

# Minutes

## HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Regular meeting

6 p.m. Dec. 3, 2025

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



Present: Chair Will Senner and members G. Miller, Sara Riek and Daniel Widis

Absent: Vice Chair Hannah Peele

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 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

There were no changes to the agenda.

### 4. Minutes review and approval

Minutes from regular meeting on Oct. 1, 2025.

Motion: Member G. Miller moved to approve the minutes from the regular meeting on Oct. 1, 2025, as submitted. Senner seconded.

Vote: 4-0.

Minutes from regular meeting on Nov. 5, 2025.

Motion: Miller moved to approve the minutes from the regular meeting on Nov. 5, 2025, as submitted. Senner seconded.

Vote: 4-0.

### 5. Old business

A. Certificate of Appropriateness Application: 311 W. Orange St.  
New construction house (PIN 9864883297).

Senner reopened the public hearing.

Planner Joseph Hoffheimer provided the staff comments:

- This application is being continued from the August, September, October, and November Historic District Commission meetings. The applicant has submitted an updated application that includes the following major changes from the initial proposal:
  - The garage is set back further from the front line of the house and is less visible.

- The roof pitches are wider, and curves have been eliminated.
- Several exterior materials have changed, and all appear to comply with the compatibility matrix. Notably, the siding is now entirely Hardie plank.
- The driveway has been adjusted to preserve an additional tree.

Uriah Dortch was present to speak on behalf of the application. He introduced the application and presented an overview of changes that had been made to the design. He said the applicants had moved the garage door back from the front plane and used a wood tone door so it wouldn't stand out as much. He said they also lowered the pitch of the roof to have a more classic feeling. Dortch confirmed the roof over the porch entry is metal, and all other roofing is shingle. He confirmed that the siding on the second floor is board and batten.

The commissioners expressed appreciation for the steps the applicant had taken to address their congruity concerns.

The commissioners reviewed the right elevation. Dortch said the steps to the porch are pressure-treated wood.

The commissioners reviewed the left elevation. Dortch pointed out the representation of the change in grade across the house, and mentioned that it is an estimation. He said the foundation would be concrete masonry units, smooth parged. He said the house siding stayed the same between the previously shown design and this one.

The commissioners reviewed the site plan. Dortch said they had adjusted the placement of the driveway to preserve the 12-inch walnut tree, which will help block the view of the garage door from the street. Dortch said he had confirmed with the septic installer that there are only three trees inside the septic area that need to be removed.

The commissioners requested a tree protection fence to protect the trees over 24 inches, especially those on each side of driveway, two to plan east, and one north of the septic field. Dortch agreed to the request.

It was acknowledged that the applicant had taken steps to address the commissioners' concerns around congruity.

Victoria Matheson, a neighbor who lives across the street from the property in question, was sworn in to provide public comment. She said she was glad to hear fewer trees are being removed and explained that her main concern is stormwater runoff.

Senner closed the public hearing.

**Motion:** Miller moved to find as fact that the 311 W. Orange 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: New Construction of Primary Residential Buildings; New Construction of Outbuildings and Garages; and Walkways, Driveways, and Off-Street Parking. Member Sara Riek seconded.

**Vote:** 4-0.

Motion: Miller moved to approve the application with conditions. Riek seconded.  
 Vote: 4-0.  
 Condition: Existing trees 24 inches and larger near the construction area will be protected during construction.

The commissioners next discussed Item 6A.

- B. Certificate of Appropriateness Application: 206 S. Hillsborough Ave.  
 Convert the existing screened porch to glass, connect the existing screened porch to the house, and add a new screened porch (PIN 9864753647).

This item was addressed after Item 6D.

Senner opened the public hearing. He asked if 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.

David Cates was sworn in to speak on behalf of the application.

Hoffheimer presented 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:

- This item was automatically continued from the November Historic District Commission meeting due to the lack of quorum then and will be heard at or after the regular 6:30 p.m. start time.

The commissioners reviewed the south elevation. Cates said the steps will be narrowed slightly. He said the new porch will look almost identical to the existing, as the primary framing members will remain and only the intermediary framing members will be replaced, with new glazing.

The commissioners reviewed the west elevation. Cates clarified that the infill fascia above the screen, labeled "new wood trim," will likely be wood German siding to match.

The commissioners reviewed the right elevation. Cates said the roofline will be seamless with no change and that the roof of the sunroom will just be extended. He said the screened room has a different roofline and that the applicants chose to keep its roof lower to minimize its presence. Cates said the footprint will be similar, as there are existing landscaping timbers where the screened room will be built.

