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HPC Members

CHAIR:	Heather Fletcher
VICE-CHAIR:	Worth VanLinden
	Joanna Beckman
	Bobbie Epting
	Lindsey Roper
	Ellen L. Walker
	Thomas White

Support Staff

PRESERVATION PLANNER:	Amber Eskew
ASSISTANT PLANNING DIRECTOR:	
	Bruce Lonnee

ATTORNEY: Austin Jackson

All are invited to attend the HPC hearings held on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 5:30pm, 120 W. Dougherty Street, Athens, GA

www.acgov.com/208/Historic-Preservation



Athens-Clarke County, Georgia Historic Preservation Commission Annual Report 2022

Preservation and Affordable Housing

By Heather M. Fletcher, HPC Chair

As I finish my second and final term as a member of the historic preservation commission, I would like to share the ways in which this experience changed my perception of what historic preservation is, and how it should be utilized within the community. Preservation of our collective histories goes beyond protecting homes and buildings with great historical or architectural significance (though this is certainly part of it). Preservation is telling the inclusive story of a community by protecting the tangible elements relative to that community. Preservation is showing the way a community has transitioned from past to present. Preservation should be used to restore and revitalize communities, but doing so without the wholesale displacement of the people of that community.

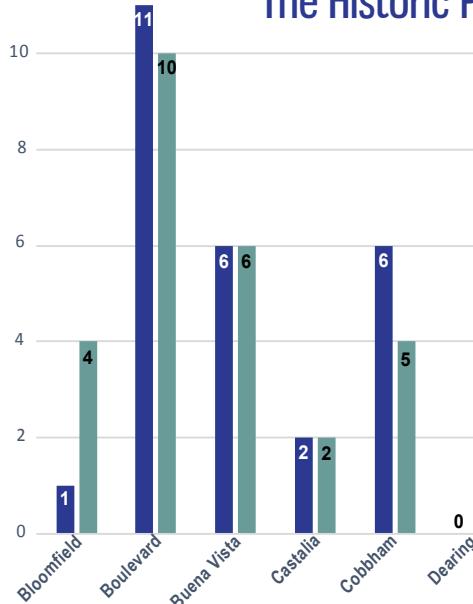
Due to the recent boom in the real estate market, the topic of housing affordability

continues to dominate public debate. Low inventory coupled with high demand and low interest rates caused home values to skyrocket, which then led to an increase in rents. This perfect storm of market conditions has created a national housing crisis that is pushing people out of certain locations due to the 20-40% increases in listing prices and rental rates. Therefore community leaders must look to creative, out-of-the-box solutions to address large scale housing insecurity. Many of those available solutions serve the dual purpose of historic preservation.

Statistically it has been proven that historic designations at the local level not only protect property values, but also increase those values at a faster pace than surrounding neighborhoods. As such it may appear counterintuitive to look towards historic preservation as a way to alleviate the housing shortage however,

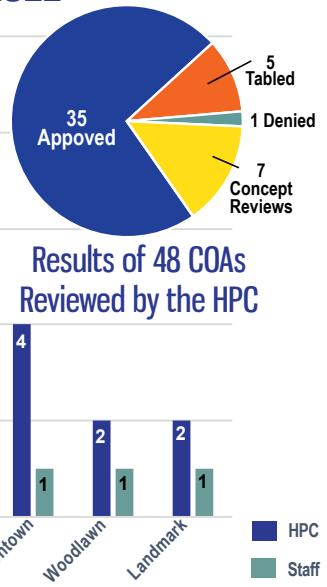
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The Historic Preservation Commission by the Numbers 2022



Applications By District
Total: 48 HPC Reviews and 47 Staff COAs

Tax Freeze Applications Approved: 3



The HPC Completes Strategic Planning

By Ellen Walker, HPC Member

Over the past year, the HPC developed a strategic plan to guide the work of the commission over the next 5 years. The year of meetings, discussions, and collaboration with other community members resulted in a document that includes a detailed action plan. This plan is a practical, action-oriented guide, that makes a clear statement of our mission and vision, identifies a set of goals and objectives and formulates key strategies to reach those goals.

