

Minutes

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Regular meeting

6:30 p.m. June 4, 2025

Board Meeting Room of Town Hall Annex, 105 E. Corbin St.



Present: Chair Will Senner, Vice Chair Hannah Peele and members G. Miller, Sara Riek, Bill Warren and Daniel Widis

Staff: Planner Joseph Hoffheimer and Town Attorney Bob Hornik

1. Call to order, roll call, and confirmation of quorum

Chair Will Senner called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. He called the roll and confirmed the presence of a quorum.

2. Commission's mission statement

Senner read the statement.

3. Agenda changes

Planner Joseph Hoffheimer provided an update for Item 5D, which the commissioners addressed first.

4. Minutes review and approval

Minutes from regular meeting on May 7, 2025.

Motion: Member G. Miller moved to approve the minutes from the regular meeting on May 7, 2025, as submitted. Senner seconded.

Vote: 6-0.

5. Written decisions review and approval

Written decisions from regular meeting on May 7, 2025.

Motion: Miller moved to approve the written decisions from the regular meeting on May 7, 2025, as submitted. Senner seconded.

Vote: 6-0.

6. New business

- A. Certificate of Appropriateness Application: 225 W. Tryon St.
Replace existing deck with sunroom (PIN 986869780).

Senner opened the public hearing and asked whether there were any conflicts of interest or bias among the commissioners. None were disclosed. All commissioners disclosed that they had visited the site in preparation for reviewing the application.

Hoffheimer was sworn in. Charlie McMahon, of Patio Enclosures, and John Saxon, the property owner, were sworn in to speak on behalf of the application.

Hoffheimer introduced the application by presenting the staff report. He noted that the inventory information, application materials, and applicable design standards would be entered into the record as evidence. He provided the staff comments:

- Staff are unaware of the age of the current deck, but it does not appear to be historic and is not mentioned in the historic inventory.
- Aluminum windows are indicated as case-by-case in the compatibility matrix, but they have been used in the district on other newer residential projects, including a recently approved sunroom conversion.
- The compatibility matrix does not directly address knee walls. Aluminum is not allowed as a siding or trim material, but knee walls may differ enough from siding and trim for the aluminum restriction to not apply.

McMahon confirmed that the knee walls will be glass.

The commissioners reviewed the cover sheet for the application. McMahon confirmed that the space will be glass-enclosed and will not add square footage to the house.

The commissioners reviewed Elevation A.

McMahon said the screens are sliding black aluminum mesh and move open and closed in the same direction as the windows. He said the door would be foam panel with aluminum skin.

There was discussion of the proposal for the triangular wing panels above the door and windows to be made of aluminum. The commissioners explained that aluminum is disallowed as a siding material in the compatibility matrix and said the material should be changed to a compatible material.

McMahon said the knee walls are tempered glass with aluminum borders and that the windows are aluminum-framed.

He said the underside of the soffit will be aluminum-skinned foam panels.

The commissioners reviewed Elevation B.

McMahon said the intermediate and perimeter framing will be aluminum with a white finish, 3/8-inch extrusion.

There was discussion of the vertical supports indicated on the elevation. McMahon said the ones shown in white are new, and the ones in gray are existing. Saxon clarified that the existing posts will remain, and new posts will be added where none currently exist. McMahon said the posts will be 6-inch x 6-inch posts. Saxon said the decking, stair banister, and steps will be replaced, but everything else existing will remain. He confirmed that they will retain as much of the existing deck as is feasible. The commissioners expressed appreciation for using as much existing material as possible.

There was discussion of the use of aluminum panels as a roofing material, which is not addressed in the design standards. It was agreed that most metal roofing would look substantially similar, and it was noted that the use of the material is sited in the rear and is fairly inconspicuous. Saxon and McMahon confirmed that there is a significant slope away from the house, so the top of the roof will not be visible. The

commissioners noted that the low pitch of the roof and the grade sloping away contribute to minimal visibility of the material.

McMahon said the roof will be capped off with a 3-inch aluminum fascia treatment and that the structural members will be white. He said the roof will also be white.

The commissioners agreed that the proposal met the standards around siting the addition in the rear; minimizing the impact on the primary structure; appropriate massing, size, and scale; and minimizing disturbance to the site by using the existing porch footprint with a slight addition.