Senner summarized the commissioners' discussion: Converting an existing screened porch to glass is not uncommon and not incongruous with the district. The addition of the new screened porch, sited in the rear behind the house, and the new connector are planned in a way that they will have minimal visual impact from the street. They are also consistent with the design standards. The massing allows differentiation from the original structure. The materials are congruous but different enough to make clear that this is an addition.

Senner closed the public hearing.

Motion: Miller moved to find as fact that the 206 S. Hillsborough Ave. 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: Porches, Entrances, and Balconies; and Additions to Residential Buildings. Riek seconded.

Vote: 4-0.

Motion: Miller moved to approve the application as submitted. Member Daniel Widis seconded.

Vote: 4-0.

C. Certificate of Appropriateness Application: 222 Lydia Lane

Remove portion of front gable, add windows and pergola (PIN 9874274715).

Senner opened the public hearing. He asked if 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.

Marty Nelson and Bill Trost were sworn in to speak on behalf of the application.

Hoffheimer presented 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:

- This item was automatically continued from the November Historic District Commission meeting due to the lack of quorum then and will be heard at or after the regular 6:30 p.m. start time.
- Although the inventory mentions that the front elevation has been extensively altered, it does not give any dates for when the front elevation took its current form. Staff have not seen any documentation of the front elevation's (street-facing) prior appearance.
- The design standards do not directly address pergolas, but pergolas are allowed as minor works if located behind the structure. Staff are not aware of any similarly situated pergolas in the historic district.

The commissioners asked Cates about the proposed pergola in relation to Design Standard 11 of Porches, Entrances, and Balconies. Cates said he meant to include the example of 320 N. Cameron St., which has a wood pergola on the north (front) side similar to what is proposed. He said this example is noteworthy because the pergola blends in with the house, which is set back from the street.

It was noted that this house is unique, as the street-facing elevation is not the front elevation.

The commissioners reviewed the front elevation.

Cates said he does not believe the porch is original to the house, though he said he could not find pictures to confirm. He said there are some structural remnants of an original porch, which the existing porch was built over, which is what has led him to believe it is not original. Senner observed that the change in roof pitch seems to provide evidence that it was not built that way originally. Nelson added that the ceilings are 6-½ feet tall in that part of the house. Cates said this is unusual and does not seem to fit with the rest of the house. Senner said this evidence is indicative of the porch not being original.

Cates said the metal flue is new and might be taller in the renderings than it needs to be. He said it will be similar to the color of the roof to be unobtrusive.

There was general agreement among the commissioners that while the facade is street-facing, it is not the traditional character-defining elevation.

Cates said that where the existing wall will be removed to expose new wall, which will have new siding. He said the windows in that location are new, and there is a wood stove that goes between the two windows. He added that the whole wall will be resided because there will be a lot of punctures in that wall. He said the rest of the house is sided with Hardie board or aluminum siding.

Cates confirmed there will be no change to the existing cinderblock foundation. He also confirmed that the rendering shows plants on the ground, but the rendering extends to show the foundation and footings below grade.

Cates confirmed the primary horizontal framing members on the upper portion of the pergola are essentially in line with the roof fascia, and that the vertical posts are posts for the porch, so it is essentially integrated into those elements of the existing house.

Cates said neither the landscaping nor the footprint will change.

The commissioners reviewed the right elevation.

There was general agreement that while the removal of the existing vinyl window, which was part of a past addition, impacts the character-defining elevation, it does not compromise it or the character-defining elements.

Cates clarified that the “existing vinyl window” labels should be on the existing elevation rather than the proposed elevation.

There was discussion of the impact of the addition of the pergola on the character-defining elevation. Widis said that, in reference to Design Standard 8, he did not feel like the addition compromises the integrity of the character-defining elevation, even though it does alter it. Senner agreed, observing that the change preserves and is integrated into the character-defining elements. He noted that the pergola is set back from the entry, minimizing its impact on the front facade. Miller added that he would not consider this change to compromise the character of this character-defining elevation.

Senner closed the public hearing.

Senner summarized the commissioners’ discussion: Although there are modifications being made to a street-facing elevation, its primary character-defining elevation is not street-facing. The evidence of the change in roofline and massing and the structural remnants of a previous porch indicate that this section of the house is not original and was an addition. The addition of the pergola is being integrated into the existing porch, massing, and roofline in a way that minimizes impact on the character-defining elements of the facade on its front, non-street-facing elevation, or on the street-facing elevation. The pergola is set back from the front entry to be not as prominent on the front facade.