One of the first items the HPC tackled during strategic planning was formulating a mission and a vision statement, which were approved on March 30, 2022 by the members of the HPC:

Our Mission

The mission of the Athens-Clarke County Historic Preservation Commission is to serve as a steward to protect and preserve

the tangible history of Athens. The HPC is charged with safeguarding the rich cultural and architectural contributions of our community.

Our Vision

The vision of the ACC HPC is to engage with our community to promote an appreciation of historic preservation. We will achieve this by:

- guiding future development that is sensitive to our collective and individual histories
- identifying new areas that would benefit from local historic designation
- providing education on the economic and community benefits of historic preservation

The plan will be available on the ACC website after it has been shared with the Mayor and Commission.

Noteworthy COA Approvals in 2022

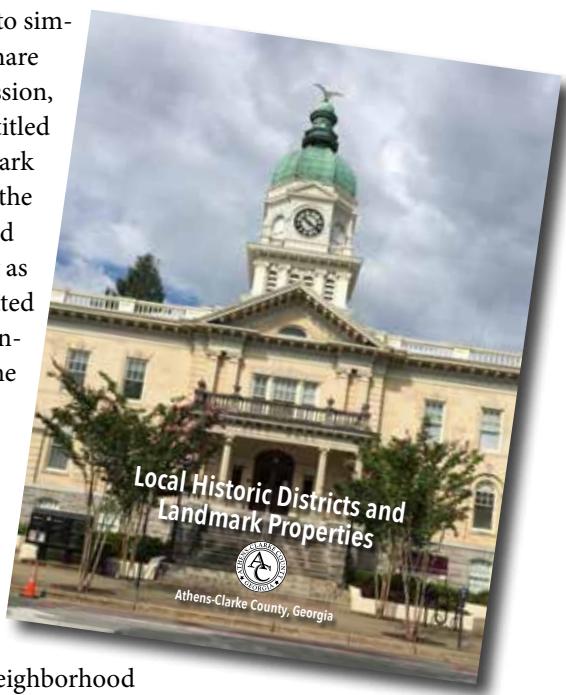
As the world tries to find ways to plan for future pandemics and protect future economies, this can also be seen in the design choices for renovations in downtown Athens. The forced changes in operations during the height of the Coronavirus pandemic led to a greater desire for outdoor connection as it pertains to air circulation and limiting contact with others. Several projects reflecting this are under construction or review in 2022.



New Publication: Historic Districts and Landmark Properties of Athens-Clarke County

As part of the HPC's strategic plan to simplify, organize, disseminate and share more widely the work of the commission, we have created a new document entitled "Local Historic Districts and Landmark Properties." This publication lists all the districts (both local and national) and landmarks in Athens-Clarke County as of 2022. This booklet will be distributed to various locations around Athens including Historic Athens, the Welcome Center, the public library and the ACC Planning Department. It will also be shared on the ACC website under the Historic Preservation Commission link.

Copies will also be available to organizations and individuals who have an interest or are working on neighborhood preservation and/or documentation. Please contact the Planning Department to request a copy.



184 W. Clayton Street saw a renovation of the existing patio area approved in 2021. The first phase of the project has been completed for The Last Resort with a side entry, an outdoor bar, and the patio space formalized from having once been used for parking.

265 E. Clayton Street, Moonshine Bar and Grill, saw a storefront renovation approved in 2021 that is under construction in 2022 and includes the use of operable windows at the storefront as part of that plan.

268 N. Jackson Street saw a storefront renovation approved in 2021 that is under construction in 2022 and includes both adding a service window to the Athens Bagel Company storefront and adding additional operable windows.

145 E. Clayton Street saw a storefront renovation approved in 2022 that is now under Plans Review to allow a service window to be added for sidewalk service at Starland.

Meet Your HPC Commissioner - Lindsey Roper



Lindsey joined the HPC as its newest commissioner in 2022.