There was further discussion of the compatibility of the roofing materials with the existing home and with the rest of the district. It was agreed that the materials are not incongruent, especially because they are not on a visible part of the house or on the entire roof.

Senner summarized the commissioners' discussion: with the modification of the infill panels on the side as glass instead of aluminum, the commission does not see anything that would be incongruous with the historic district and conflicting with the design standards. Although aluminum roof panels are not explicitly addressed in the compatibility matrix, it is agreed that it is not incongruous, particularly because it is being used on a rear addition which is not visible from the street, it is on a very low sloped roof that minimizes the visibility of the material itself, and is on a grade that further contributes to the minimal visibility of the material.

Senner closed the public hearing.

Motion: Miller moved to find as fact that the 225 W. Tryon St. application is in keeping with the overall character of the Historic District and complies with all relevant standards of evaluation based on the commission's discussion of the application and the standards of evaluation in Section 3.12.3 of the Unified Development Ordinance because the plans are consistent with the Historic District Design Standards: Windows; Doors; Porches, Entrances, and Balconies. Member Sara Riek seconded.

Vote: 6-0.

Motion: Miller moved to approve the application with conditions. Riek seconded.

Vote: 6-0.

Conditions: The triangle area above the windows and doors will be of a material consistent with the compatibility matrix.

- B. Certificate of Appropriateness Application: 100 S. Hillsborough Ave.
New rear addition with shed dormers and new garage/storage building (PIN 9864763172).

Senner opened the public hearing and asked whether there were any conflicts of interest or bias among the commissioners. Vice Chair Hannah Peele disclosed that she lives across the street from the property but said she believed she could hear the application without bias. All commissioners disclosed that they had visited the site in preparation for reviewing the application.

David Cates was sworn in to speak on behalf of the application. Catherine Phelps, the property owner, was sworn in.

Hoffheimer introduced the application by presenting the staff report. He noted that the inventory information, application materials, and applicable design standards would be entered into the record as evidence. He provided the staff comments:

- There is some discrepancy regarding the dates of construction of the original house. The historic inventory says c. 1967, while the marker on the property says c. 1921. The 1924 Sanborn map also shows a house with a footprint that matches that of the current house in that location.
- The inventory notes that the section of the house proposed to be replaced is an addition. It does not give dates for the addition, but the addition was presumably built much more recently.

Hoffheimer said Cates also sent an aerial image from 1938.

Cates introduced the application saying it appears that there were two additions to the house based on the type of construction used. The most recent addition includes sub-standard construction in terms of ceiling heights, which are lower than 6 feet, 2 inches, and the way the roof was added. He said that portion of the house is not in good shape and doesn't address the property owners' needs. He said the proposal is to add onto the back, and that he ensured the new ridgeline was well below the existing ridgeline of the original structure. He said the foundation of the existing addition is sub-standard. Cates said they will not be expanding the footprint of the house, but instead will be filling in under the existing roof overhang. He said they were also proposing a small, singular garage, like many Hillsborough singular garages. He said he had provided examples of similar additions in the application.

The commissioners expressed appreciation for the thorough and thoughtful application.

There was discussion of the historic nature of the additions to the house and their contribution to the historic character of the home. C. Phelps said the addition to be renovated was built in 1967, directly on the ground with no crawl space. Cates added that because the frame of the structure was built on the ground, it has no protection from moisture and is deteriorating because of that. He reiterated that the ceiling height is shorter than code requirements. He claimed the state of the addition is not adding to the historic character of the property, and that the proposed work will improve the character in many ways. Cates said that modifications to the existing structure to address these deficiencies is not practical because the existing portion has no structural integrity and used substandard materials. He said that the homeowners chose to use only the existing footprint of the house out of sensitivity to the character of the neighborhood. The commissioners agreed that using the existing footprint makes the project more consistent with the design standards.

Cates walked the commissioners through the site plan. He said the other existing addition will stay, and they will be building on top of it. The commissioners expressed appreciation for the plan to use as much of the existing structure as possible. Cates showed the commissioners which walls would remain and which would be rebuilt. He said two walls of one addition would be kept, and that the walls of the other addition would be rebuilt entirely.

Cates clarified that he does not know how much time elapsed between the building of the additions.

Cates said the foundation of the two existing additions will be rebuilt, and there will be a new concrete foundation added to infill under the existing overhang. He said there will be no concrete added outside of the existing perimeter other than that small section.