Motion: Riek moved to find as fact that the 222 Lydia Lane 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: Exterior Walls and Windows. Miller seconded.

Vote: 4-0.

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

Vote: 4-0.

D. Certificate of Appropriateness Application: 225 E. Corbin St.  
Replace nine windows (PIN 9874189986).

Senner opened the public hearing. He asked whether there were any conflicts of interest or bias among the commissioners. Widis said his family rented the house in question for 2 months while their own house was being renovated, but that this would not have any influence on his decision. All commissioners disclosed that they had visited the site in preparation for reviewing the application.

Keith Bunten, of Renewal by Andersen, and Susan Montpetit were sworn in to speak on behalf of the application.

Hoffheimer presented 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:

- This item was automatically continued from the November Historic District Commission meeting due to the lack of quorum then and will be heard at or after the regular 6:30 p.m. start time.
- The existing wood windows date to 1957, which is old enough to be considered historic.
- The minor works standards were recently relaxed to allow deteriorated wood windows to be replaced with substitute materials on side and rear elevations. Even though the building in question does not front the street, several of the windows may be considered character-defining so require Historic District Commission review.

The commissioners asked Bunten to address the decision to replace the windows with substitute materials, with respect to Design Standards 5 and 6.

Bunten said that the windows cannot open and close, which is a safety hazard, and that they are made with single-pane glass. He said they plan to replace them with dual-pane windows, with fully divided lites and mortise and tenon joints, that mimic wood windows both inside and out. He said the new windows will look identical to the existing ones and will maintain the integrity of the property. Montpetit said the reason for replacing the first floor windows but not those on the second floor was for budgetary reasons.

Bunten confirmed that the windows will be the same size as existing.

Montpetit said they had tried many methods to repair the windows in lieu of replacement, including glazing and silicon, which lasts for only a few weeks. She said the aluminum casing on the side is degraded and not effective. She said she had worked with a wood window expert who said the entire window could be removed and replaced with old windows with weights, like-for-like. But the expert had also said that the wood-on-wood installation would require more frequent repairs.

The commissioners acknowledged that the windows have functional problems and are beyond reasonable repair. They noted that the new windows would provide the same appearance in size and style but with

more energy efficiency. The commissioners acknowledged the intent to match the existing windows as closely as possible, with an eye toward improved maintenance and longevity.

Senner closed the public hearing.

Motion: Miller moved to find as fact that the 225 E. Corbin 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. Riek seconded.

Vote: 4-0.

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

Vote: 4-0.

- E. Certificate of Appropriateness Application: 217 S. Occoneechee St. Repair house, remove rear corner additions, and replace rear roof with standing seam roof (PIN 9864850633).

Senner opened the public hearing. He 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 presented 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:

- This application was automatically continued from the November Historic District Commission meeting due to the lack of quorum then and will be heard at or after the regular 6:30 p.m. start time.
- The application was submitted to comply with an order to repair for an active demolition by neglect case.
- The inventory does not provide an age for the existing rear roof, rear additions, or Bricktex siding.
- Aside from what is described in the application, staff have not found any documentation of the building's second evolution.

Cates said that upon his initial investigation, it was obvious that the two rear additions were the third generation of the evolution of the house, based on the structural framing and a window that had been built over in the rear that the homeowner would like to expose. Cates said he walked through with State Historic Preservation Office staff.

Cates said the house is in surprisingly good shape on the inside. He said the first floor will need to be rebuilt, and that the two additions are in the worst shape, but that there are no leaks in the upstairs rooms. He said there is some structural termite damage, which is worst in the front area, and the wall there is falling down, but that the damage is not so substantial that it cannot be replaced in-kind and is worth saving.

Cates said the building has been protected by its asphalt siding, which they plan to remove and repair the wood underneath in-kind as possible, or replace with wood to match.

Cates said that in order to get the pitch of the roof low enough to expose the window that his now hidden, standing seam must be used.

The commissioners reviewed the front elevation. Cates said the roof color has not been selected yet, but it will probably be similar to the existing. He confirmed he would coordinate with staff once it has been selected.

Cates said the existing door will be salvaged, but that he did not know what color it would be, and that he would coordinate with staff to confirm.

The commissioners reviewed the left elevation. Cates said the foundation would be repaired in-kind. He explained that the window on this facade looks large because it is an egress window, and the other windows are quite narrow. The commissioners noted it is not on an elevation that will impact the character of the home.