Lindsey Roper grew up in southern Cobb County, northeast of Atlanta. She moved to Athens in 2004 to attend the University of Georgia and began her studies in philosophy and landscape architecture. In 2009, she moved to New Orleans as an Americor Vista Member with the Tulane Center for Public Service. She worked with various non-profits and educators at the university with the goal of developing service-learning projects that students complete for class credit. In 2013, Lindsey made her way north to the City

College of New York to pursue a graduate degree in landscape architecture, but eventually transferred back to the University of Georgia to complete this degree. Following 2020, Lindsey found an opportunity to work with a local landscape architecture firm, and at the same time she was offered a position as a consultant and designer in a native plant nursery. She currently still works in both of these areas. Working in the plant nursery led Lindsey to open her own landscape design firm which she has operated in Athens for just over two years.

What made you apply to be on the HPC?

Lindsey has always had a passion for serving her community in any way she can and when the position on the HPC came available she jumped at the opportunity. Her interest in historic preservation stretches back to when she was a student at UGA. She was exposed to Athens' history a great deal through her education programs and that lit the initial spark.

“It’s important that new development occurs to keep up with the contemporary needs of the area while also preserving the uniqueness that makes Athens the “Classic City.”

By Worth VanLinden, HPC Member

What's been the most interesting part of being on HPC?

Lindsey has enjoyed seeing our repeat architects come to hearings for the projects they represent and the positive relationships those architects have with the members of the commission. It's wonderful how invested these familiar faces are with the work being done on the commission and hopes this would inspire others to explore what it means to design/redesign with a preservation mindset.

What is the biggest challenge you see for historic preservation in Athens?

Maintaining the remaining pieces of Athens' physical history in the face of exponential growth in the town's population. Finding that balance is a huge challenge because it's important that new development occurs to keep up with the contemporary needs of the area while also preserving the uniqueness that makes Athens the “Classic City.” Community understanding of these ideas will also be difficult. It will always be old vs new, but that's why we're here! 

Preservation and Affordable Housing . . . continued from page 1.

communities across the nation are taking the approach of working with the infrastructure they have to create the housing they need. Recently the Historic Savannah Foundation (HSF) began acquiring historic homes in varying states of disrepair that, once renovated, are placed into a program for low-income and first-time buyers. In a Georgia Public Broadcasting article published in March of this year the director of historic preservation at HSF, Ryan Arvay, said the following: “So, instead of having to raise capital and buy land to build new units, we already have an initial investment of time and resources and energy in these buildings that we don’t want to see wasted. So, we are using preservation as just one more tool to help provide affordable housing.”

This model could be taken a step further and be used to create affordable rental properties by converting historic homes—and other existing infrastructure—into one or two bedroom apartments. Furthermore, when renovating properties that are in a designated historic district or listed on the National Register of Historic Places an entity may receive up to 45% towards qualifying rehabilitation expenses. Such an incentive could be used to leverage a public-private partnership to create more affordable rental housing units and merits the consideration of the Athens Clarke-County Mayor & Commission. As they update our Comprehensive Plan, I urge them to include historic preservation as a tool that could serve the dual purpose

of retaining the tangible fabric that makes Athens unique, while also creating more housing opportunities for the community.

Payne, Benjamin, “In Georgia’s oldest city, historic preservation meets affordable housing”, GPB, 30 March 2022, <https://www.gpb.org/news/2022/03/30/in-georgias-oldest-city-historic-preservation-meets-affordable-housing>

Gajewski, John and Lephew, JR, “Historic Preservation and the Housing Crisis: A “Two Birds, One Stone” Solution: Historic buildings present attractive opportunities to create affordable housing and thriving communities”, GlobeSt., 28 February 2022, <https://www.globest.com/2022/02/28/historic-preservation-and-the-housing-crisis-a-two-birds-one-stone-solution/>

On the corner of Hull and West Clayton streets sits a stately three-story yellow brick building with an interesting history. The structure was built in 1916 to serve as the Athens Exchange for the Southern Bell Telephone & Telegraph Company. Designed by architect P. Thornton Marye in Atlanta, the new building would house state-of-the-art telephone equipment of the day including miles of telephone cables and switchboard stations. Marye (1872-1935), who was part of the firm Marye, Alger and Vinour, designed many acclaimed projects including the grand Atlanta Terminal Station and the Fox Theatre. Over the years, with changing technology, the Bell Building continued to serve as the telephone company offices until 1966 and was later occupied by a law firm for many years.