Kent Phelps, the property owner, was sworn in. He said there is a concrete sidewalk along the back that stops at the edge of the house and added that the joists of one of the additions are resting on the ground with no foundation or pylons of any sort.

There was discussion of the material used for the foundation. It was determined that either brick or concrete would be suitable since they are both compatible materials, and the foundation is not a significant character-defining element and is not visible from the street.

Senner expressed appreciation that the proposed garage is clearly set back from the primary front elevation, subordinate to the main house and consistent with other garages in the district. Cates added that it will also be sited behind a fence.

The commissioners reviewed the front elevation.

Cates said the garage door will be standard painted aluminum with simple inserts in the door.

It was noted that the height of the garage is clearly subordinate to the primary home.

There was discussion of the absence of grids on the front-facing window of the addition. Miller asked why the window was not proposed to be six-over-six to match the other front windows. C. Phelps said the existing window does not have grids, and they are adding a new, larger window of the same style. Cates added that the lack of grids defines the window as being a different age. Miller said he found the window to be incongruous, and that if the window were being replaced with an exact match of the existing one he might find it less incongruous. He said he would find a six-over-six window to be not incongruous. Riek said she did not find the window to be incongruous, especially because it matches the rest of the windows in the new addition.

Miller noted that the window in question is sited on the character-defining elevation. Senner noted that there is a change in plane that is not readily apparent in the elevation, but that it will read differently because it will be set back from the front of the house. Member Daniel Widis noted that the new window is a more appropriate scale and a more consistent treatment to the existing house.

C. Phelps said they will be matching the existing round, faux-copper down-spouts, and will reuse as many of the existing ones as they can.

The commissioners reviewed the right elevation.

It was noted that the clear drop in the roofline makes the addition clearly subordinate to the original structure. It was also noted that the addition is well proportioned in relation to the existing structure.

Cates said the door opens onto ground level, and that the raised door in the elevation is due to a drafting error. K. Phelps said they plan to build a patio outside of the doors and will likely get rid of the drainage sidewalk. He added the intent is for the door to open onto a single step down. C. Phelps added that they plan to create a patio there using cement pavers.

Cates confirmed that the siding will be fiber cement.

The commissioners reviewed the left elevation.

There was discussion of what the side of the garage facing the house will look like. Cates said there will be a door and window on that facade. C. Phelps added that there will be no window on the other side. Cates showed where doors would be. He said the doors into the addition will match patio doors going out. C. Phelps confirmed the door of the garage will have a window, and that there will be a window in the back of the garage as well. She said the door will be fiberglass-clad wood. Cates said the door could be a half-lite.

The commissioners reviewed the rear elevation.

Cates confirmed the lower windows would be sliders, and not simulated-divided lites as noted on the elevation.

There was discussion of the compatibility of placement, size, massing, and proportion of the windows on the rear. Miller said that similar to his feelings about the front window, he believed the rear windows to be incongruous since they did not match the six-over-six configuration of the windows on the rest of the house. C. Phelps noted that the existing windows in that location are not six-over-six.

Peele expressed her appreciation for how the portion of the addition that fills in under the overhang has retained the existing shed form.

Senner summarized the commissioners' discussion: overall there is not majority concern of the proposal having elements that are incongruous with the historic district or inconsistent with the design standards. The garage is sited appropriately and is consistent with other outbuilding garages in the district. Although there is an existing rear addition, the structural deficiencies, habitability challenges, and lack of viability of restoring or renovating the existing rear addition has been well documented. The application has gone to great measure to maintain as much of the existing additions as is feasible and to design the addition to work within the footprint of the existing structure using compatible materials. The design is consistent with the primary home and other houses in the district.

Senner closed the public hearing.

Motion: Miller moved to find as fact that the 100 S. Hillsborough Ave. application to replace the current addition with a new addition and building a new garage is in keeping with the overall character of the Historic District and complies with all relevant standards of evaluation based on the commission's discussion of the application and the standards of evaluation in Section 3.12.3 of the Unified Development Ordinance because the plans are consistent with the Historic District Design Standards: Additions to Residential Buildings; New Construction of Outbuildings and Garages; Exterior Lighting. Riek seconded.

Vote: 6-0.

Motion: Senner moved to approve the application as submitted. Widis seconded.

Vote: 6-0.

