



Historic Preservation Commission

Regular Meeting

<http://www.townofboone.net/>

~ Agenda ~

Jane Shook
828-268-6960

Tuesday, April 8, 2025

3:00 PM Planning and Inspections Conference Room

The public may attend the meeting in-person at the Planning and Inspections Conference Room at 680 West King Street, Suite C, or online via WebEx (a video conferencing software).

Public Comment: To give public comment, you should appear in person at the physical location of this meeting. Persons who attend the meeting remotely via WebEx, a videoconferencing software, may be permitted to speak during public comment but are not assured of that opportunity.

WebEx Participation: To join online or by phone, email Planning and Inspections at planning@townofboone.net or call 828-268-6960, and you will be provided with an email invitation. Requests must be submitted no later than one hour before the meeting begins.

- I. Call to Order
- II. Adoption of Agenda
- III. Public Comment
- IV. 150 Clay House Drive - R.L. Clay (Rivers) House Bathrooms - Pre-Application Workshop

R.L. Clay (Rivers) House - Architectural Survey and Historic Photos

R.L. Clay (Rivers) House - Deed

R.L. Clay (Rivers) House - Landmark Report

R.L. Clay (Rivers) House - Scope of Work

R.L. Clay (Rivers) House - Plans & Elevations

- V. Approval of Meeting Minutes

March 4, 2025, HPC Advisory Meeting Minutes

March 11, 2025, HPC Quasi-Judicial Meeting Minutes

VI. Approval of Written Decisions

Written Decision for Case A25-0045 713 W King St - COA

Written Decision for Case A25-0061 Come Back Shack - COA

VII. Boone Cemetery Interpretative Panels - Unveiling Ceremony Date Selection

VIII. Staff Updates

Statement of Conformity (SoC) Report

Statement of Conformity Report as of March 27, 2025

IX. HPC Member Updates

X. Other Discussion

XI. Adjournment



Town of Boone

R.L. Clay (Rivers) House, Bathroom Reno

Architectural Survey Excerpt and Historic Photos

Architectural Survey Excerpt

Staff Note: In addition to this excerpt from the Comprehensive Architectural Survey of Downtown Boone, the local historic landmark designation report for the R.L. Clay (Rivers) House has also been provided for reference.

WT0530 R. L. Clay House (1933)

150 Clay House Dr.

This is an update to the 1988 survey of this property and the 2002 survey update. Please note that the 2002 survey update incorrectly states that the house is no longer standing, and the 1988 survey incorrectly identified it as the Rob Rivers House (Rivers was a later owner). Because the original architectural description is quite brief and lacking in essential details, this resurvey provides a more exhaustive account of the house and its significance.

According to past surveys, an African-American contractor, “Mr. Simpson,” built the house in the late 1930s for Robert Luther (R. L.) Clay (1889-1945), the former Linville River Railway station agent (early 1930s) and deputy tax collector (mid to late 1930s) at Boone. Clay had moved his prior home—a frame structure demolished in 2015—down the hill toward Moretz Drive to accommodate the new construction. Newspaper accounts actually confirm a construction date of 1933 for the R. L. Clay House, with the June 29, 1933, issue of the Watauga Democrat reporting that Clay “is engaged in the construction of a native stone house.” Frequent newspaper updates occurred throughout the year, with the Democrat reporting in December 1933 that the house was complete. Past attributions to Simpson have never been sourced, however, and African-American members of the local Junaluska community insist that John L. (“J. L.”) Hickerson (circa 1889-1938), who was listed in the 1930 Census as a brick mason working and living in Boone Township, completed the stonework at the R. L. Clay House. Indeed, Hickerson was credited in the June 14, 1934, issue of the Watauga Democrat with completing the masonry work on a stone dwelling being erected for Ed Luttrell in Shulls Mills, with W. G. Hartzog as the general contractor. Hickerson’s obituary indicated that he “had resided in Boone for the past 17 years, where he had the highest respect of the white population. He and his crew of workmen had erected the walls of almost all the newer brick structures of the town” (“John Hickerson Dies on Sunday,” Watauga Democrat, October 13, 1938, 1).

