Historic Resources Commission of Asheville & Buncombe County

Meeting Minutes of May 13, 2026

1st Floor North Conference Room

City Hall (70 Court Plaza) at 4:00 p.m.

Present: Chair Will Hornaday, Vice-Chair Oliva, Celesta Gorman, Hans Skouby, Amy Moxley, Robert Mays, Jenny Bowen, Cecil Holt, Shannon Watkins, Leslie Humphrey

Absent: None

Staff: Alex Cole, Matt Holloway, Jannice Ashley, Aspen Johnston

Administrative

- Annual Historic Resources Commission Champion Awards were presented to Mr. Todd Gragg for his documentary work on Black in Asheville; Historic Stumptown Association (Rasheeda Hall), STM Multimedia (Elizabeth Lashay Garland), & Garnet Prose + Projects (Ami Worthen) for their preservation efforts for Historic Stumptown; Buncombe County Special Collections (Katherine Cutshall) - Come Hell or High Water project.

- Vice-Chair Oliva moved to approve the minutes and the Findings of Fact & Conclusions of Law of the April 8, 2026 meeting. This motion was seconded by Ms. Watkins and carried unanimously.

- After Chair Hornaday explained the public hearing rules, all those present in the audience and staff who anticipated speaking were sworn in.

- Ms. Cole explained that the Walton Street Park application hearing had to be rescheduled to the June HRC meeting, as the commission had not made a motion to continue the item at the last meeting..

Public Hearings

1. Certificate of Appropriateness - 265 Cumberland Avenue (PIN 9649045369) - Alteration of existing retaining wall in front yard. Applicant: Jennifer & Andrew Ayala

Historic Resources Planner Alex Cole presented the following staff report and oriented the commission to the property.

Owner/Applicant: AYALA ANDREW;AYALA JENNIFER/Jennifer & Andrew Ayala

Subject Property: 265 Cumberland Avenue

Hearing Date: May 13, 2026

Historic District: Montford

PIN: 9649045369

Zoning District: RS8

Property Description: 0.36 acre parcel containing the Dr. J. E. Cocke House - an early 20th-century vernacular German sided cottage with irregular roofline and porte-cochere.

Certificate of Appropriateness Request: Widening of existing driveway and relocation of existing concrete retaining wall in front yard; removal of existing ~8" DBH dogwood tree in front yard to accommodate wall relocation. All work will be in accordance with attached and approved drawings and plans. **All permits, variances, or approvals as required by law must be obtained before work may commence.**

HRC Staff Concerns per the Applicable Standards & Submittal Requirements:

1. Retain and preserve historic walls that contribute to the overall historic character of a building or site (#1, p. 37); retain and preserve the location, configuration and materials of intact character defining historic driveways that contribute to the overall historic character of the site, streetscape and district (#1, p. 51); widening of existing driveway and wall relocation will alter the character of the site, streetscape and district.

The standards for Walkways, Driveways and Off-Street Parking found on pages 50-51 and Fences and Walls on pages 36-37 of the Montford Historic District Design Review Standards, adopted April 14, 2010 and amended December 11, 2019, were used to evaluate this request.

Staff Recommendation - Staff does not recommend approval of the request for the following reasons, provided concerns have been addressed:

1. Historic walls that contribute to the overall historic character of a building or site should be retained and preserved.

2. Location, configuration and materials of intact character defining historic driveways that contribute to the overall historic character of the site, streetscape and district should be retained and preserved.

Ms. Cole presented the alternative site plans proposed by the applicant, Andrew Ayala. Ms. Cole detailed the four alternatives, highlighting one plan that proposed relocating a portion of the wall to one side without altering the wall at the street. She said staff could potentially support this option, but noted that it wasn't clear to her which portion of the wall was at issue given the alternatives proposed.. She reiterated the importance of maintaining the configuration of historic walls, per the Montford standards. She also noted that the driveway was fairly wide when compared to other nearby driveways. Ms. Cole noted that although the applicant had noted fire safety standards in his application, those standards were only applicable to roads rather than driveways.

Mr. Ayala addressed the commission and added that his revision was an attempt to address the concerns noted during the March 2026 meeting, including that emergency vehicles may be unable to access the home. He said the proposed option two was his preference; that plan would not alter the portion of the wall at the street.

Chair Hornaday asked the applicant whether each version proposes changes to the radius at the entrance, Mr. Ayala said that each design alters the radius differently, but all aim to reduce the visual impact at the street.

Ms. Bowen questioned the plan, and wondered whether there would be a way to address the lean of the retaining wall, as that would continue to cause issues down the line. She added that the ‘version two’ would be the main way to address the wall failure.

Ms. Watkins sought clarity around where the damage was occurring from cars. Mr. Ayala replied that the whole wall gets hit due to the angle of the driveway in relation to the porte-cochere.

Ms. Bowen asked whether the applicant planned to treat the new concrete in order to make it look more historic. Mr. Ayala said that they were willing to do whatever the commission required in order to visually age the new concrete.

Ms. Humphrey asked whether Ms. Cole had recommendations for masons that know how to treat historical concrete. Ms. Cole replied that their partners at Preservation Society of Asheville & Buncombe County (PSABC) and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) maintain lists of contractors but the city cannot make recommendations.Ms. Humphrey acknowledged that the need to repair a leaning retaining wall was a better case for repair than not feeling comfortable using the driveway.

Chair Hornaday asked how Mr. Ayala planned to “Retain and preserve historic walls that contribute to the overall historic character of a building or site (#1, p. 37); retain and preserve the location, configuration and materials of intact character defining historic driveways that contribute to the overall historic character of the site”. Mr. Ayala explained how their resubmitted plans aim to maintain the sweeping curve of the retaining wall while addressing the size constraints and failing retaining wall.

Mr. Ayala added that in his proposed plans the driveway had been reconfigured to increase the drive width from 10.5 feet to 12.5 feet to reduce future collisions. Chair Hornaday followed up asking how the applicant planned to retain and preserve the materials, as Mr. Ayala is proposing new concrete, though it is the same material it is a different location and configuration of an in-tact historical driveway.