The Bell Building sits in the heart of the West Downtown Historic District and is considered contributing to the district. As such, any development must meet the Downtown Design Guidelines and come before the Historic Preservation Commission for approval. In 2022, Architectural Collaborative (Arcollab) of Athens was enlisted to reimagine the historic building with 21st century function but honoring its strong tie to Athens' past. Research into the site's history at the UGA Hargett Library, revealed the original plan set for the building and several historical photos that show that the building's exterior has remained relatively unchanged for more than 100 years. Modern interventions include the enclosure of the main entrance on West Clayton and the addition of an elevator shaft to the rear of the building. The plans show that the elevator shaft used to be an exposed, recessed alcove in the structure that was used to lift oversized equipment from a roof-mounted hoist beam into the rear of each floor for easier access. The façade features yellow brick, large double-hung windows, and decorative accents of white glazed terra cotta. The plans show that Marye offered the glazed ceramic embellishments as an alternative to limestone or galvanized iron adornments. Arcollab took advantage of a design review option, called a Concept Review, available to any developers of

Athens Bell Building Calls for Historic Preservation

By Joanna Beckman, HPC Member

a historic district property—commercial or residential. Arcollab presented to the HPC in March and again in May to test the feedback of commissioners and address any design elements that might be of concern to the HPC when the architects applied for their Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) later. Joe Smith, a principal architect at Arcollab, believes the Concept Review process is valuable to any architect to ultimately save time and money on costly revisions later in the design process.

"The concept review is an essential part of the COA submission process," says Smith. "The open dialogue format of concept review meetings is the most effective and efficient way for the applicant and HPC to communicate and collaborate on future COA submissions. It allows the HPC to freely express their concerns and the applicant to address these concerns in a timely manner."

The new design includes a commercial space on the first floor, one and two-bedroom rental units on the second floor, and an owner residence on the third floor with a rooftop terrace. The areas of concern for the HPC were that the façade retain its original character (including repair/retention of original windows), that a decrepit fire escape which was to be replaced with iron terraces convey the original feeling of the 1916 design, and that the rooftop terrace should not cause significant adverse impact to the district. Arcollab was able to address each concern with a commitment to honoring the building's historic presence.



During a post-demo tour, some members of the HPC were able to see firsthand the interesting design features of the purpose-built

space which used many fireproof construction methods of the day. For instance, the building uses fireproof terra cotta tiles embedded in cement for construction of the floor pans as well as in walls and doorways. Cables and wiring traveled





Top Row (L to R):

- *Exterior of the Bell Building*
- *Original plan set by P. Thornton Marge (Credit Hargrett Library)*
- *Detail terra cotta ceiling and door header*



from the basement through terra cotta conduit pipes embedded in the west wall up to the second floor which must have housed most of the telephone switching equipment. Uncovering the original cable tray for the heavy cabling systems on the second floor revealed a smooth, curved, chase where the cables turned from vertical in the wall to horizontal in the floor,

presumably to protect the telephone and electrical wiring from friction that might fray or break the connections. Much of the cabling had been embedded in coal ash to insulate the wires under the floating floors. When the coal ash was safely remediated, it also created several inches of extra floor depth which will be used to run modern mechanicals. Under the windows the

demo crew found mysterious, grated “letter slot” openings that may have served as scuppers to drain away water in the event of a fire. The interior finishes throughout were either concrete or plaster further protecting the structure that housed equipment that must have produced a good deal of heat. The poured concrete roof beams, which will now support a rooftop terrace should be more than adequate as they are almost five feet thick!

The HPC welcomes all designers and developers to take advantage of the Concept Review process to help any historic district project start off on the right track. Phase one of Arcollab’s Bell Building project is expected to complete in fall of 2023.