R. L. Clay sold the house in early 1945 to R. C. Rivers, the editor and publisher of the Watauga Democrat and owner of the Rivers Publishing Company. The house remained in the Rivers family until October 1998, when Rachel Rivers-Coffey and her husband Paul Armfield Coffey donated the house and related, adjacent family lands to the Town of Boone. A tenant, Jim Butler, remained in the house under a life estate until his death in November 2011, but the house has been vacant for the past several years. Deed restrictions limit future uses of the property and the house to “recreational purposes, green space, [underground utility line easements], flood mitigation, a wildlife sanctuary, and historical purposes.” The Boone Historic Preservation Commission has already identified the site for potential local historic landmark designation.

The R. L. Clay House is a one and a half-story, side-gabled, natural cut stone home that is three bays wide and built to face present-day Rivers Street. Access to the property is via a long, circuitous driveway, known as Clay House Drive, off of Moretz Drive to the southeast. The property retains a one and a half-story, two bay garage, also of natural cut stone, that is located at the end of Clay House Drive and just to the southeast of the house. Walkways, outside stairwells, retaining walls, and curbing throughout the property are also of natural cut stone and apparently part of the original landscaping plan. The roof of the house until recently was composed of asbestos shingles designed to resemble slate, but these were probably not original. They were removed in 2015 and replaced with more traditional asphalt shingles.

The house and garage are encircled in all directions by two parcels that are historically associated with the Rivers and Clay families. The smaller parcel located to the southeast (2900-78-3881-000) was donated to the Town of Boone by Paul Armfield Coffey in 2004. This parcel originally contained the small frame house that appears to have been the R. L. Clay house that previously stood on the 1933 R. L. Clay house site, but was moved in 1933 to make way for construction of the newer stone building (Watauga Democrat, June 1, 1933). This house was burned, then demolished by the Town of Boone on May 30, 2015, as part of a firefighting training exercise after attempts to sell or relocate the house failed.

The second, larger parcel (2900-69-9070-000) is located to the north, west, and south of the house and contains what was once the horse pasture (now overgrown) for Rachel Rivers-Coffey's horses. This land appears to have also been in the Clay family's ownership for a number of years. This parcel contains Baby, a gargantuan sugar maple that is on the North Carolina Register of Big Trees. There is a wrought iron fence surrounding the tree and a large plaque on the southwest fence that states that Baby is a North Carolina Champion Big Tree. Also on this parcel, at the northeast corner, is the Daniel Boone Monument (WT0567), which was reconstructed at this location in the early 2000s. The Town of Boone owns three additional, adjacent parcels to the northwest along Poplar Grove Road, two of which were also donated by Paul Armfield Coffey with similar deed restrictions as those attached to the main house property.

The north (front) façade of the R. L. Clay features an irregular, front-gabled porch entrance that is reached by stone steps with stone cheek walls. The entrance to the porch features a flat arch lintel with a gothic-style light above, and the interior of the porch includes a stone bench on the east side of the porch with two rectangular window openings on either side of the porch and wood weatherboard for the interior porch ceiling. The main entrance features a twelve-light, wooden door, which is covered by an aluminum screen door. Immediately to the east of the porch is a prominent, exterior, stone chimney with alternating steps that narrow the chimney as it rises. The chimney includes a pronounced concrete cap with brick piers at its four corners. Further to the east of the chimney and porch on the first floor is a double set of six-over-six, double-hung sash windows with a wooden surround, aluminum storm windows, and stone sills. Beyond this to the east, the first floor of the north elevation opens to a square, interior porch with stone flooring and walls and a wooden weatherboard ceiling, with all of it anchored to the footprint of the house by a stone column at the northeast corner of the porch. The porch includes one wooden doorway along the interior south wall at the southwest corner of the porch, with another similar door at the same corner along the west wall of the porch. Both are covered with aluminum screen doors. To the north of the second door, still on the west wall of the porch, is a single, six-over-six, double-hung sash, wooden window with a wooden surround, a stone sill, and an aluminum storm

window covering it. Another gothic light fixture hangs at the center of this interior porch space. Two basement-level vents are visible under each window grouping of the north elevation.

The west side of the north elevation has a triple bay of six-over-six, double-hung sash, wooden windows with a wooden surround and a stone sill. All three are covered with aluminum storm windows. The second floor of the north elevation, meanwhile, features two projecting, symmetrically spaced, gabled dormers, each clad in weatherboard on their sides and what appear to be shingles on the gable fronts; this shingle material may be of asbestos that has since been painted. The dormers themselves, meanwhile, include prominent cornice returns, with double sets of six-over-six, double-hung sash, wooden windows with wooden surrounds and aluminum storm windows over them. Small vents are visible just below the apexes of these dormer gables.