Ms. Bowen wondered whether Mr. Ayala would be able to retain the existing materials while addressing the leaning retaining wall, noting that repairing the wall may provide more clearance in the driveway. Mr. Ayala acknowledged that while they may be able to repair a portion of the lean to retain some existing materials, a majority of the wall was damaged beyond the point of being able to patch the repairs and would need to be replaced.Ms. Bowen then asked whether the applicant would be open to repairing the failing retaining wall without necessarily adjusting the historical configuration, adding that she believed he would be able to gain a few inches in the driveway clearance.

Ms. Cole noted that this scope of work would normally be reviewed under a minor work application, but with Mr. Ayala’s request to re-configure the driveway required a major work review.

Ms. Moxley then referenced Mr. Ayala’s proposed version five - adding that it may be the best option to reduce the impact to the historic configuration of the existing driveway. Mr. Ayala acknowledged that could be a good option, but felt concerned that if they did not reconfigure the existing footprint, they may end up in a similar situation in the future.

Mr. Ayala then brought 230 Cumberland Avenue’s driveway and retaining wall work into question, wondering what the difference between the proposed scope of work was. Chair Hornaday noted that the rationale was different in that case, with Ms. Humphrey adding that the retaining wall was stone, and therefore easier to match existing historic character.

Mr. Mays noted the repaving of Mr. Ayala’s driveway with concrete and exposed aggregate had been approved as part of a previous CA application.

Ms. Humphrey referenced the standards on page 65 #5, for masonry and stucco; “If replacement of a deteriorated detail, module, or element of a masonry surface or feature is necessary, replace only the deteriorated portion in kind rather than the entire surface or feature and match the original as closely as possible in design, material, dimension, color, texture, and detail. Consider compatible substitute materials only if the original material is not viable.” Chair

Hornaday was unsure whether that standard could apply to a driveway, then asked if the commission had any further questions.

Ms. Watkins asked how much the wall was changing, with Mr. Ayala clarifying that the proposed plan expands the driveway from 10.5 feet wide to 12.5 feet wide. Mr. Ayala added that his proposal was an attempt to strike the balance of retaining the historical character while addressing his own needs.

Chair Hornaday opened the floor for public comment at 4:46 p.m., and when no one spoke, he closed the floor for public comment.

Ms. Gorman noted that this wall may not be at a point of disrepair, but if not addressed it would eventually reach that point and need to be replaced. She added that she felt that the standards for walls were more applicable than the standards for driveways. Ms. Gorman noted that maintaining the current location of the wall could continue to present issues.

Vice-Chair Oliva said she thought the wall would more or less be in the same location even if it was moved over two feet. Ms. Cole wanted to clarify that the standards for walls, not driveways, were being applied to this case. Vice-Chair Oliva then questioned how to make the concrete look old, adding there were likely experts that knew how to do that.

Ms. Watkins said the wall has a more severe lean than she previously realized, so she thought it would be appropriate to repair and replace the wall.

The commission then decided which proposed reconfiguration they would vote on, and agreed that version two was the most appropriate option.

There was no further discussion on the application.

MOTION TO APPROVE CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

Chairman, based upon the evidence presented to this Commission, including Exhibit A - application, photos, and plans (12 pages); Exhibit B - revised application (1 page - received February 24, 2026); Exhibit C - revised site plans (9 pages - received February 24, 2026); and the Commission's actual inspection and review of subject property by all members;

I move that this Commission approve the Certificate of Appropriateness based on the following:

1. That the application is to widen the existing driveway and relocation of existing concrete retaining wall in front yard; removal of existing ~8" DBH dogwood tree in front yard to accommodate wall relocation. All work will be completed in accordance with approved and attached drawings and plans. All permits, variances, or approvals as required by law must be obtained before work may commence.

2. That the standards Walkways, Driveways and Off-Street Parking found on pages 50-51 and Fences and Walls on pages 36-37 of the Montford Historic District Design Review

Standards, adopted April 14, 2010 and amended December 11, 2019, were used to evaluate this request.

3. This application does meet the design standards for the following reasons:

    a. Historic walls that contribute to the overall historic character of a building or site are being retained and preserved.

    b. Location, configuration and materials of intact character defining historic driveways that contribute to the overall historic character of the site, streetscape and district are being retained and preserved.

That the action and improvements proposed in the application before us for a Certificate of Appropriateness are/are not congruous with the special historic character of the Montford Historic District.

Motion by: Ms. Gorman

Second by: Ms. Humphrey

Vote for: Unanimous

Vote against: None

Based upon the foregoing findings and for the reasons set forth therein, I move that a Certificate of Appropriateness be **issued**.

Motion by: Ms. Gorman

Second by: Mr. Holt

Vote for: Unanimous

Vote against: None

A copy of the written decision approving the Certificate of Appropriateness is attached hereto and incorporated by reference.

2. Certificate of Appropriateness - 30 Lodge Street (PIN 9648607352) - Demolition of non-original enclosed entryways on front elevation, installation of new doors, new mechanical equipment and repainting. Applicant: Chris Renno

Historic Resources Planner Alex Cole presented the following staff report and oriented the commission to the property.

Owner/Applicant: SAIR PROPERTIES LLC/Chris Renno

Subject Property: 30 Lodge Street

Hearing Date: May 13, 2026

Historic District: Biltmore Village

PIN: 9648607352

Zoning District: Community Business II

Property Description: 0.17 acre parcel containing the Southern Railway Passenger Depot: a one-story building with half-timbering, pebbledash siding and brick water table, designed by renowned architect Richard Morriss Hunt.

