

Historic District Commission

June 26, 2025

Meeting Minutes

Chair Eddlemon called the meeting of the Historic District Commission to order at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 26, 2025, at City Hall in the Council Chamber, 181 S. South Street of Gastonia, NC.

Present: Chair Andi Eddlemon and Commissioners Carol Hauer, Jeff Trepel, Josh Hauser, and Kaitlyn Peeler

Absent: Commissioner Blair Propert

Staff present: Charles Graham, Joe Gates, Jalen Nash, and Rebeca Mintz

ITEM 1a. Roll Call / Sound Check

Chair Eddlemon opened the meeting, conducted a roll call, and declared a quorum.

ITEM 2. Public Hearing – Certificate of Appropriateness (File # PLCA202500240)

- Ann Ownbey
- 509 S. Lee Street
- Requesting a COA for the after-the-fact renovation and repainting of the front porch.

Chair Eddlemon opened the public hearing and recognized Jalen Nash, Planner, for the staff's presentation. The Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) application was presented. Mr. Nash stated that Ms. Ownbey reached out to him last Friday and informed him she would be on vacation. She was unaware that the meeting was scheduled for today and requested that it be continued to next month. Commissioner Hauser moved to continue the application to the July 24th meeting of the HDC. Commissioner Trepel seconded the motion. With there being no further discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

ITEM 3. Public Hearing – Certificate of Appropriateness (File # PLCA202500257)

- Niels Anderson
- 701 W. Garrison Blvd
- Requesting approval for the after-the-fact repainting of the home's exterior and the replacement of all windows with 1-over-1 double-pane white vinyl windows.

Chair Eddlemon opened the public hearing and recognized Jalen Nash, Planner, for the staff presentation. Mr. Nash stated the home was built in 1951 and that the property is a contributing structure in the local York-Chester Historic District. He noted the property is zoned RS-8 and surrounded by residential zoning. Mr. Nash presented the key elements of the request. He explained the application is straightforward, including repainting the exterior siding and chimney vents royal blue, which was previously a Carolina blue shade. He added that the request also includes repainting the front and side porch columns and foundation from red brick to off-white. Finally, he noted the proposal includes replacing the existing six-over-six windows with new one-over-one double-pane white vinyl windows.

Commissioner Trepel asked Mr. Nash to confirm whether the painting work had already been completed and the window work had not yet been done. Mr. Nash responded, "Correct".

Related excerpts of the Design Principles and Standards were presented, along with before and after photos of the property. Commissioner Trepel asked Mr. Nash if the chimneys were also painted blue. Mr. Nash responded, "Yes".

Commissioner Trepel asked Mr. Nash if there were any photos of the side of the house before the work was completed. Mr. Nash responded "no". Discussion ensued among the commissioners regarding the shade of blue the home had been painted.

Chair Eddlemon asked the board if there were any further questions for Mr. Nash. Commissioner Trepel then asked Mr. Nash if the property was considered contributing. Mr. Nash responded that yes, the home is considered a contributing structure in the York-Chester Historic District.

With there being no other question for Mr. Nash, Chair Eddlemon recognized Neils Anderson at 701 W. Garrison Blvd, Gastonia, NC.

Historic District Commission

June 26, 2025

Meeting Minutes

Mr. Anderson explained that the house was repainted a few years ago after a maintenance worker used an old, dried-out can of paint and made a judgment call on the color. He admitted he didn't anticipate the change being an issue and felt the new blue shade was an improvement. He also stated the chimneys were painted without his permission and, while he doesn't know how to remove the paint, he doesn't think it looks bad.

Regarding the windows, Mr. Anderson said they are original, single-pane, and deteriorating. He showed photos and noted that nearby homes have similar or simpler window styles. He is requesting to replace the existing windows with white, double-pane vinyl windows, either all at once or one side at a time, ensuring each side matches. He added that when they replace windows, they typically retain the frame and insulate around the new window to maintain energy efficiency and appearance.