Middle Row (L to R):

- *First floor ceiling with terra cotta tiles revealed*
- *Scupper drains below each window*
- *Cable management area on second floor*
- *Cable passthroughs between second and third floors*
- *Original white oak stair railing*

Bottom Row (L to R):

- *Southern Bell Telephone Company operators in front of 183 W. Clayton Street (Credit Hargrett Library)*
- *100-year-old electrical panel, 30-year-old Pepsi*
- *Top floor with exposed beams and extra high ceilings*
- *Top floor beams and terra cotta infill detail*

Democratizing Historic Preservation

The Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation, the Georgia Historic Preservation Division, and the Georgia Alliance of Preservation Commissions hosted the 2022 Statewide Historic Preservation Conference virtually during the week of September 19-23, 2022. One of the sessions was entitled, “Democratizing Preservation; Creating and Maintaining Grassroots Partnerships.”

The Moderator for this session was Anthony Knight, African-American Heritage Coordinator of City of Atlanta’s Office of Design in the Department of City Planning which provides leadership for planning the physical design of the city for the future.

The panelists for this session, who all live and work in Atlanta, were: Nasim Fluker, founder of ThrdSpace, a community building consulting firm; LeJuano Varnell, Executive Director of Sweet Auburn Works, a preservation-based economic development organization created to protect and enhance the commercial and cultural legacy of the Sweet Auburn Historic

District; and Nedra Deadwyler – Founder of Civil Bikes, a walking and biking tour organizer which brings attention to unseen and unheard stories about Atlanta in a unique and accessible way. She is also the founder of the “Save Your Spaces” preservation festival that aims to, “educate, inspire and activate the everyday person to become involved in cultural heritage and historic preservation.” Nedra serves as a member of the City of Atlanta’s Urban Design Commission.

As the African-American Heritage Coordinator for the Future Places Project through the city of Atlanta, Knight Identified the need for the city to move away from traditional designation related activi-

ties as the only tool for preservation at the local level. Atlanta’s Future Places Project’s mission is to ensure that Atlanta’s history is maintained through a wide range of historic preservation initiatives. Knight asked the panelists, “From the title of our session, it is clear that we believe that the preservation profession is not necessarily a democratic one. Based on your observations how might we better democratize our profession?”

Deadwyler feels we need to be rethinking the purpose of preservation. She asks “Is it about financial gain, is it more about maintaining a narrative we have or is it

something more? If our goal is trying to achieve something bigger, address the past, create a space that is more holistic, more meaningful, more inclusive and has resiliency. We need to think about our purpose and identify opportunities and creating spaces for inclusion. It should be about the people who belong here, their existence matters and their stories are important.”

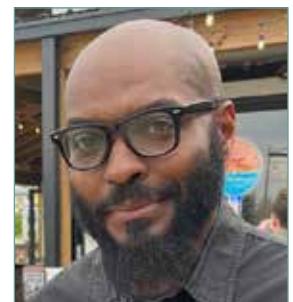
Varnell believes that the things we enjoy about our community are intrinsic to that place. He asks, “Can we use the tool of preservation to give equal access to other things such as appreciating peoples culture, heritage, spaces, and telling the story well?”

Fluker shared that a big part of her practice is to let people know where they are in the physical space they inhabit in ways that are accessible to them. She works to educate the public where they are, where their neighborhoods are, and how they evolved. She also believes that people need to be educated about how decisions get made about those places and understand the forces that come into play when changes are proposed.

Deadwyler and Varnell added that gentrification is a major factor in the loss of community and the displacement that it creates is more than disruptive. The cultural richness of a place can be lost in the process.



Nasim Fluker



LeJuano Varnell



Nedra Deadwyler

In discussing the role grassroots organizations play in preservation, the panelists acknowledged that they can be the keepers of a culture. They help preserve the stories, support local businesses, and get involved with the life of a community. None of the panelists came from traditional historic preservation programs but found themselves engaged in this work through other interests and work in communities. Fluker believes that there are institutions, organizations, and people doing preservation work and don’t know they are. Traditional preservationists and grassroots organizations are often working toward similar goals.

In discussing development pressures from outside a community, the panelists commented on how local organizations could have input and work with developers in a more democratic way.

Varnell offers that there should be a network of institutions that have a place at the table when development is proposed. There should be more institutions that are an intermediary between the cultural heritage and the new development

coming in. He also acknowledged that all of this work costs money. The network of institutions needs people doing full time work and being paid. "When you think about the forces that we have to battle and how well resourced they are, it is like bringing a toothpick to a machine gun fight." Grassroots organizations don't have the resources they need. He feels we must prioritize the idea that communities and neighborhoods are the path for growth of a city and that the preservation of culture is an important link to that growth.