Certificate of Appropriateness Request: Removal of non-historic glass and brick enclosed areas and awning and metal supports from front elevation; installation of new aluminum single-lite entry doors with sidelites and transoms on either side of porte-cochere; installation of two (2) new custom-made single-lite wood entry doors in existing openings on front elevation; replacement of non-historic leaded glass from windows with new glass; reinstallation of original wood single-lite door in opening on rear elevation; infill of one (1) door opening on rear elevation - exterior wall will be finished with _____ vertical siding; construction of new door opening with hollow metal door on non-original bump-out on west elevation; construction of new ___ x __ x ___ _____ platform and mechanical unit screened with _____ on rear elevation; replacement of existing asphalt shingle roof with new IKO asphalt shingle roof in Monaco Red color. All work will be in accordance with attached and approved drawings and plans. **All permits, variances, or approvals as required by law must be obtained before work may commence.**

HRC Staff Concerns per the Applicable Standards & Submittal Requirements:

1. Staff has concerns regarding the material and contemporary appearance of the new metal doors proposed on the structure; respect the original design character of the building (#1, p. 5 of Book 2); use materials similar to those employed historically where feasible (#10, p. 8 of Book 2).

2. Staff has concerns regarding the lack of screening provided for the mechanical unit and platform; minimize the visual impact of mechanical and electrical equipment (#17, p. 10 of Book 2).

3. Staff has asked the applicant for the following additional information for review:

    a. Clarification on the outdoor dining areas illustrated on the plans; if this application is requesting approval for those features, specifications for the site furniture will need to be submitted for review and approval

    b. Mechanical unit platform dimensions, specifications and screening type

c. Clarification on proposed siding for proposed door opening infill on rear elevation

The standards for General Rehabilitation found on pages 5-10 and Rehabilitation of Landmark Structures on page 23 of Book 2 and the standards for Site Design found on pages 23-34 and Color on pages 43-44 of Book 1 of the Biltmore Village Historic District Design Review Standards, adopted October 1, 1988, were used to evaluate this request.

Staff Recommendation - Staff does recommend approval of the request for the following reasons, provided concerns have been addressed:

1. Some alterations that have occurred to the building are being restored to their original state.
2. The original design character of the building is being respected.
3. Existing significant stylistic elements of the building are being maintained and protected.
4. Materials similar to those employed historically are being used where feasible.
5. Mechanical equipment will be screened with _____.

Ms. Cole gave an overview of the project, which included removal of the non-original glass vestibules from the front facade, replacement of the glass enclosing the porte-cochere, installation of several wood and metal doors, and installation of a mechanical unit on a raised platform. She said her primary concern regarding the proposal were the aluminum storefronts proposed on either side of the porte-cochere. Ms. Cole also noted that the Biltmore Village standards identify this as a landmark structure within the district, and as such site furniture like the outdoor dining shown on the plans, would require additional review. She said she wanted the applicant to provide additional clarity on the proposed siding material on the rear elevation, as well as paint color, since multiple options were included. The standards require that paint colors on landmark structures be analyzed and matched.

Mr. Mays asked for more information on the aluminum doors being proposed. Ms. Cole clarified that the new storefronts were proposed on the south and north elevations of the porte-cochere where the glass was being removed.

Mr. Chris Renno, applicant and property owner, expressed his team's desire to highlight the original features of the structure, while addressing the damage caused by Tropical Storm Helene. Mr. Renno stated his willingness to better understand the best way to move forward with the new door materials.

Chair Hornaday questioned Mr. Renno about the proposed paint colors, to which Mr. Renno confirmed they plan to match the original paint as closely as possible, although he noted that many of the original colors from the palette are no longer available from the manufacturer.

Ms. Bowen asked the applicant how they were planning to retrofit the building to weather future storms, as it was often the first to be flooded in Biltmore Village. Mr. Renno referenced the interior materials, explaining that instead of using drywall they are working on finding a lime-based plaster that was breathable and water resilient. He added that they were continuing to come up with ways to make the building more durable as they rebuild.

Chair Hornaday asked more about the proposed metal door on the west elevation and whether they could find a way to make it more cohesive with the neighborhood, such as a door with the typical lite opening instead of the small side lite. Ms. Cole suggested a single lite entry door that was wood, as it would meet the standards by respecting the original design while using materials similar to those employed historically. Mr. Renno responded that he would be willing to use a wooden door versus the proposed metal door. Chair Hornaday asked what the existing siding materials on the sides of the porte-cochere were. Mr. Renno explained that there was a brick knee-wall with some pebble-dash, brown wood, and trim. Chair Hornaday questioned whether metal storefronts would conform with the standards which require materials similarly employed historically where feasible. The commission agreed that if the doors and trim were changed to wood they could be reviewed administratively by staff.

Chair Hornaday opened the floor for public comment at 5:15 p.m., and Sybil Argentar with Southeastern Preservation Services approached the podium to provide public comment. She said she wanted to make it clear to the commission that the changes proposed would impact non-original/historic features.. She didn't think that it would be appropriate to use wood doors in the porte-cochere as part of their rehabilitation tax credit application.

Mr. Mays asked whether the porte-cochere was original, and Ms. Argentar replied that the porte-cochere was the original carriage drive-through for the train station, but noted it was not enclosed until at least 1976. Ms. Humphrey asked whether they were opposed to wood doors, to which Ms. Argentar said they were not.

Mr. Benjamin Mitchell was sworn in for public comment, and noted that this was the most thorough application he had seen. He implored the commission to do everything possible to expedite this portion of the planning process, as it would be good for the village and promote the re-activation of the corridor.

At 5:19, Chair Hornaday closed the floor for public comment.

Chair Hornaday confirmed that the commission was ok with staff reviewing the revised doors and final paint colors.

There was no further discussion on the application.

MOTION TO APPROVE/DENY CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

Chairman, based upon the evidence presented to this Commission, including Exhibit A - application (3 pages); Exhibit B - floor plans and elevations (8 pages); Exhibit C - materials (3

pages); Exhibit D - photos (16 pages); Exhibit E - mechanical unit screening (received May 8, 2026); and the Commission's actual inspection and review of subject property by all members;

I move that this Commission **approve** the Certificate of Appropriateness based on the following:

1. That the application is to remove non-historic glass and brick enclosed areas and awning and metal supports from front elevation; installation of new wood entry doors with sidelites and transoms on either side of porte-cochere; installation of two (2) new custom-made single-lite wood entry doors in existing openings on front elevation; replacement of non-historic leaded glass from windows with new glass; reinstallation of original wood single-lite door in opening on rear elevation; infill of one (1) door opening on rear elevation - exterior wall will be finished with vertical siding; construction of new door opening with wood door on non-original bump-out on west elevation; construction of new 3.5' wide x 10.5' tall painted wood platform and mechanical unit screened with 4' tall painted wood fencing on rear elevation - paint color to match trim; replacement of existing asphalt shingle roof with new IKO asphalt shingle roof in Monaco Red color. All work will be completed in accordance with approved and attached drawings and plans. **All permits, variances, or approvals as required by law must be obtained before work may commence.**

2. That the standards for General Rehabilitation found on pages 5-10 and Rehabilitation of Landmark Structures on page 23 of Book 2 and the standards for Site Design found on pages 23-34 and Color on pages 43-44 of Book 1 of the Biltmore Village Historic District Design Review Standards, adopted October 1, 1988, were used to evaluate this request.