The commissioners reviewed the rear elevation. Cates said the plan is mainly to do repairs to the existing elements, but with a new roof on the lower portion and potentially a new window. He said the middle upper window is existing but is currently hidden, and he was not sure what shape it is in. He said if necessary it would be replaced with a new aluminum-clad window.

There was discussion of whether more due diligence is necessary to determine which elements need replacement rather than repair in order for the commissioners to know specifically what they are approving. It was acknowledged that this is a unique application that will be receiving increased scrutiny.

Cates said the applicant is committing to restore the existing elements, including the windows. He agreed that if something needs to be replaced in-kind instead of restored, it will be addressed with staff. Cates also said if anything needs to be replaced, the plan is to replace it in-kind.

Cates said the foundation beneath the additions will be replaced. He added that the applicant is trying to change as little as possible.

The commissioners reviewed the right elevation. Cates clarified that the renderings show different siding widths because they do not know how much of the lap is currently exposed underneath the asphalt siding. He said they will respect whatever width exists.

Cates said the applicant is not proposing any changes to the carport or shed at this time, and no other side modifications. He said the applicant is aware of the time sensitive nature of this project.

Senner summarized the commissioners' discussion: The clear overarching intent of the application is to preserve and restore as much of the existing home as possible. Based on the testimony provided, the two sections being removed are clearly later additions, which are not character-defining elements of the home and their removal is not incongruous with the design standards. The applicant's intent is to restore in-kind or replace in-kind. If anything needs to change in that regard, staff can coordinate that.

Cates noted that the applicant will be coordinating with the State Historic Preservation Office as well.

Jill Heilman was sworn in to provide public comment. She encouraged the applicant to return to the commission if there are any changes to the project. Senner added that the applicant should discuss with staff first, and staff will decide whether the application needs to be reviewed by the commission.

Senner closed the public hearing.

Motion: Riek moved to find as fact that the 217 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: Wood, Exterior Walls, Windows, Doors, and Roofs. Widis seconded.

Vote: 4-0.

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

Vote: 4-0.

## 6. New business

- A. Certificate of Appropriateness Application: 109 N. Cameron St.  
Construct a second driveway to the house from North Cameron Street (PIN 9874163529).

This item was addressed after Item 5A.

Senner opened the public hearing. He asked if there were any conflicts of interest or bias among the commissioners. Senner disclosed that he works with the applicant's brother but does not feel that the relationship will influence his decision in any way. All commissioners disclosed that they had visited the site in preparation for reviewing the application.

Stephen Mahaley and Allison Mahaley were sworn in to speak on behalf of the application. Hoffheimer was sworn in.

Hoffheimer presented 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 minor works standards do not allow for staff approval of new driveway construction.

A. Mahaley said the applicants initially planned to have the driveway go across the front yard to the back, but Bartlet Tree Expert, whom they consulted with, recommended not to do that because of two 80-foot oak trees in the front yard. A. Mahaley said the intent of the proposed location of the driveway is to protect the trees.

The commissioners noted the design standards' recommendations on the siting of new driveways, which discourage siting them visible to the street and encourage protecting significant site features. Senner observed that the property is essentially a double lot. He said that there are not many homes in the district with two driveways or circular driveways, but that he does not feel a second driveway would be incongruous, especially with the width of the lot. There was general agreement amongst the commissioners.

A. Mahaley added that the driveway will follow the natural contour of the property.

A. Mahaley confirmed the gravel will be standard crushed gravel. She said the applicants want it to blend in as much as possible. She said the application will be crushed and run topped with gravel with about a ¾-inch stone. She said it would be installed by Wilkerson Grading.

A. Mahaley confirmed that parking would be down the back behind the house.

Senner summarized the commissioners' discussion: While a second driveway is not necessarily common within the historic district, there is evidence in the application that care has been taken to protect and maintain the existing site and preserve the existing trees; and this is a double lot with extensive street frontage that allows the introduction of a second driveway to not be incongruous with the historic district.

Senner closed the public hearing.

Motion: Miller moved to find as fact that the 109 N. Cameron 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: Walkways, Driveways, and Off-Street Parking. Riek seconded.

Vote: 4-0.

Motion: Miller moved to approve the application as submitted. Riek seconded.

Vote: 4-0.

The commissioners next discussed Item 6D.

B. Certificate of Appropriateness Application: 241 Lydia Lane

Demolish the existing house and construct a 2,831 square-foot new house with a breezeway and fence (PIN 9874280274).

Senner opened the public hearing. He asked whether there were any conflicts of interest or bias among the commissioners. None were disclosed.