C. Certificate of Appropriateness Application: 218 S. Occoneechee St.

Two-story rear addition, small side addition to the south, upfit/reconstruction of existing garage, new front door and front porch railings, and after-the-fact request to remove chimney (PIN 9864757359).

Senner opened the public hearing and asked whether there were any conflicts of interest or bias among the commissioners. None were disclosed. All commissioners disclosed that they had visited the site in preparation for reviewing the application.

Carlos Gonzalez, the property owner, was sworn in to speak on behalf of the application. John Young, a neighbor, was sworn in to provide public comment.

Hoffheimer introduced the application by presenting the staff report. He noted that the inventory information, application materials, and applicable design standards would be entered into the record as evidence. He provided the staff comments:

- The removal of a brick chimney requires after-the-fact approval by the Historic District Commission, and the relevant standard is Exterior Walls 8. The after-the-fact fee has been paid.

Cates introduced the application. He said he tried to make sure the ridgeline of the addition was below the ridgeline of the existing structure. He said the existing garage is structurally unsound and is falling down and cannot be salvaged. Part of the garage has fallen onto the neighbor's property. He said the proposal includes plans to rebuild the garage where it was originally sited. He described the unique nature and constraints of the property's setback lines because of the house's position along the curve of the street, which left them with few options for siting the project.

Hoffheimer said photos of the existing house do show the chimney on them. Cates explained that it was a utilitarian chimney.

Senner referenced Roofs Standard 8, which indicates that it may be appropriate to remove secondary chimneys. The commissioners considered the chimney and determined that it was not a character-defining element, despite being visible from the street. Cates added that the next door neighbor removed a chimney of the same style, with approval from the Historic District Commission.

Cates said they had found remnants of the staircase where they are planning to build a new one, so it will be placed in its original location.

Cates said the setbacks of the property absorbed much of the yard and left little room for flexibility.

Senner referenced Additions to Residential Buildings Standard 3, which addresses the proportion of constructed area to unbuilt area on the site. He noted that this structure will span the length from front to rear setback, which is fairly rare in the district. He acknowledged that it is a uniquely positioned lot. Cates said he has worked on sites with similar lot features. He referred to a proposal he presented for a house on W. Margaret Lane where a screened porch was added to the rear. He said this current proposal leaves more green space than that previous one did. He added that it is not unusual for nonconforming lots to have a large portion of their available space used for development.

Member Bill Warren noted that given the lack of space between the back of the house and the fence behind it, while the addition adds some substantial building to the area, the entire footprint of the house isn't changing much of the proportion of built space to green space. Cates added that the green space on the north side is protected by the setback.

Cates clarified that the small room within the house that appears to have no access is a drafting error. He said there is nothing there that would extend through the roof.

Senner referenced Additions to Residential Buildings Standard 11, which addresses differentiating the addition from the primary structure with clear visual delineation. He said the approach is often to set the addition in slightly from the primary structure, but he acknowledged that the property owner is working within the constraints of the lot and will be retaining the corner board. Widis added that the layout made sense to keep the structure as compact as possible.

The commissioners reviewed the front elevation.

Cates clarified that the materials list incorrectly listed the material of the garage door. He said it would be a simple aluminum door with no wood grain, and with glass lites. There was discussion of whether the garage door would have simulated divided lites. Cates said he did not normally come across simulated divided lites in garage doors, but that he suspected they would not be. He confirmed they would not be only grilles-between-glass.

Cates said he tried to make the front addition subservient to everything existing.

The commissioners reviewed the left elevation. It was noted that given the siting, the facade serves almost as a second front elevation.

The commissioners discussed the existing metal crawl space access. Gonzalez said he could try to move the access to the back corner so it is not as visually prominent. He said the water and sewer lines attach in that spot. Cates said currently the access is covered by 5V tin leaning up against the house, but that the proposed project includes an access panel, to code, of compatible material.

Cates said the door is inset, in line with where the original corner was to help visually separate the two portions of the house. He said the steps would be concrete masonry unit blocks to match the existing. Gonzalez said he felt flexible about the material for the steps, which could be brick or veneer. The commissioners agreed that they did not consider the existing blocks to be historically contributing, and that Gonzalez could select a different compatible material if he wanted to.

Cates said the existing porch railings would be replaced on all three sides and were proposed to be wood rail and pickets. Warren observed that the railings probably weren't original to the house, and were probably added sometime later. Senner added that although the existing railing is metal, he didn't think it was original, and he didn't consider it to be a character-defining element contributing to the structure's historic nature.