3. This application **does** meet the design standards for the following reasons:

    a. Some alterations that have occurred to the building are being restored to their original state.

    b. The original design character of the building is being respected.

    c. Existing significant stylistic elements of the building are being maintained and protected.

    d. Materials similar to those employed historically are being used where feasible.

    e. Mechanical equipment will be screened with painted wood picket fencing.

4. That the action and improvements proposed in the application before us for a Certificate of Appropriateness are congruous with the special historic character of the Biltmore Village Historic District.

Motion by: Vice-Chair Oliva

Second by: Ms. Gorman

Vote for: Unanimous

Vote against: None

Based upon the foregoing findings and for the reasons set forth therein, I move that a Certificate of Appropriateness be **issued**.

With the following conditions:

1. Revised wood door specifications will be submitted for staff review and approval.

Motion by: Vice-Chair Oliva

Second by: Ms. Gorman

Vote for: Unanimous

Vote against: None

A copy of the written decision approving the Certificate of Appropriateness is attached hereto and incorporated by reference.

3. Certificate of Appropriateness - 174 Montford Avenue (PIN 9649028665) - Modification of roof line on rear elevation. Applicant: Kirstin Millan

Historic Resources Planner Alex Cole presented the following staff report and oriented the commission to the property.

Owner/Applicant: MILLAN CARLOS E;MILLAN KIRSTEN M/Kirsten Millan

Subject Property: 174 Montford Avenue

Hearing Date: May 13, 2026

Historic District: Montford

PIN: 9649028665

Zoning District: RM8

Property Description: 0.27 acre parcel containing an early 20th-century two-and-a-half story vernacular dwelling with bungaloid details, shingle over stucco siding, and irregular roof with Montford brackets and clipped dormers, constructed prior to 1910.

Certificate of Appropriateness Request: Alteration of existing roofline over sleeping porch on rear elevation to change from a flat roof with TPO membrane roofing to 3/12 pitch with asphalt shingle roofing matching existing. All work will be in accordance with attached and approved

drawings and plans. **All permits, variances, or approvals as required by law must be obtained before work may commence.**

HRC Staff Concerns per the Applicable Standards & Submittal Requirements:

Staff has no concerns

The standards for Roofs found on pages 74-75 of the Montford Historic District Design Review Standards, adopted April 14, 2010 and amended December 11, 2019, were used to evaluate this request.

Staff Recommendation - Staff does recommend approval of the request for the following reasons, provided concerns have been addressed:

1. Changes to the configuration of the existing roof will be confined to the rear of the house and will not be visible from any public primary right of way.

2. New roofing material will be asphalt shingle and dark in color, matching existing roof material.

Ms. Cole explained that the application was for modifying the roofline on the back of the house to have a slight pitch in order to drain water more effectively. She said staff did not have any concerns.

Kirstin Millan, property owner and applicant, approached the commission to answer any questions. Mr. Mays asked for the reasoning behind this proposal, Ms. Millan responded that a structural engineer viewed the roof and warned that it was not structurally sound.

When there were no more questions, Chair Hornaday opened the floor for public comment at 5:26 p.m., and when no one spoke, he closed the floor for public comment.

There was no further discussion on the application.

MOTION TO APPROVE/DENY CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

Chairman, based upon the evidence presented to this Commission, including Exhibit A - application and project description (2 pages); Exhibit B - proposed elevation drawings (1 page); Exhibit C - photos (5 pages); and the Commission's actual inspection and review of subject property by all members;

I move that this Commission **approve** the Certificate of Appropriateness based on the following:

1. That the application is to alter existing roofline over sleeping porch on rear elevation to change from a flat roof with TPO membrane roofing to 3/12 pitch with asphalt shingle roofing matching existing. All work will be completed in accordance with approved and

attached drawings and plans. **All permits, variances, or approvals as required by law must be obtained before work may commence.**

2. That the standards for Roofs found on pages 74-75 of the Montford Historic District Design Review Standards, adopted April 14, 2010 and amended December 11, 2019, were used to evaluate this request.

3. This application **does** meet the design standards for the following reasons:

    a. Changes to the configuration of the existing roof will be confined to the rear of the house and will not be visible from any public primary right of way.

    b. New roofing material will be asphalt shingle and dark in color, matching existing roof material.

4. That the action and improvements proposed in the application before us for a Certificate of Appropriateness are/are not congruous with the special historic character of the Montford Historic District.

Motion by: Ms. Bowen

Second by: Ms. Gorman

Vote for: Unanimous

Vote against: None

Based upon the foregoing findings and for the reasons set forth therein, I move that a Certificate of Appropriateness be **issued**.

Motion by: Ms. Bowen

Second by: Ms. Gorman

Vote for: Unanimous

Vote against: None

A copy of the written decision approving the Certificate of Appropriateness is attached hereto and incorporated by reference.

4. Certificate of Appropriateness - 315 Pearson Drive (PIN 9639854065) - Enclosure of porch on the rear elevation. Applicant: Jessica Larsen

Historic Resources Planner Alex Cole presented the following staff report and oriented the commission to the property.

Owner/Applicant: TUTHILL COLLIN/Jessica Larsen

Subject Property: 315 Pearson Drive

Hearing Date: May 13, 2026

Historic District: Montford

PIN: 9639854065

Zoning District: RS8

Property Description: 0.34 acre parcel containing the Ben Jones House: a late 19th-century two-and-a-half story vernacular Queen Anne dwelling with shingles over weatherboard siding, high stone foundation, turned porch posts, multiple gables, shed dormers, other notable details; constructed prior to 1917.