Chris Jones and Charles Woods were sworn in to speak on behalf of the application.

Hoffheimer presented 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 application refers to the house's "noncontributing" National Register status. While the National Register inventory provides valuable information about properties in the National Register historic district that overlaps with the local historic district, National Register "contributing" status does not have any added significance for local commission review. The design standards define "historic" and "historically significant" as 50 years of age or older, and most of the current form of the house in question meets that criteria.
- Staff requested more information regarding Demolition standards 1, 3, 5, and 8, and the responses are noted in the narrative.
- Only in the case of demolition can finances be taken into account.
- The commission may delay a proposed demolition for up to 365 days from the date of approval, but it may not deny demolition. See the attached section of G. S. 160D for more information.

- The construction dates of the example houses referenced in the application for the new build range from c. 1921 to 2021.

Town Attorney Bob Hornik provided guidance on the commission's approach to the application. There was discussion of the questions to be evaluated within the demolition considerations of the design standards. There was also discussion of how those questions relate to G. S. 160D-949. The commissioners discussed the circumstances that might provide grounds for delaying demolition and due diligence required by the commission and staff in the case of a delay.

Cates said that in his opinion the house is not of much architectural value, and that there are no elements of it that are of significant architectural interest. He said the construction of the addition was not well done: there is a visible seam between the original structure and the addition, the depth of the facades differ by an inch and a half, and the ceiling heights are slightly different. He said the property owners went to the expense of designing an addition to the existing building. They had drawings made and met with contractors, but the contractors made it clear that they would be investing a lot of money trying to make aesthetic improvements to a structure that is not of great value to start out with. He added that the basement floods, there is insufficient crawlspace, the roof is not well constructed, and there is a third generation addition that was started and then abandoned. He said the house has too many problems to make renovation worthwhile.

Senner asked whether the renovation project would meet the functional needs of the homeowners. Cates said they determined it was not worth the money to try to work with the existing substandard home and try to make it functional. He added that the building is sited less than 12 inches from the property line, which is not in keeping with the character of the neighborhood.

Cates said that if the commission were to choose to delay the demolition, he would be surprised if anyone would want to salvage anything from the existing house.

Cates said he was unaware whether effort had been made to sell the house to other buyers. He said the property owners like the location so they had chosen not to sell it.

Cates said he does not believe the house has any significant contribution to the character of the district.

Widis observed that the photos of the house with its original siding shows a house with very different character than its existing state. He said he would not consider the house to have any special significance within the district, especially since it now exists within a very different architectural context than it originally did.

Cates said that in his professional opinion, based on the multiple substandard additions and the placement of those additions, this will not be a great loss to the character of the neighborhood. He pointed out that if this change were going to destroy the character of the neighborhood, there would be more neighbors attending the meeting and speaking up to prevent that from happening.

Senner agreed that while the historic district is comprised of homes of many styles and vintages, this particular home provides very little in terms of specific elements or defining features that are contributing to the overall character of the district. He said that while he is sad to see any home be demolished, he does not think there is much legal ground to stand on to prevent its demolition. Miller agreed. There was general agreement among the rest of the commissioners.

The commissioners shifted the discussion to the proposed new construction.

Cates said the proposed design is a very typical Hillsborough house, and not incongruous with the district, including its placement on the lot. Senner noted that the proposal maintains the setback from the street and makes the side setbacks more consistent with other homes in the district.

The commissioners reviewed the site plan. Cates said the wood hogwire fencing would run along the left side of the walkway to enclose the space. He said the applicant would consult with staff on the fencing.

The commissioners reviewed the front elevation.

Cates confirmed the front porch pedestals are clad brick with pre-cast caps before the column starts.

Senner said the massing appeared to be consistent with other houses in the district and along the neighboring streetscape. Widis said he found the landing and number of steps up to the porch to feel incongruous. He said other houses are much lower set, and this design feels like a large expression of brick. Cates said the lot has a lot of slope and he wanted plenty of separation between the siding and ground. He said the applicants chose this design as opposed to building a retaining wall to artificially drive the house lower.

There was further discussion of the height of the porch floor and options to soften the brick, including landscaping or material changes, and backfilling to reduce the number of steps. Senner observed that many homes along the street have about four steps to get up to the door, and that maybe what's more unique in this case is the full porch with exposed brick. Widis added that the steps are going up grade, so there is a lot of exposed brick. Cates clarified that the left back elevation is the critical corner that needs six inches between grade and siding to be up to code.