The first floor of the west elevation, reading from north to south, is primarily of native stone and includes a single, six-over-six, double-hung sash, wooden window with a wooden surround, a stone sill, and an aluminum storm window covering, followed a short distance to the south by an identical window. Near the center of the elevation, but offset slightly to the south, is a smaller, double window group of six-over-six, double-hung sash, wooden windows with a wooden surround, stone sill, and aluminum storm window coverings. A short distance to the south of this is a single window that is otherwise identical to those found in the double window grouping. Just above this window, the south end of the gable roofline abruptly evens out to accommodate an enclosed porch along the south elevation. The small, west portion of this porch includes another double set of windows identical to those at the center of the west elevation, with a small amount of the same asbestos shingle treatment visible between the tops of the windows and the roofline, while the bulkhead below the windows is parging over an unknown material (possibly concrete block). At ground level are three basement vents with stone lintels and stone window wells. The second floor of the west elevation, meanwhile, includes a double set of windows at an intermediate size between the small and large examples found elsewhere on the west elevation, but otherwise identical in their design and treatment. This set is centered underneath the west gable. The roofline of the west gable, meanwhile, includes an aluminum, boxed soffit that sports an oddly shaped cornice return only at the northwest corner of the house.

The south elevation of the house, meanwhile, is irregularly shaped. Reading from west to east, the first floor of the south elevation is dominated by the three-season porch that runs nearly to the center of the back of the house. This porch continues the parged bulkhead treatment, with a centered, four-light door with an aluminum storm door over it, flanked by double sets of windows like those found on the west elevation of this porch. For reasons that are not clear, the roofline of this porch steps down near its junction with a second floor window, perhaps in an effort to prevent blocking that window. The east return wall of this rear porch, meanwhile, repeats the asbestos shingling for a short distance below the roof slope, with the bulkhead treatment taking up the whole east return wall. At its base is a set of stone steps with a stone stairwell wall leading down to a basement door with an aluminum storm door. Above this, along the main body of the house is a double set of large, six-over-six, double-hung sash, wooden windows with a wooden surround, stone sill, and aluminum storm windows. Above this, the second floor of the main block of the house reads as a wide dormer. At its center is a medium-sized, double window grouping otherwise identical to those found elsewhere, with a single window of similar size just to the west, over the aforementioned, stepped-down porch roof. A much smaller window, also otherwise identical, is visible to the east of this centered, double window group. This wide dormer features wooden weatherboard on the west and east sides of the dormer. A stone, interior chimney

risers from a high point of the south-facing roof at a junction with the west side of the south dormer, while another interior chimney rises from the east side of the south-facing roof, separated by a short distance from the south dormer. Back at the first floor level is another projection at the southeast corner of the house, with a small, single, one-over-one, horizontal light, wooden window with a stone sill and aluminum storm window over it on the west elevation of this projection, while a large, single window like most of the others on the house is centered on the south elevation of this southeast projection. Along this south elevation of the house, about ten feet from the back of the house, is a long, stone retaining wall that runs parallel with the house to a set of stone steps with a stone cheek wall and an iron railing just beyond the southwest corner of the house. This retaining wall continues a short distance, parallel with the west elevation of the house.

The first floor of the east elevation, moving from south to north, includes a large window like those found elsewhere, followed a short distance to the north by a large, double window group like those found elsewhere. A short distance to the north of this is a set of stone steps with stone cheek walls on each side and an iron railing along the top of the north cheek wall. This set of steps leads to the aforementioned open, interior porch at the northeast corner of the house. The second floor of the east elevation, meanwhile, features a medium-sized, double set of windows identical to those on the west elevation, centered below the gable. A boxed, aluminum soffitt terminates in prominent cornice returns at both ends of the roofline. Leading away from the porch steps, meanwhile, is a cut stone pathway, with the iron railing continuing along its length. This terminates at a step down to the asphalt driveway, which is itself bounded on its west and south sides by a low, stone retaining wall.

At the southeast end of this driveway is a detached, front-gabled, one and a half-story, two-car garage of cut stone. Its north elevation includes the two symmetrically spaced, garage bay doors of vertical wood slats, with a large, six-over-six, double-hung sash, wooden window with wooden surround and stone lintel centered beneath the gable. The roofline includes an aluminum, boxed soffitt that terminates in prominent cornice returns. The west and east walls of the garage are essentially featureless stone, while the south elevation, which is built partially into the grade, includes a set of wooden steps rising to the upper level of the garage, which is accessed via a wooden door with a deep wooden surround. The roofline on this gable end also includes an aluminum, boxed soffitt that terminates in prominent cornice returns.