Certificate of Appropriateness Request: Enclosure of existing porch on rear elevation with wood lap siding matching existing, Miratec board and batten siding, 4/1 wood TDL double-hung windows and 9-lite wood door with 3-lite transom; all trim and corner boards will be wood. Modification of three (3) window openings on north elevation and one (1) window opening on west elevation. All work will be in accordance with attached and approved drawings and plans. **All permits, variances, or approvals as required by law must be obtained before work may commence.**

HRC Staff Concerns per the Applicable Standards & Submittal Requirements:

1. Staff has concerns regarding the proposed modification of window openings; adding or changing original window and door openings shall not be permitted on the primary facade; if additional window or door openings are desired, they should be installed on a rear or non-character defining facade; design such units to be compatible with the overall design of the building (#6, p. 85).

2. Staff has concerns regarding the proposed door and window materials; new or replacement windows and doors on existing historic homes should be wood (#7, p. 85).

The standards for Porches, Entrances and Balconies found on pages 72-73 and Windows and Doors on pages 84-85 of the Montford Historic District Design Review Standards, adopted April 14, 2010 and amended December 11, 2019, were used to evaluate this request.

Staff Recommendation - Staff does recommend approval of the request for the following reasons, provided concerns have been addressed:

1. New windows and door will be on the rear elevation, and will be wood and compatible with the overall design of the building.

2. Porch to be enclosed is on the rear elevation, and the enclosure is designed so that the historic character and features of the porch are preserved.

Ms. Cole said the porch was not present on the 1951 Sanborn Fire Insurance map, so perhaps it was not original to the structure. The applicants were proposing to enclose the porch to create a mud room, incorporating similar exterior elements like vertical siding that would help to illustrate the rhythm of the porch railing on the enclosure. The applicant was also requesting the removal of a window on the front elevation which was not permitted by the Montford design standards. She said they were also proposing to modify three other window openings on the north elevation Ms. Cole added that the north elevation was more visible on this house due to the structure being located on a hill.

The applicant, Jessica Larsen, approached the commission to provide more context for the project. She began by saying she would prefer to replace or modify the existing kitchen windows, but would address the issue from the inside if necessary. Ms. Larsen added that the window in the kitchen was not original to the house, so she hoped there was an option to keep the width of the window while adjusting it by a few inches to accommodate the interior countertop height. Ms. Larsen confirmed that the windows towards the back of the house on north elevation were not original to the house. The proposed new windows would match the same style and features of the existing windows. Though the application originally noted aluminum clad windows, they were open to wood windows.

Ms. Humphrey asked about the addition/enclosure siding material and Ms. Larsen noted that she proposed multiple options for the client, and that the siding was chosen to mimic the original porch. Ms. Humphrey expressed concern about the board and batten materials chosen not being as durable as other options available.

Chair Hornaday opened the floor for public comment at 5:40 p.m., and when no one spoke, he closed the floor for public comment.

Ms. Bowen wondered if there were any records indicating when they were originally installed. Ms. Cole clarified that the standards apply to the opening, not just the window. Though this is not technically the primary elevation, it was still a prominent elevation and highly visible. The commission had not permitted alterations to window openings when they were highly visible.

Chair Hornaday confirmed with the commission that they were in agreement the window towards the front of the house should remain the same, and the double windows on the kitchen may be altered to be smaller, though the location would not change.Upon agreeing, Chair Hornaday implored the commission to make a motion to approve changing the kitchen windows; leaving the other two windows with interior solutions; enclosing the porch; and ensuring the new doors and windows are made out of wood.

Ms. Humphrey reiterated her concerns with the board and batten siding material, and questioned the reason behind mimicking the enclosure to indicate that it used to be a porch. Ms.

Cole cited the standards that say when enclosing a porch, the porch features should be preserved. Ms. Cole added that this has led to creative approaches from applicants to preserve historical features.

There was no further discussion on the application.

MOTION TO APPROVE/DENY CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

Chairman, based upon the evidence presented to this Commission, including Exhibit A - application and project description (5 pages); Exhibit B - existing and proposed floor plans (4 pages); Exhibit C - existing and proposed elevation drawings (2 pages); Exhibit D - door and window schedule (1 page); Exhibit E - photos (5 pages); Exhibit F - 1951 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (1 page - added by staff May 4, 2026); and the Commission's actual inspection and review of subject property by all members;

I move that this Commission **approve** the Certificate of Appropriateness based on the following:

1. That the application is to enclose the existing porch on rear elevation with wood lap siding matching existing, Miratec board and batten siding, 4/1 wood TDL double-hung windows and 9-lite wood door with 3-lite transom; all trim and corner boards will be wood. Modification of two (2) window openings on north elevation; all new trim will be wood and match existing. All work will be completed in accordance with approved and attached drawings and plans. **All permits, variances, or approvals as required by law must be obtained before work may commence.**

2. That the standards for Porches, Entrances and Balconies found on pages 72-73 and Windows and Doors on pages 84-85 of the Montford Historic District Design Review Standards, adopted April 14, 2010 and amended December 11, 2019, were used to evaluate this request.

3. This application **does** meet the design standards for the following reasons:

    a. New windows and door will be on the rear elevation, and will be wood and compatible with the overall design of the building.

    b. Porch to be enclosed is on the rear elevation, and the enclosure is designed so that the historic character and features of the porch are preserved.

4. That the action and improvements proposed in the application before us for a Certificate of Appropriateness **are** congruous with the special historic character of the Montford Historic District.

Motion by: Mr. Skouby

Second by: Vice-Chair Oliva

Vote for: Unanimous

Vote against: None

Based upon the foregoing findings and for the reasons set forth therein, I move that a Certificate of Appropriateness be **issued**.

With the following conditions:

1. Revised wood window and door specifications will be submitted for staff review and approval.
2. Existing and proposed side elevations showing window opening modifications will be submitted for staff review and approval.