There was discussion of the siting of the structure. Cates showed the site plan and explained that moving the house west would lead to larger changes in elevation.

Senner said that along Mitchell Street there are elevated porches that are more extensive, which use landscaping to soften impact. Cates pointed out 229 E. Queen St., which has six risers. Cates agreed to landscaping as a condition to screen the exposed brick.

The commissioners reviewed the left elevation. Senner noted that there are a few similar covered walkways in the district. Cates said the walkway would have wood framing members and a metal roof, with an exposed brick knee-wall.

The commissioners reviewed the right elevation. Cates said the roof of the walkway would tie in just below the existing garage roof, with a small gap between them. He said the intent was for water to shed off, as they will be two distinct structures that are not actually connected. He said the pitch of the roof will be very flat and not visible from the ground. He said the roof will be standing seam.

The commissioners reviewed the back elevation. Cates said the linework around the door that appears in the rendering is a cross section of the breezeway, but that the vertical line is a software artifact.

Senner summarized the commissioners' discussion: All the materials are found in the compatibility matrix and are not incongruous with the district. The design is similar to a number of other homes in the district

and is not incongruous in terms of massing, siting, fenestration layout, and the screened porch being in the rear, all of which are all consistent with the recommendations of the design standards.

Senner summarized the discussion around demolition: There was consistent agreement that there are not character-defining elements, components, or contributions that are significant to the character of the overall historic district, and as such, based on the state statutes, there is not sufficient reason to delay demolition.

Senner closed the public hearing.

Motion: Senner moved to find as fact that the home at 241 Lydia Lane does not have any special significance or contribution toward maintaining the character of the historic district.  
Miller seconded.

Vote: 4-0.

Motion: Riek moved to approve the 241 Lydia Lane application for demolition. Miller seconded.

Vote: 4-0.

Motion: Miller moved to find as fact that the 241 Lydia Lane 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: Demolition, New Construction of Primary Residential Buildings, Fences and Walls, and Exterior Lighting. Riek seconded.

Vote: 4-0.

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

Vote: 4-0.

Conditions: Landscaping will be installed to soften the expanse of foundation on the front elevation of the house.

C. Certificate of Appropriateness Application: 409 N. Wake St.  
Demolish existing residence and construct new residence (PIN 9864984248).

Senner opened the public hearing. He asked whether there were any conflicts of interest or bias among the commissioners. Senner said that his child and the designer’s child are on the same soccer team but that that relationship would not have any influence on his decision. Widis said he and the designer are friendly colleagues but that that relationship would not have any influence on his decision. All commissioners disclosed that they had visited the site in preparation for reviewing the application.

Highley was sworn in to speak on behalf of the application.

Hoffheimer presented 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 design standards define “historic” and “historically significant” as 50 years of age or older, and the current house on the property meets that criteria (it is also considered “contributing” to the National Register historic district).

- Staff requested more information regarding inferiorities in the original construction of the existing structure, and the applicant has provided an addendum depicting foundation defects.
- The commission may delay a proposed demolition for up to 365 days from the date of approval, but it may not deny demolition. See the attached section of G. S. 160D for more information.
- The owners have expressed interest in working with an interested party that is willing to move or dismantle the structure. If that is not possible, they are willing to salvage and donate reusable building material.
- The location of the proposed carport in front of the house is uncommon in the historic district. The applicant noted to staff that “the siting is primarily driven by a desire to reuse the existing drive, minimize the amount of paving, and leave the existing natural areas as undisturbed as possible. Putting parking behind the house would require removing some of the largest mature trees, putting up retaining walls, and a lot of disruptive grading.”
- The Historic District Commission approved polyash for a past Certificate of Appropriateness in 2023, and the applicant can bring a sample to the meeting.
- The plans for the proposed new house do not include any proposed light fixtures, but these typically can be approved at the staff level.

Highley said that in large part, the structure does not have much architectural merit contributing to the special character of the historic district, with one exception, which is the big picture window, which he believes has its own special character as part of the house. He said the property owners are committed to salvaging as much as possible from the house.

Highley said the existing house is 800 square feet.

Miller raised the point that this is a fairly unique house within the district. He said he was not sure whether it is significant, but it is unique, and part of the charm of the district is in the uniqueness of its houses.

There was discussion of the limited scope of the commission’s authority in matters of demolition. The commissioners expressed appreciation for the property owners’ interest in alternatives to demolition and commitment to salvaging materials.