Historic Photos

Below is a collection of historical photos of the subject property, obtained through a collaboration with Digital Watauga. The photos are displayed in their original size and resolution, as well as in a cropped version that highlights the main features of interest. For each photo, there is a citation.

Staff Note: Planning Staff did not alter or edit the photos in any way, but only arranged them in this document for presentation purposes. Photos attached here are the best available with the clearest and most complete images of the subject property. Any commentary on the images is from the Digital Watauga technician(s) who found and sent the images to Planning Staff.



Image courtesy of the Crayte Teague Collection, Digital Watauga Project



Image courtesy of the Palmer Blair Collection, Digital Watauga Project



Image courtesy of the Palmer Blair Collection, Digital Watauga Project



Image courtesy of the Palmer Blair Collection, Digital Watauga Project

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Stamps: -0-

FILED
WANDA C. SOOTT
REGISTER OF DEEDS
98 OCT 29 AM 10:12
BY: *Diane Derry*
DEPUTY
WATAUGA COUNTY, NC

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

WARRANTY DEED - GIFT

COUNTY OF WATAUGA

This Deed, made this 28 day of October, 1998, by and between

RACHEL RIVERS-COFFEY and husband, ARMFIELD COFFEY.

(hereinafter called "Grantor")

and the

TOWN OF BOONE

P.O. Drawer 192
Boone, NC 28607

(hereinafter called "Grantee")

The designation Grantor and Grantee as used herein shall include said parties, their heirs, successors, and assigns, and shall include singular, plural, masculine, feminine, or neuter as required by context.

WITNESSETH:

The Grantor, for and in consideration of the sum of Ten Dollars and other good and valuable consideration paid by Grantee, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, has and by these presents does grant and convey unto the Grantee, in fee simple, all that certain lot or tract of land situated in Watauga County, North Carolina, and more particularly described as follows:

See Exhibit "A" attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.

The property hereinabove described was acquired by the Grantor by instrument recorded in Book of Records 272, at Page 579, Watauga County Registry.

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the aforesaid lot or tract of land and all privileges and appurtenances thereunto belonging to the Grantee in fee simple.

The Grantor covenants with the Grantee that the Grantor is seized of the premises in fee simple, and has the right to convey the same in fee simple, that title is marketable and free and clear of all encumbrances, other than those exceptions set forth below, and that the Grantor will warrant and defend the title against the lawful claims of all persons whomsoever except for the exceptions hereinafter stated.

✓ Prepared by: David Paletta, P.O. Box 541, Boone, North Carolina 28607
Return to: Freida Van Allen, Town of Boone, P.O. Drawer 192, Boone, North Carolina 28607

Communication: R.L. Clay (Rivers) House - Deed (150 Clay House Drive - R.L. Clay (Rivers) House Bathrooms - Pre-Application Workshop)

Said property shall be subject to the Restriction and Limitation that the Grantor may use said property only for the following purposes:

1. Recreational purposes.
2. Green space.
3. The installation of utility lines; provided however, that all lines must be installed underground, and in such a way so as to cause a minimum disturbance to the natural environment.
4. Flood mitigation.
5. A wildlife sanctuary.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Grantor has hereunto set his hand and seal, the day and year first above written.

Rachel Rivers-Coffey
Rachel Rivers-Coffey
Armfield Coffey (SEAL)

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF WATAUGA

I, a Notary Public of said County and State, do hereby certify that RACHEL RIVERS-COFFEY and husband, ARMFIELD COFFEY Grantor, personally appeared before me this day and acknowledged the execution of the foregoing instrument.

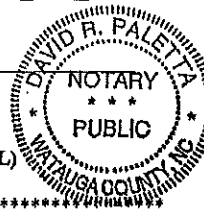
WITNESS my hand and official stamp or seal, this the 28 day of October, 1998.

David R. Paletta
Notary Public

My commission expires:

1-20-2002

(NOTARY SEAL)



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA, COUNTY OF WATAUGA

The foregoing certificate of David R. Paletta, Watauga County, NC., Notary Public, is certified to be correct. This instrument was presented for registration and duly recorded in the Office of the Register of Deeds of Watauga County, North Carolina in Book of Records 480, Page 496, on this the 29th day of October, 1998, at 10:12 a.m./p.m.