Motion by: Mr. Skouby

Second by: Ms. Gorman

Vote for: Unanimous

Vote against: None

A copy of the written decision approving the Certificate of Appropriateness is attached hereto and incorporated by reference.

Other Business

1. Montford Design Standard Amendments

Chair Hornaday explained the rules for public comment. Ms. Cole then gave a brief introduction to the proposed design standard amendments, recapping the two-year timeline since they they had been submitted to the commission The design amendments were proposed by a handful of residents of Montford for additions, solar, windows, and fencing. She explained that it was decided by the commission at the April 2024 meeting that the Executive Committee would conduct analysis of the proposed amendments to make recommendations to the rest of the commission.. Ms. Cole added that the bylaws dictate that the Executive Committee was the body charged with advising the rest of the commission on things such as amendments to the standards, landmark designations, etc. The committee met four times over the summer of 2024, with the first special work session to share recommendations canceled due to it being scheduled the day before Tropical Storm Helene.

The committee then met several more times in the summer and fall of 2025 in anticipation of the rescheduled special work session in November 2025, where they recommended only further consideration of the standards for additions and fencing. She said a survey was conducted in February 2026 which asked the neighborhood to weigh in on the proposed amendments. Final recommendations from the Executive Committee were presented to the commission in April 2026 at another special work session.

Ms. Cole gave a brief overview of the makeup of the Executive Committee, with Chair Hornaday, Vice-Chair Oliva, 2nd Vice-Chair Gorman, and 3rd Vice-Chair Watkins as the current members. Ms. Cole noted that although some membership changed over the course of consideration of the proposed amendments, the recommendations from the committee stayed the same.

Ms. Cole then explained that neither North Carolina general statute nor the City's Unified Development Ordinance dictate a specific process for amendments to the standards. Ms. Cole said that this allows proposed amendments to originate from community members, the commission, or staff. Also, addressing the confusion about the use of the word standards over guidelines, Ms. Cole shared that in 2018 there was an update to state statute that required preservation commissions to use the word standard versus guidelines

Proposed amendment one (not posed by the neighborhood, recommended by executive committee): The executive committee wanted to bring awareness to the fact that the standards are rooted into the historic narrative as far as the way the district is described. They have proposed a change to page 11, adding; “The design standards are rooted in the narrative description of the historic character of the neighborhood included in the Montford Area Historic District National Register nomination”; the committee’s recommendation is to include clarifying language on this topic in this section.

Proposed amendment two: regarding fences in front yards on pages 36-37, the committee felt fences should continue to be reviewed via a major work application given their subjectivity. This is tied back to a state statute that minor work staff have to be very clear in what is being approved, there cannot be subjectivity. The committee did remove language around the use of “case-by-case basis,” which some commission members expressed concerns about during the special work session in April 2026.

Proposed amendment three: the draft addition amendments have been supported by the committee, allowing more substantive amendments to the standards for additions that would allow for addition to side elevations in some cases.

Following Ms. Cole’s presentation, Chair Hornaday opened the floor for public comment at 6:10 pm.

Montford resident Eleanor Green spoke first, expressing her experience of fencing her front yard on Chestnut Street. She had to replace a failing chain link fence which was permitted by the commission. She was grateful to not have to redesign the existing front yard landscaping features for approval. She brought up questions, wondering who the vistas and views are for, referring to the wording from the standards. She also asked whether residents would be able to vote on these amendments, or if it was only for the commission to vote on. Ms. Green added that in the 1900s, privacy and security may have not been as big of a concern as they were now. Ms. Green shared that her fence served as a community board following Helene. Ms. Green then asked whether the clarifying language of the amendment will make it any easier to deny fence applications in the future.

Susan Eggerton, Montford resident, was next to speak. Ms. Eggerton worked on the revisions that occurred around 2010 with Stacy Merten and was told that the standards were their standards, so long as they fit within the Department of the Interior's Standards. She asked

whether that had changed, and if so, why, when, and how? Ms. Eggerton referenced the community survey, which showed that 83% of the community that responded were in favor of front yard fences, and 76% in the HRC poll were in favor of front yard fences. She added that she hoped they could continue to work together to allow front yard fences with the expertise of the commission and staff.

Susan Loftis spoke next. She thanked the commissioners for the time they'd put into considering the amendments. She brought up her hope of adaptive reuse being promoted in this district, referencing the train depot project happening in Biltmore Village, and that the historic district may also need to adapt to the changing needs of the community. As the needs for security and safety in front yards were changing, Ms. Loftis said she would like to see the amendments make it easier for residents to get front yard fences approved. Ms. Loftis appreciated the wording of "strongly discouraged" being removed from the standards, though she requested the commission reconsider including a caveat about side and rear fencing as having some impact on whether or not people can get their front yard approved. Ms. Loftis felt that the caveat would make the approval process more stringent and difficult.

Paul Templeton, Montford resident, was the last to speak. He began by sharing that he moved to the district around six years ago, and immediately found the fencing regulations peculiar. Mr. Templeton felt that though many may choose to not have fences, those who would want a fence should be able to have fences, even if they must meet the district standards.

When there was no one else to comment, Ms. Watkins asked whether she was able to ask the residents a question, and with some discussion from the city attorneys, it was agreed that it would be appropriate to gather more information, due to this being a legislative process versus quasi-judicial. Ms. Watkins then asked the residents there to speak from Montford if they felt the community may need more time to look at the fence amendment, and the residents agreed that they would prefer more time. Ms. Watkins added that some may feel as though not enough community members were able to come speak today, and if more would be able to participate in the June meeting.

While noting she was in favor of taking more time before voting, Ms. Bowen questioned what having more time would offer the residents, and whether having more public comment would actually change the outcome. Mr. Mays added that the exact wording for this amendment was not available until a few days prior to the meeting, and he sent it to a listserv that reaches approximately 40% of the neighborhood. Mr. Mays questioned how the exact language was broadcast to the community so they could decide whether they wanted to participate in public comment for today's meeting. Chair Hornaday and Ms. Cole pointed out that there were multiple touchpoints with the community to receive feedback, including being shared with the Montford Neighborhood Association (MNA) Board President and Vice-President. Ms. Cole reiterated that the amendments would not make it more difficult to get fencing put in their front yard, and the original amendment proposed by the neighborhood was whether fences should be reviewed administratively or by the commission.