Highley said there has been no effort to sell the house, as the applicants have owned the house for 20 years and have always planned to move into it in retirement. He said they had considered expanding the existing home, but that the proposed home is 2400 square feet with an extra studio building and parking, and that any configuration of the structure enlarged to that scale would be beyond recognition, which is discouraged by the design standards. He said that it could be done, but it would not have the same feel as the proposed home, and it is hard to imagine that there would be anything left that resembled what is there now.

There was discussion about whether the house provides special significance to the character of the historic district. They acknowledged that due diligence has been done to renovate, move the house, and salvage historic elements. Highley said the applicants had had informal discussions with one person about moving the house, but that it requires a site close enough to be economically feasible.

Widis noted that the district has lots of different densities and characters. He said that in his opinion the lot and property itself are the more character-defining elements, but that the actual architecture of the home itself does not provide that character-defining piece.

Highley said the owners are committed to salvaging more than just the picture window, including existing fixtures.

Highley said the design and style of the new home does not allow incorporation of the picture window.

There was discussion of the unique size and scale of the house within the district. It was pointed out that there are not many 800 square-foot houses, and that the current tendency is to replace an 800 square-foot house with a 2400 square-foot one, which, if done enough, changes the character of the historic district and changes the demographics of who can afford a house in the district.

Highley said he tried to site the new house sympathetically to the existing house.

Kimberly Whitted, a neighbor at the adjoining property on West Union Street and North Wake Street, was sworn in to provide public comment. Whitted said she appreciated the conversation about the character of the neighborhood, and that she has lived here all her life. She said the house is very unique in design and size, with the picture window being the most identifiable element. She expressed concern over the affordability of the neighborhood as smaller houses like this one get replaced with large, more expensive houses. She said smaller houses allow people who grew up here an opportunity to stay or who have moved away and want to move back. She said she wanted to be on record as having this concern, even though she recognized the state statutes disallowing the commission to prevent demolition.

The commissioners reviewed the plans for new construction.

The commissioners reviewed the site plan.

Highley said the main east-west volume of the house overlaps with the existing footprint of the house.

He said the driveway entrance is the same as the existing one, and that the front of the house is level, close to grade. He added that the lot slopes down toward the back.

Highley said there is a small existing shed that is proposed to be pushed toward the side of the property, though it is shown in its current position on the site plan.

Highley said grading was the most important factor under consideration when siting the home further back, with the studio and carport at the most forward part of the property. He said getting any parking behind the house, the most traditional location, would be very disruptive to the site, requiring large retaining walls and lots of grading, which the design standards discourage. He said there are a lot of mature trees to the west of the site that the applicants wanted to protect. He added that the applicants plan to age in place in this house, so they wanted as few steps as possible. He said there are no steps between the carport and the house. Highley showed similar properties in the district that have prominent attached parking.

Widis observed that the carport is effectively a studio with an elongated porch that acts as a carport, so it reads more as a porch. Highley said the intention was for it to read as a piece of the house rather than as a separate carport.

Highley noted that the pitch of the roof of the house and of the studio match to bookend the house visually.

Senner recognized the structure siting and tree disruption as competing priorities and acknowledged that Highley provided evidence to justify an approach that conflicts slightly with some design standards in order to achieve others. He also noted the hedge added to screen parking and minimize its visual impact. Highley explained that that location is guest parking, so most of the time there will not be cars there.

Highley addressed the two trees proposed to be removed, outside of the footprint of the house. He said that both were scraggly and overtaken by ivy, and that one is leaning over and the other is very thin and spindly. He said there is a hemlock in the southwest corner providing shade canopy on the patio and a large tree to the south, which the applicants hope to save. He said they are aware of the risks, as the construction will be over its root system, but that no trees over 24 inches will be removed. Senner acknowledged the effort to protect the larger trees on the site.

Senner noted that the proposed design and what is existing is a significant increase in scale, but he recognized that the massing does not seem inappropriate. Highley added that it sits less heavily from a perspective view as opposed to the elevation view.

The commissioners reviewed the north elevation.

Highley presented materials samples. He said the siding is cedar wood with raised grain and the roofing is Galvalume, an aluminum-heavy alloy. He said Galvalume starts out on the brighter side but balances out with age. He said the gutters and downspouts will also be Galvalume. Highley said the windows and doors will be from the Marvin Elevate line, wood frame with fiberglass cladding. He said the windows will be gunmetal color windows. He said polyash material, which was approved in 2023, will be used for the trim, eaves, and door and window casings.

Highley confirmed all of the doors will be fiberglass-clad, even the non-main entry doors, though the screen door will be wood. He said the polyash will be painted the same color as the doors and windows, so it will blend in.