Wanda C. Scott -

REGISTER OF DEEDS

By:

Diane Dancy
Deputy Register of Deeds

C:\OFFICE\TOWNS\BOOKS\DEEDS\COFFEY\WD-1.WPD

File #

Boone Historic Preservation Commission
Local Landmark Designation Report

R. L. Clay House
(Rivers House)



Prepared by Ellie McCorkle
with assistance from the
Boone Historic Preservation Commission
July 2023, Final Draft,
February 2024, Final Revised

R. L. Clay House (WT0530)

I. General Information

A. Common and Historical Property Names

1. R. L. Clay House (Ca. 1933-1945)
2. R. C. Rivers House (Ca. 1945-Present)

B. Physical Address or Location

1. 150 Clay House Dr., Boone, NC 28607
 - a. North (primary) elevation faces Rivers Street

C. Tax Parcel Identification Numbers (PIN)

1. PIN: 2900-78-3934-000
2. PIN: 2900-69-9070-000
3. PIN: 2900-79-0308-000

D. Current Owner Name

1. The current owner is the Town of Boone and has been since the donation of the house and related properties beginning in 1998. There was a life tenancy included with the house deed, but this person left the house permanently in 2011 and no longer survives. It has been uninhabited since and used for storage.

E. Current Owner Mailing Address(es)

1. 567 West King Street, Boone, NC 28607

F. Appraised Value of the Property (2022)

1. PIN 2900-78-3934-000: Total value \$682,200. Land value is \$55,300 and building value is \$626,900.
2. PIN 2900-69-9070-000: Land value is \$821,100.
3. PIN 2900-79-0308-000: Land value is \$108,600.

G. Date of Construction

1. House: Circa 1933
2. Garage: Before 1940 (perhaps 1933)

H. Historical Significance

1. Criterion B: Association with Significant Person(s), 1945-1998
2. Criterion C: Architectural Significance, 1933-1940

I. Statement of Property Designation:

1. The proposed boundaries of the designation follow the surveyed boundaries for all listed parcels: 2900-78-3934-000, 2900-69-9070-000, and 2900-79-0308-000. These parcels include the house, the garage (interior not included for the house and garage), a portion of the drive leading to the house and garage (Clay House Drive), the Daniel Boone Monument/Rivers Park, land along the ridgeline to the north and northwest of the house, "Rachel's meadow," and "Baby," the North Carolina state champion sugar maple. See pages 8 and 9 for further information.

The original report drafted by Ellie McCorkle was substantially revised and edited into this final version by the following members of the Boone Historic Preservation Commission: Elizabeth Bond, Eric Plaag, James Sharp, Charles Watkins, and Riley Ziegler. January 2024 modifications were edited into this final version by the following members of the Boone Historic Preservation Commission: Elizabeth Bond, Vardell Smyth, Krystal Carter, and Jerry Williamson.

The 1950 cover image of the R. L. Clay House, taken from the northeast, is used courtesy of the Palmer Blair Collection, Digital Watauga Project.

II. Brief Statement of Significance

The R. L. Clay House is proposed for designation as a local historic landmark due to its high level of local significance for its association with several members of the Rivers family who were influential in the history of the Town of Boone. Members of the Rivers family resided in and owned the home for more than 50 years as they operated and published the local newspaper, the *Watauga Democrat*. R. C. Rivers, Jr., ran the *Watauga Democrat* for 42 years, 30 years of that while residing in this home. Rachel Rivers-Coffey, the granddaughter of R. C. Rivers, Sr., and daughter of R. C. Rivers, Jr., was raised in the home before she took over the *Watauga Democrat* following her father's death in 1975 and continued to run the paper until 1994. She and her husband Paul Armfield Coffey donated the property to the Town of Boone in 1998.

The R. L. Clay House is also locally significant for its architecture. The one and a half-story R. L. Clay House with its subdued, Colonial Revival influences was constructed using native stone and completed circa 1933. Its use of native stone is an early local example of a popular trend that accelerated with the Works Progress Administration (WPA) funding of the construction of other Colonial Revival, native stone buildings during the mid to late 1930s. Also included as a contributing resource in this designation is the two-story, native stone garage to the southeast of the home, which was likely constructed simultaneous to the house and certainly before 1940. There is a prize sugar maple tree, "Baby," that straddles two of the parcels within the boundary to the northwest of the R. L. Clay House. At the northeast end of the boundary is Rivers Park, a stone monument area built in 2005 containing a reconstruction of historic Daniel Boone Monument that originally stood several hundred yards to the southeast. The parcels proposed for designation continue to provide historic context for the close relationship the Rivers family had to the town and community of Boone.