Mr. Mays noted his issues with the legislative processes, adding that he felt a week was not enough time to review the draft. Ms. Cole responded by saying staff do the best they can with the channels available as City staff to engage with community members. She said all materials had been available on the HRC website for a week leading up to the meeting.

Mr. Mays said he disagreed with Chair Hornaday saying there were no changes to the fence standards. Mr. Mays believed that the new wording would be used to reject more fence applications by introducing a new concept that new front yard fences may be less likely to be appropriate if someone has a side or rear yard. Mr. Mays referenced language remaining in the standards that consider different fencing inappropriate. Mr. Mays then added that if there was no agreement on the commission about whether the language was making the standards more restrictive, then the commission needed more time to study the amendments. He then went on to say that fencing was the one element that the commission regulated that was a life safety issue. He reiterated that he didn't feel like the commission had enough time to review the amendments.

Chair Hornaday confirmed that Mr. Mays wanted the commission to push back their vote for a month.

Ms. Gorman remarked that she had been on the commission the entire time the amendments process had been ongoing, and what was originally brought to the commission was for front yard fences to be brought down to a minor work level. Ms. Gorman noted that fences being a minor works review would not work as this is a subjective matter. The Executive Committee did remove "strongly discouraged" from the standard which the neighborhood had specifically requested. Ms. Gorman said she felt the amendments addressed what the community asked for versus redoing the entire section of standards, which was not asked of the commission.

Mr. Skouby echoed Ms. Gorman’s sentiments and added that though he had not been involved with this process from the beginning, his initial interpretation of the wording was that it seemed to relax the standards. Mr. Skouby touched on vistas, stating that all streets are public so all vistas and views should be preserved when possible.

Ms. Moxley agreed with Ms. Gorman, highlighting with an underline and exclamation point!

Vice-Chair Oliva added from her professional historian perspective that the value of bringing fences before the commission allowed the commissioners to preserve the historic character of the district. The commission had a variety of expertise to offer. By reviewing each fence proposal, there is group wisdom that can keep the intention of the historic district.

Ms. Watkins followed up on a question from Ms. Green regarding whether the neighborhood would have a vote on these amendments, to which Ms. Watkins stated that they would not get to vote, though they had opportunities to provide feedback via multiple surveys brought to the community. Ms. Watkins said that the commission was somewhat split on level of review for fencing, but most felt that fences should be reviewed by the commission because they were more subjective.

Ms. Watkins then touched on the board composition, sharing that it was made up of volunteers from the community with an interest in architecture. Ms. Watkins said she was a real estate broker, Ms. Humphrey a builder, Mr. Mays an attorney; though not everyone was an architect or expert, they all did their best to interpret the standards.

When asked by Chair Hornaday what Ms. Watkins may want to see differently with the amendments, she noted that she primarily believed more time was what was needed for the community to feel better about the process. Ms. Watkins acknowledged that though many on the commission may feel they have spent a lot of time on the process, the neighborhood may not feel integrated into the process. Ms. Watkins wondered whether more neighbors would be able to

attend with more notice. Ms. Watkins added that the executive committee initially discussed needing to dedicate an entire session to the amendments, or have a special HRC session, though the committee wanted to conclude by summer 2026.

Matt Holloway, Assistant City Attorney, commented that pursuant to new rules, subcommittees cannot be formed. The rules of procedure for changing the amendments assigns the task to the Executive Committee. The committee then brings the proposals to the full commission in order to vote on it. Mr. Holloway added that this process and proper noticing has been followed.

Mr. Mays countered Mr. Holloway's claims regarding the rules of procedure. In response, Mr. Holloway cited article VII.A, which assigned the Executive Committee with the task of dealing with rule amendments, with one of the first pages of the Montford standards indicating that members of the public or commission may submit a request for an amendment in writing. While Mr. Mays said he felt the Executive Committee did not have plenary authority over anything, Mr. Holloway reminded the commission members that the Executive Committee does have the authority granted by the rules of procedure.

Mr. Mays said the community had asked the commission to relax the standards for fencing in front yards. The commission then reviewed standards in other communities and the Executive Committee reported back that Asheville and Charlotte were the only cities that had historic districts that required fencing to be reviewed by their commissions. Mr. Mays noted that all other historic districts allowed approval for front yard fencing to be done through a minor work review. This led Mr. Mays to believe the standards don't need to be subjective, and the process can be made more clear. Mr. Mays noted that the focus of the commission was to make the district historically appropriate, not beautiful, as an HOA would focus on. He then said that there was nothing in the historical record of Montford that anyone can point to that says front yard fences were inappropriate.

Ms. Bowen commented on the last work session, and said that it did not go well and was not the work session that this matter deserved. Ms. Bowen said she felt that since two years had already been put into this effort, why not give it more time to make it count? Ms. Bowen suggested that the commission may consider going to an in person meeting with Montford Neighborhood Association to hear the community's feedback. She added that a future work session on these amendments would be better suited as an in-person meeting. She noted that she was in favor of front yard fences remaining a major works review, but felt they did not get the chance to discuss during the special work session.

Mr. Holt then echoed the sentiment that though this has been ongoing for two years, it may feel as though there has not been enough time to process as more opinions are coming forward. Chair Hornaday reiterated that the original ask was to make fences minor work review, while staff are saying that it is not possible. By leaving this a major work, staff can be used as a resource the same way as they would for a minor work. Chair Hornaday described this as a more thoughtful way to make a decision.

Ms. Humphrey said she did not have a comment.

In response to some comments regarding Bill Roberts' recent resignation from the commission, Ms. Cole offered that he had relayed that he had other commitments to tend to. He had not relayed anything to staff regarding the last work session.

Chair Hornaday commented that he had not necessarily heard from members of the public that they wanted more time, mostly that was coming from the commission members. Ms. Bowen said she felt that the community needed more time to see what the draft language and have a conversation with the commission about what would meet their needs, adding that it was the responsibility of the commission to communicate to the public why review of fencing should require major versus minor work.