The commissioners reviewed the south elevation. Highley addressed the aluminum shade above the windows. He said the shade is sized to be deep enough that it shades sunlight from the south. He said it is a thin, ¼-inch, solid sheet folded into a thin c-shape, which is held up by supports made of the same material. Highley said he could not provide examples of a similar application. Senner noted that it is in the rear and serves an important function. Highley added that there is another similar shade at the lower door, which serves the purpose of keeping rain off the basement access. He said the basement under the back bedroom is a utility space.

Highley confirmed there will be standard downspouts at the corners.

Highley confirmed the railing at plan left of the south elevation will be a black square steel tube.

The commissioners reviewed the miscellaneous elevations. Highley confirmed the doors will be fiberglass-clad wood.

Highley clarified that the verticals between the screens in Detail 1 will be 6x6 posts painted to match the trim.

In Detail 4, Highley explained that the horizontal line under the pitched roof of the carport is a line that runs throughout the project and makes the carport feel integrated into the rest of the house. He said that on the opposite site of the carport, it provides a spot for the roof to land.

Highley said the walkway will be wood posts with a continuous concrete knee-wall, parged the same as the foundation. He said there will be a pre-cast cap on the knee-wall.

Highley said the barn door will cover the studio doors when the homeowners are out of town, since the doors are meant to maximize natural light. He said the barn door will roll along an exposed galvanized box track above it. He said the hardware on the door will be galvanized hangers with a cleat on each end of the door to attach it to the track.

The commissioners had no concerns about the polyash material.

The commissioners reviewed the perspective renderings.

Highley said the driveway materials will be small-diameter gravel, and that concrete unipavers will be behind the carport break, which will continue up the ramp to the side entry door.

Senner closed the public hearing.

Senner summarized the commissioners' discussion regarding demolition: He said there was significant discussion and consideration that the existing home is somewhat unique in the district in that it is a smaller home. He acknowledged the desire to maintain a mix of housing within the district that allows Hillsborough to be affordable to a wide spectrum of the population. Within the constraints of the legal statutes addressing demolition, the question is the extent to which this home provides special significance to the character of the historic district. While the picture window provides character to the home itself, there is not strong consensus that the home in its totality provides particularly special significance to the character of the district overall. The applicants have made an effort to consider or accept efforts to move the home and salvage materials, particularly the picture window. Given those efforts and the fact that there is minimal contribution to the special character of the district in the design and architectural significance of the home, there is limited standing to justify delay of demolition.

There was discussion amongst commissioners about the appropriateness of requiring a delay, concerns about setting a precedent for applications for demolition, and the process for approving or delaying such applications. There was discussion about having a separate time to clarify the commission's approach to evaluating applications for demolition. There was discussion with the applicants about the timeline of the project and pursuit of alternatives.

The commissioners agreed to require a 6-month delay of demolition. The applicants expressed openness to the decision.

Motion: Senner moved to find as fact that there has been no evidence provided in the 409 N. Wake St. application to justify denial of demolition; however, the commission requests a delay of demolition of 180 days to pursue alternatives to preserve the home. Miller seconded.

Vote: 4-0.

Motion: Senner moved to grant approval for the application for demolition, subject to a 180-day delay. Widis seconded.

Vote: 4-0.

Motion: Miller moved to find as fact that the 409 N. Wake 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: Demolition; New Construction of Primary Residential Buildings; New Construction of Outbuildings and Garages; and Walkways, Driveways, and Off-Street Parking. Riek seconded.

Vote: 4-0.

Motion: Miller moved to approve the application as submitted. Riek seconded.

Vote: 4-0.

- D. Certificate of Appropriateness Application: 420 Calvin St.  
Request for after-the-fact approval for second-floor window replacement (PIN 9864753302).

This item was addressed after Item 6A.

Senner opened the public hearing.

Motion: Senner moved to continue the application to the Feb. 4, 2026, regular meeting. Riek seconded.

Vote: 4-0.

The commissioners next discussed Item 5B.

**7. Elect vice chair**

This item was tabled until the January regular meeting.

**8. Adopt 2026 meeting schedule**

Motion: Senner moved to adopt the 2026 meeting schedule. Miller seconded.

Vote: 4-0.

**9. General updates**

There were no additional updates.

**10. Adjournment**

Senner adjourned the meeting at 9:48 p.m. without a vote.

Respectfully submitted,



Joseph Hoffheimer  
Planner

Staff support to the Historic District Commission

Approved: February 4, 2026