Cates confirmed that all doors would look as shown on the elevations, a style compatible with this style of house.

The commissioners reviewed the rear elevation.

Senner expressed appreciation for the drop of the roofline to make it look subordinate. Cates confirmed the drop would be four inches.

Gonzalez confirmed the entire roof would be new 5V of an ash gray color, similar to roofs he has seen throughout the historic district.

The commissioners reviewed the right elevation.

Cates clarified that the inconsistency of the framing between the three dormer windows is a software glitch, and that there will be no difference in spacing. He said the intent is to have one consistent trim board. He further clarified that the inconsistency of the shutters on the elevation is also a software error.

Cates said that the north side of the garage will have solid siding. He said the south side will have a six-over-six window with no shutters that matches an existing window on the house. He said that across from the garage one would see the side of the rear steps. He said the rear entrance required a porch because there was no room for steps in either direction, so they had to inset steps. He said the siding material would be the same on the porch as on the rest of the addition. He said the side of the porch would also have an egress window because the interior room would be a bedroom.

Cates said the siding would all be lap siding.

Senner summarized the commissioners' discussion: there is nothing in the application as presented that was identified as incongruous with the district. The chimney that was demolished was determined not to be a character-defining element contributing to the historic character of the front elevation. The addition has been sited in a way that is clearly subordinate to the primary structure and differentiated from the primary structure in both its massing and architectural elements such as the maintained cornerboard. While the addition does take up a fair bit of the nonconforming lot, the lot does maintain a substantial side yard which allows it to be not incongruous with other additions in the district. The applicant has taken care to use the existing garage footprint and repair the garage to the extent feasible.

Young provided public comment in support of the application. He said he lives next door to the property and appreciates the considered details of the application. He said that the scale of the addition is reasonable for what the owners are trying to accomplish, and that it is preferable to have it built into the back rather than toward the south in the open space. He noted that the property is in a very visible spot, right near the entrance to the Riverwalk. Young said he appreciated the commission's scrutiny. He said the proposed materials are compatible, and attested that the shed is in major disrepair and not recoverable. He expressed appreciation for the commission's careful review of the application.

There was further discussion of the division of lites in the garage door, and it was agreed that staff will review the final garage door.

Senner closed the public hearing. He noted that the crawl space access material will be confirmed with staff, and that the steps can be of a material consistent with the compatibility matrix.

Senner reopened the public hearing.

Gonzalez offered an apology for the removal of the chimney without approval. He said the bricks are still on site and could be used for the steps.

Senner closed the public hearing.

Motion: Peele moved to find as fact that the 218 S. Occoneechee St. application is in keeping with the overall character of the Historic District and complies with all relevant standards of evaluation based on the commission's discussion of the application and the standards of evaluation in Section 3.12.3 of the Unified Development Ordinance because the plans are consistent with the Historic District Design Standards: Additions to Residential Buildings;

Outbuildings and Garages; Doors; Porches, Entrances, and Balconies; Exterior Walls. Riek seconded.
Vote: 6-0.

Motion: Riek moved to approve the application with conditions. Warren seconded.

Vote: 6-0.

Conditions:

- Garage door will be approved by staff.
- Entry to the crawl space will be confirmed by staff.

Gonzalez thanked the commissioners and expressed appreciation for Hoffheimer's help during the application process.

- D. Certificate of Appropriateness Application: 320 W. Orange St.
New construction house on the rear parcel (PIN 9864882685).

This item was addressed during the discussion of Item 3. Hoffheimer said that this item would need to be continued to a future meeting because some properties adjacent to the parcel behind 320 W. Orange St. were not notified and would need to be notified prior to the evidentiary hearing.

Motion: Miller moved to continue the application until the next meeting.

There was discussion of the viability of a special meeting in July for hearing the application.

Motion: Senner moved to continue the application to the next meeting. Miller seconded.

Vote: 6-0.

7. General updates

Hoffheimer said he would send updates about in-person Certified Local Government trainings.

Hoffheimer informed the commission that after-the-fact fees have been increased by the town board to a \$500 flat fee for both major and minor works.

8. Adjournment

Senner adjourned the meeting at 8:34 p.m. without a vote.

Respectfully submitted,



Joseph Hoffheimer
Planner
Staff support to the Historic District Commission

Approved: July 16, 2025