Jannice Ashley, Deputy City Attorney, brought clarity to the legislative process that the commission had undertaken with these amendments, and added that typically there was not a back and forth discussion addressing specific questions from public comment. Ms Ashley noted that the standards do not just belong to the current residents, but were grounded when the historic district was created. These standards do not just change with the needs of current residents, though sometimes it is necessary such as with solar and accessibility requirements. Ms. Ashley added that if the originating nomination for Montford's historic district specifically said that fences were not typically found in front yards, you can't pick and choose the history that has already been created.

Mr. Mays noted that all discussions in the past had been under the presumption laid out in the National Register nomination, with Ms. Ashley clarifying that it was not a presumption but was part of the original nomination. Mr. Mays cited an appendix to the original standards from 1981 which specified a wide array of fences that one could have and add in a front yard as a minor work , as long as one chose certain designs. Referring to a concern from the November 2025 work session, the standards were being presented as very strict to front yard fences and Vice-Chair Oliva suggested finding the original standards.

Ms. Gorman added that if Mr. Mays felt strongly that he needed to propose a specific amendment, but noted his concerns were not applicable to what was originally brought before the commission by the Montford neighborhood.

Ms. Ashley responded to Mr. Mays and said it was the responsibility of individual commission members to educate themselves. Ms. Ashley said that even if Montford standards had changed over time for different reasons, the original nominating report says fences were not typically found in front yards and the commission does not have the ability to adapt the standards for just any reason.

Ms. Bowen noted that Mr. Mays has sent over historical documents that claim front yard fences were present in historical Montford, but she said she not had the time to review these documents yet. Though she was still in favor of reviewing front yard fences as a major work, Ms. Bowen agreed that more time needs to be given in order to review all relevant documents.

Ms. Bowen then made a motion to provide the commissioners with more time to review these amendments. She asked how much time the commissioners may need. After some discussion, Ms. Bowen clarified that she was not making a real motion.

Ms. Cole noted that the commission should separate out the other amendments for the fences, as there are people waiting to submit applications for additions.

Ms. Watkins wanted the original requests on the record that the neighborhood initially wanted fences, additions, solar, and windows and doors examined. Ms. Cole noted that this information was shared at the work session in November 2025.

Mr. Mays began making a motion to continue the discussion on the proposed amendments pages 36-37 fences and walls of the Montford Design Standards to July, and requested a special work session in between. Mr. Holloway clarified that commissioners are not allowed to assign more work to staff, so could not request a special session without consent of staff.

Chair Hornaday suggested making a motion to explore the topic more and leave the timeframe open ended for staff to decide. The commission cannot meet without staff, nor without satisfying public notice requirements, which require staff. Ms. Bowen added that staff are supposed to support the commission, though understands that the commission cannot dictate meeting time. Mr. Holloway noted that this decision was made by the City Council following Helene and a reduction of commissions. Ms. Cole said that this would be brought back to the executive committee and they would determine the next steps.

Mr. Mays made a motion to move the fencing amendments back to the July HRC meeting. This motion was seconded by Ms. Humphrey. Vice-Chair Oliva, Mr. Mays, Ms. Bowen, Mr. Holt, Ms. Watkins, and Ms. Humphrey voted in favor. Chair Hornaday, Ms. Gorman, Mr. Skouby and Ms. Moxley opposed. The motion carried.

Vice-Chair Oliva made a motion to adopt the amendments for revisions to page 11 and 89 on additions. This motion was seconded by Ms. Gorman and carried unanimously.

2. Executive Committee Nomination

Vice-Chair Oliva made a motion to nominate Ms. Gorman as Chair, Ms. Moxley as Vice-Chair, Ms. Watkins as 2nd Vice-Chair, and Mr. Skouby as 3rd Vice-Chair for the new Executive Committee. This motion was seconded by Ms. Humphrey. Ms. Gorman, Mr. Skouby, Ms. Moxley, Chair Humphrey, Mr. Holt, and Ms. Humphrey voted in favor. This was opposed by Mr. Mays and Ms. Bowen.

Ms. Bowen made a motion to nominate Ms. Humphrey and Mr. Mays as 2nd and 3rd Vice-Chair, but there was no second.

3. HRC Education Event - June 12, 2026 @ YMI

Ms. Cole provided further information about the HRC education event on June 12, 2026 featuring Donnovan Rykema of PlaceEconomics at the YMI Cultural Center. This will be a lunch and learn that is open to the public, up to 75 people. There will also be a trolley tour with limited seats for commission members, and will be by invitation only. The tour will highlight various tax credit projects from Biltmore Village, the Preservation Society's affordable housing project on Grail Street, and the Boosting the Block project to reconnect The Block to Pack Square Park and the rest of downtown.

4. Other Comments from Commissioners, Public and Staff

Ms. Cole reminded the commission about the preliminary landmark designation site visits on Friday, May 15, 2026 to see the Grove Park Office and Feldman House.

Following an event commemorating a 400 year old White Oak tree, Chair Hornaday was asked about the process of designating trees as landmarks. Mr. Holloway said for historic landmarks, they are not organic matter. Since trees are organic matter they would not qualify as a landmark. City Council has the ability to designate a tree as historic, though there was no process for that outlined in the ordinance. If designated historic, a tree placed under the authority of the public works director, even if located on private property.

Ms. Bowen said she had done research on the tree in question, and believed it was the oldest living thing in Buncombe County, with connections to the Revolutionary War. Vice-Chair Oliva added that it may be the oldest White Oak in the country!

Mr. Holloway added that the process of how Council may designate the tree was not well defined, and HRC does not have any binding jurisdiction due to this tree not being located within a historic district. Ms. Bowen questioned if it would be an issue to bring this up with a Council member, if there is already a meeting established and she clarified that she is speaking on behalf of herself, not the commission. It was agreed that this would not be an issue.

Adjournment

At 7:12 p.m., Ms. Gorman moved to adjourn the meeting. This motion was seconded by Ms. Moxley and carried unanimously.