Three of seven legal parcels in this vicinity that are owned by the Town of Boone are proposed for designation, all three of which were associated with the Rivers family from at least the mid 1940s. The Town of Boone acquired all three parcels through donations by Rachel Rivers-Coffey and/or Paul Armfield Coffey. This is not all of the land once associated with the property, as some of the original Clay and Rivers holdings were either subdivided or sold off, then developed by private individuals and companies. The other four nearby parcels owned by the Town are either noncontiguous to the boundary parcels or not historically associated with the Rivers family.

III. Architectural Description

The R. L. Clay House is a one and a half-story, side-gabled home with a native, cut stone exterior, and it features subdued, Colonial Revival influences. It is three bays wide and built to face north, toward present-day Rivers Street. The house sits perpendicular to another street historically known as South Water Street (recently renamed Burrell Street). Access to the property is via a long, circuitous driveway, known as Clay House Drive, located off of Moretz Drive to the southeast. The property retains a one and a half-story, two-bay garage that also features a native, cut stone exterior. This garage is located at the end of Clay House Drive and just southeast of the house. Walkways, outside stairwells, retaining walls, and curbing throughout the property are also of native, cut stone and are apparently part of the original

landscaping plan. The roof of the house, until recently, was composed of asbestos shingles designed to resemble slate, but these were probably not original. These shingles were removed in 2015 and replaced with more traditional asphalt shingles.

The north (front) façade of the R. L. Clay House features an irregular, front-gabled porch entrance that is reached by stone steps with stone cheek walls. The entrance to the porch features a flat arch lintel with a gothic-style light above, and the interior of the porch includes a stone bench on the east side of the porch with two rectangular window openings on either side of the porch. Wood weatherboard was used for the interior porch ceiling. The main entrance features a twelve-light, wooden door that is protected by an aluminum screen door. This entrance, while intended as the front door to the home, is no longer used for interior access by the Town of Boone. Immediately to the east of the porch is a prominent, exterior chimney of native stone with alternating steps that narrow the chimney as it rises. There is a pale, stone diamond in the center of the chimney, an architectural detail that is continued throughout the design of the home, interior and exterior. The chimney includes a pronounced concrete cap with brick piers at its four corners. Further to the east of the chimney and porch on the first floor is a double set of six-over-six, double-hung sash windows with a wooden surround, aluminum storm windows, and stone sills. Beyond this to the east, the first floor of the north elevation opens to a square, interior porch with stone flooring and walls as well as a wooden weatherboard ceiling. This is all anchored to the footprint of the house by a stone column at the northeast corner of the porch.

The porch includes one wooden doorway along the interior south wall at the southwest corner of the porch, with another similar door at the same corner along the west wall of the porch. This west wall entrance is currently used as the main entrance by the Town of Boone. Both doors are covered with aluminum screen doors. To the north of the second door, still on the west wall of the porch, is a single, six-over-six, double-hung sash, wooden window with a wooden surround, a stone sill, and an aluminum storm window protecting it. A gothic light fixture hangs at the center of this interior porch space; some of the glass panels in this fixture are broken and missing.

Visible under each window grouping on the north elevation are two basement-level vents. The west side of the north elevation has a triple bay of six-over-six, double-hung sash, wooden windows with wooden surrounds and a stone sill. All three are covered with aluminum storm windows. The second floor of the north elevation features two projecting, symmetrically spaced, gabled dormers, each clad in weatherboard on their sides and what appear to be shingles on the gable fronts. This shingle material may be of asbestos that has since been painted. The dormers include prominent cornice returns with double sets of six-over-six, double-hung sash, wooden windows with wooden surrounds and aluminum storm windows over them. Small vents are visible just below the apexes of these dormer gables.