The panelists acknowledged that most of the funding for preservation work in the African-American community is coming from two sources: The African-American Cultural Heritage Action Fund of the National Trust and the African American Experience Fund through the National Park Foundation. These two organizations provide roughly \$200M annually. Most granting organizations require recipients to be a 501(c)3 non-profit, which leaves many grassroots organizations without access to these funds.

Varnell offered, "The greatest success of the work that we do will come from someone assigning true economic value and benefits to it." Fluker agreed that "It's also about our value system. We live in a capitalist society. Trying to make these cases that don't add up financially is really tough. As we move towards and value other ways of knowing our history, the better off we will be and the space will be. We need different types of investors who are more creative in their investment work and who understand what we are doing."

Nasim Fluker can be reached through her company website: thrdspace.com.

LeJuano Varnell can be reached through Sweet Auburn Works: sweetauburnworks.com.

Nedra Deadwyler can be reached at: nadradeadwylerconsulting.com

Conversation with Hope Igelhart, Director of Engagement & African American Heritage, Historic Athens

What do you think Athens needs to do to further democratize preservation?

We need a preservation officer who focuses on inclusion. Their first duty should be building and implementing a preservation plan with input from the broader community. We must look for ways to incentivize inclusion and belonging among our property owners, business owners, county developers, and planners. Preservation must be people-centered, which means including sites that traditionally do not meet the historical standards of preservation. The emphasis should be on seeking more voices as a whole and developing a level of trust that is currently missing among the university and the city/ county government with the greater community; stewarding and protecting a complete architectural inheritance of the city of Athens. It's possible to maintain our essence while creating an equitable, safe, and sustainable future for Athens—one that includes culture and heritage in historic spaces—with thoughtful design.

Who needs to be at the table when community planning and development is discussed that may not be there now?

We need a diverse group of historians, artists, business owners, community leaders, and people who don't just check a box; we need real diversity meaning race and ethnicity, gender, age, education, socioeconomic status, and marginalized groups with a vested interest in cultural heritage, preservation, and planning.



Hope Iglehart

You have done incredible work in furthering the preservation of, and giving voice to, African American contributions to the history of Athens. Can you talk a little about the projects you are working on at Historic Athens and what your goals are for the year ahead?

Our ultimate goal is to create opportunities to deepen individuals' sense of place and connection to the interconnective history of our community and the places that make Athens great. Projects for the year ahead include:

- Weekly One Story Athens livecast, every Friday from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. on the Historic Athens Facebook page,
- Traditional oral history interviews that will be donated to the Russell Library Oral History Program
- Weekly newsletter expanding the voice of the broader community which includes everyone.
- Host our Historic Athens History Hours every third Tuesday at 12 p.m. at the Lyndon House Arts Center
- One Story Athens Photojournalism Project and Exhibit with Jessica Brooks
- Athens Queer Map Initiative with Caro Caden
- Seeking funding to expand One Story to include additional programming and to include all segments of the population.

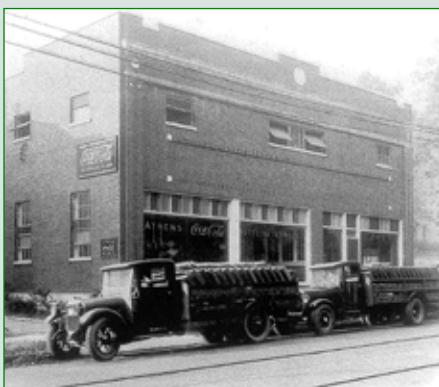
Notable Building Birthdays and Designation Anniversary Milestones in 2022

Congratulations to **Gospel Pilgrim Cemetery** on 140 years of providing a resting place for some of Athens most prominent Black residents. Located at 530 Fourth Street, Gospel Pilgrim Cemetery dates to 1882 and is a wooded 10 acre site. The cemetery was founded and cared for by the Gospel Pilgrim Society, a lodge-type organization centered around burial insurance.