Commissioner Trepel asked Mr. Anderson to clarify whether only the back of the house currently has single-pane windows and if no other windows have been replaced. Mr. Anderson confirmed that yes, the photos being presented show the back of the house, and no other windows have been replaced.

Mr. Anderson presented photos of surrounding properties with windows without grids. He stated he assumes the previous owners had approval for those windows. Chair Eddlemon responded that the board does not know this for certain and emphasized they never assume prior approvals were granted.

Mr. Anderson stated he thinks non-grid windows would look nice and would not hurt the desirability of the area. He added that, as a realtor and broker in charge who owns several hundred homes in the area, he has experience and believes the look without grids is appealing. He emphasized that this is simply his request.

Chair Eddlemon asked the board if they had any questions for the applicant at this time.

Commissioner Hauser shared his opinion on the entire request. He said he does not have an issue with the color, as it looks nice and fits with the neighborhood. He would have preferred the chimneys and foundation not to be painted, but thinks reversing that now would be more damaging. He suggested painting the flashing black or a dark gray closer to the roof color. Regarding the windows, he does not object to one-over-one windows in the back since they are hidden from the street. However, he would like to see true or simulated divided light windows on the front and sides, possibly six-over-one instead of six-over-six, but not one-over-one on the visible sides.

Commissioner Trepel stated that he agrees with everything Commissioner Hauser said except for the chimneys. To him, the chimneys look strange. He understands the difficulty in reversing the paint but feels that doesn't mean they have to approve it.

Commissioner Peeler agreed and said she does not see how reversing the paint on the chimneys would work, but does not think they should stay blue either because that color is not historically accurate.

Commissioner Hauser recommended repainting the chimneys a brick red, black to match the roof, or possibly white. He said he is not certain which color is best but believes the blue is far out of character for chimneys, especially on a house of this age.

Commissioner Trepel added that he cannot think of any house where a blue chimney would be appropriate, whether historic or not, although he said he is okay with the foundation color as it stands.

With there being no further discussion, Chair Eddlemon recognized Matt Benson of 507 South Lee Street in Gastonia. Mr. Benson stated he was originally present to speak on behalf of his neighbor at 509 South Lee Street, who was currently on vacation. He said that anything that has been remodeled on the property looks great. He acknowledged that the color is blue, but it appears clean and is not a major departure from other homes in the neighborhood.

Regarding the windows, Mr. Benson stated that his own house has had one-over-one windows for decades, and he supports that style. He added that maintaining consistency across the entire home is important and noted that while the rear has one-over-one windows, it may simply be a matter of street character.

With no additional speakers, Chair Eddlemon asked for any recommendations the board may have.

Historic District Commission

June 26, 2025

Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Peeler stated that one-over-one windows are not consistent with the Design Standards, which aim to preserve gridded window styles. She did not object to the blue paint or the white foundation but felt the painted chimneys were inappropriate and not historically accurate.

Commissioner Hauser agreed and cited the standards, which call for replacement windows to match the original in detail and configuration, including the use of divided light. He said he could support one-over-one windows on the rear since they already exist and are not visible from the street.

With no further discussion, Chair Eddlemon asked if anyone was prepared to make a motion. Commissioner Hauser moved to approve the application with the conditions that the chimneys be repainted in a more brick-like red, the flashing be painted to better blend with the roof, and all replacement windows be divided light—either traditional or simulated—in a six-over-one or six-over-six style.

Commissioner Trepel seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

ITEM 4. Other Business

Joe Gates, Assistant Planning Director, briefly discussed the possibility of adjusting the meeting start time to 5:30 PM. Multiple commissioners expressed concern that applicants may have difficulty arriving before 6:00 PM. The consensus was to keep the regular meeting time at 6:00 PM and hold the subcommittee meeting before the full commission meeting rather than afterward. Mr. Nash noted that a subcommittee would still be needed following the meeting.

ITEM 5. Adjournment

With there being no further discussion, Chair Eddlemon adjourned the May 22nd, 2025, meeting of the HDC at 6:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Andi Eddlemon, Chair
Historic District Commission

Jalen Nash – CZO, Planner
Planning Department