The first floor of the west elevation, reading from north to south, is primarily of native stone and includes a single, six-over-six, double-hung sash, wooden window with an aluminum storm window covering. A short distance to the south is an identical window. Near the center of the elevation, but offset slightly to the south, is a smaller, double window group of six-over-six, double-hung sash, wooden windows with a wooden surround, stone sill, and aluminum storm window coverings. A short distance to the south of this is a single window that is otherwise

identical to those found in the double window grouping. Just above this window, the south end of the gable roofline abruptly evens out to accommodate an enclosed porch that includes another double set of windows identical to those at the center of the west elevation, with a small amount of the same asbestos shingle treatment visible between the tops of the windows and the roofline, while the bulkhead below the windows is parging over an unknown material (possibly concrete block). At ground level are three basement vents with stone lintels and stone window wells. The second floor of the west elevation includes a double set of the windows at an intermediate size between the small and large examples found elsewhere on the west elevation, but otherwise identical in their design and treatment. This set is centered underneath the west gable. The roofline of the west gable includes an aluminum, boxed soffit that sports an oddly shaped cornice return at the northwest corner of the house and at no other corner.

The south elevation of the house is irregularly shaped. Reading from west to east, the first floor of the south elevation is dominated by the three-season enclosed porch that runs nearly to the center of the back of the house. This porch continues the previously described, parged bulkhead treatment, with a centered, four-light door with an aluminum storm door over it; this door is flanked by double sets of windows like those found on the west elevation of this porch. For reasons that are not clear, the roofline of this porch steps down near its junction with a second-floor window, perhaps in an effort to not block that window. The east return wall of this rear porch repeats the asbestos shingling for a short distance below the roof slope, with the bulkhead treatment taking up the whole east return wall. At its base is a set of stone steps with a stone stairwell wall leading down to a basement door with an aluminum storm door. This door is not visible from the interior of the basement, indicating that it leads to a separate storage space under the home. Above this, along the main body of the house, is a double set of large, six-over-six, double-hung sash, wooden windows with a wooden surround, stone sill, and aluminum storm windows. Above this, the second floor of the main block of the house reads as a wide dormer. At its center is a medium-sized, double window grouping otherwise identical to those found elsewhere with a single window of similar size just to the west, over the stepped-down porch roof. A much smaller window, also otherwise identical, is visible to the east of this centered, double window group. This wide dormer features wooden weatherboard on the west and east sides of the dormer. A stone interior chimney rises from a high point of the south-facing roof at a junction with the west side of the south dormer, while another interior chimney rises from the east side of the south-facing roof, separated by a short distance from the south dormer.

Back at the first floor level is another projection at the southeast corner of the house, with a small, single, one-over-one, horizontal light, wooden window with a stone sill and aluminum storm window over it on the west elevation of this projection. A large, single window like most of the others on the house is centered on the south elevation of this southeast projection. Along this south elevation of the house about ten feet from the back of the house is a long, stone retaining wall that runs parallel with the house to a set of stone steps with a stone cheek wall and an iron railing just beyond the southwest corner of the house. This retaining wall continues a short distance, parallel with the west elevation of the house.

The first floor of the east elevation, moving from south to north, includes a large window like those found elsewhere, followed a short distance to the north by a large, double window group like those found elsewhere. A short distance to the north of this is a set of stone steps with stone

cheek walls on each side and an iron railing along the top of the north cheek wall. This set of steps leads to the aforementioned open, interior porch at the northeast corner of the house. The second floor of the east elevation features a medium-sized, double set of windows identical to those on the west elevation, centered just below the gable. A boxed, aluminum soffit terminates in prominent cornice returns at both ends of the roofline. Leading away from the porch steps is a cut stone pathway, with the iron railing continuing along its length. This terminates at a step down to the asphalt driveway of Clay House Drive, which is itself bounded on its west and south sides by a low, stone retaining wall.

At the southeast end of this driveway is a detached, front-gabled, one and a half-story, two-car garage of cut stone. Its north elevation includes two symmetrically spaced, garage bay doors of vertical wood slats, with a large, six-over-six, double-hung sash, wooden window with wooden surround and stone lintel centered beneath the gable. The roofline includes an aluminum, boxed soffit that terminates in prominent cornice returns. The west and east walls of the garage are essentially featureless stone while the south elevation, which is built partially into the grade, includes a set of wooden steps rising to the upper level of the garage, which is accessed via a wooden door with a deep wooden surround. The roofline on this gable end also includes an aluminum, boxed soffit that terminates in prominent cornice returns.¹

There is a low, creekstone retaining wall along the sloping edge of the north portion of the property, facing Rivers Street. The wall was likely more prominent when first constructed but has since been obscured by overgrowth and has partially collapsed. It appears to have been placed to aid in landscaping for the rhododendrons that grow along its top.