Happy 175th to the **Upson House** at 1022 Prince Avenue. The Upson House was built in the Greek Revival style in 1847. The house remained a residence until the mid-1970s when it became a bank and remained so for about 40 years. The house is currently undergoing the final details of renovation and restoration as office space.

Twenty years ago saw the local historic designation of the Bottleworks and Whitehall Mill. Both properties speak to the industrial history of the area.

Whitehall Mill was built in 1893 to replace an earlier textile mill that burned. The mill ran on hydroelectric power and it remained in use as a textile plant until 1988. The property is now used for residential lofts.



Bottleworks was originally a Coca-Cola bottling plant on Prince Avenue beginning in the late 1920s and continuing as such until the year 2000 after which it was redeveloped into a mixed-use property with commercial uses on the lower floor and residential uses above.

Conceptual Preliminary Design Reviews

One of the best ways to get feedback and HPC input before a formal application for a COA, is to present a project at a “concept review.” This can be done for new construction projects or major renovations and additions to historic landmarks or within historic districts. Many of our applicants have expressed great appreciation for this extra step so that projects can consider recommendations before a final review and vote by the HPC.

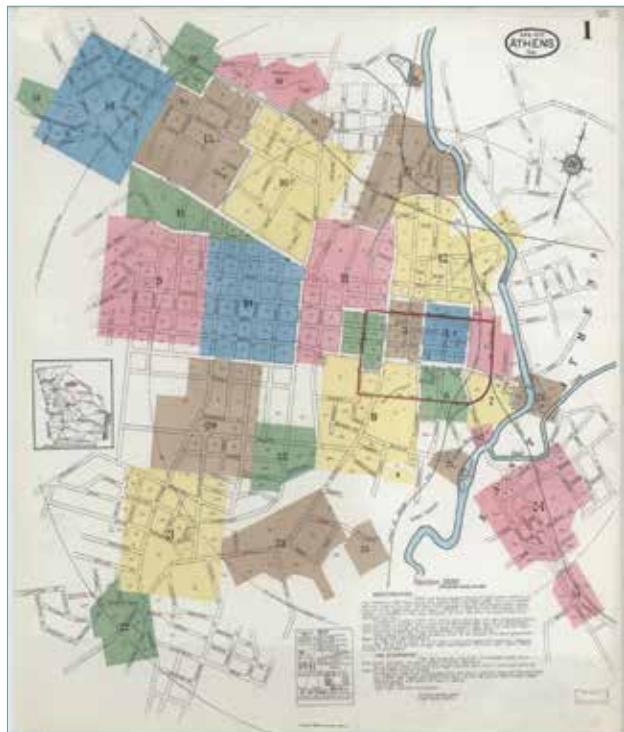
“Conceptual Review is a relaxed forum where you can openly discuss ideas and direction for where a project would like to evolve. We receive great feedback from Planning and the HPC, where boundaries are defined and creativity challenged to create the best scenario for the owner. We believe it is important for all parties to feel good with their decision. We encourage every project to go through Conceptual Review for a fluid and comprehensive approval process.”

KJIRSTEN OGBURN,
Relay Shop Architecture + Design

Sanborn Maps

The staff report for each COA that comes before the HPC includes an historic map that shows the structure or location of the property. These maps are known as Sanborn maps and are detailed maps of U.S. cities and towns in the 19th and 20th centuries. Originally published by The Sanborn Map Company, the maps were created to allow fire insurance companies to assess their total liability in urbanized areas of the United States. Sanborn maps are valuable for documenting changes in the built environment of American cities over many decades. The last Sanborn fire maps were published on microfilm in 1977, but old Sanborn maps remain useful for historical research into urban geography.

From Wikipedia



Sanborn began providing maps for Athens in 1885 (the last in 1960). Because these maps show the built environment, including open structures like porches, and noted building materials, they continue to be a valuable resource for the HPC to see not only the changes over time, but the original location of structures on the plot being considered for review. These maps are available for review at UGA's Map and Government Information Library as well as online at dlg.usg.edu/collection/dlg_sanb (Georgia) and at the Library of Congress loc.gov/rr/geogmap/sanborn/

Map at left is of Athens 1918.