On the northeast corner of the larger parcel (2900-69-9070-000) being designated there is a monument and small park, Rivers Park, that is included in the proposed boundary. The monument feature, known as the Daniel Boone Monument (WT0567), is a stone obelisk with a pinnacle of either parged stone or concrete, capped by a rough stone finial; together, they stand approximately 25 feet tall. This monument is a replica of one built twice before and originally meant to denote where a cabin once stood that local legend alleges may have been inhabited seasonally by Daniel Boone in the late eighteenth century.² Commemorative tablets from the original monument are mounted within the base of the present iteration of the obelisk. Surrounding the monument is a native stone, circular wall, bisected by entries at the east and

¹ Almost the entirety of this architectural description is taken, with minor adjustments, from Eric W. Plaag, et al, "Comprehensive Architectural Survey of Downtown Boone, North Carolina," (Boone, NC, February 2021), 97-101, <http://www.townofboone.net/DocumentCenter/View/1334/Comprehensive-Architectural-Survey-of-Downtown-Boone-North-Carolina-2021>.

² The original version of this monument stood on the north side of the intersection of Stadium Drive and Rivers Street, near the present Daniel Boone and Dogs statue. This original version was composed of rough-cut, stone blocks with a pyramidal cap of concrete that tapered in a phallic, pyramidal spearpoint. In 1968, the monument was deconstructed and moved approximately 50 yards to the east to a point just northeast of the former location of Justice Hall dormitory, just southeast of Stadium Drive, where it was reconstructed in April 1969. This reconstruction used entirely different materials and was proportioned differently in terms of overall height and the proportions of its cap. This version was demolished in 1994. After rescuing the original engraved tablets from the original monument, the Town of Boone reconstructed the monument at Rivers Park in 2005. For more on this feature, see Plaag, "Comprehensive Architectural Survey," 101-02, from which much of the description in this note is taken.

west ends. Portions of the south portion of the perimeter wall are stepped with the terrain, and all elements of the wall are capped by a concrete slab. Additional commemorative plaques are adhered to the south portion of the perimeter wall.

No significant archaeological features are known to be on the property at this time.

Integrity

The association between this property and the Rivers family is undivided and uninterrupted during the period of significance and more broadly during their lifetimes until the property was transferred to the Town of Boone for its protection in the late 1990s. The house and garage have never been moved and are still associated with much of the original acreage the Rivers family would have enjoyed while residing at the property. The design of both the residence and the garage is original and still retains the original features that make both buildings architecturally significant. The alteration of the south porch of the residence from an open to an enclosed porch appears to have occurred during the 1970s, and while the materials used for this porch do not match the stonework of the rest of the house, this is a relatively minor change to the tertiary elevation of the house, so the impact on material and design integrity is minimal. The exterior cladding materials of both the home and the garage are original and in good condition, and they continue to reflect the workmanship of the home's skilled mason, John L. Hickerson (see significance section). The roof was replaced recently on both the house and the garage, but the materials selected generally match the appearance of the original materials. The aluminum storm windows are not original to the home and are in fair condition; this reversible application serves to protect the original windows that are still in place. As far as setting, much of the property is still characterized by the thick forest that remains to the north and west of the home, and "Rachel's Meadow," a bowl-shaped feature to the west and southwest of the home, still retains its topography. Taken together, the landscape and building resources of the property continue to convey the historic feeling of the 1930s, when the home was first built, and the 1940s through the 1990s, when members of the Rivers family resided here. As the home, garage, and surrounding landscape have remained largely unchanged, excepting the south porch of the house, there is little that detracts from the integrity of the property and its building resources.

Boundary Justification

The proposed boundaries of the designation follow the surveyed boundaries for all listed parcels: 2900-78-3934-000, 2900-69-9070-000, and 2900-79-0308-000.³ These parcels include the house, the garage, a portion of the drive leading to the house and garage (Clay House Drive), the Daniel Boone Monument/Rivers Park, land along the ridgeline to the north and northwest of the house, "Rachel's meadow," and "Baby," the North Carolina state champion sugar maple. The combined acreage for the boundary amounts to 9.54 acres of the original 13 to 15 acres associated with the home under the Rivers' ownership. While this does not include all of the property that was once associated with the Rivers family during the Rivers occupancy, it does include all pertinent

³ Rachel Rivers-Coffey and Armfield Coffey to Town of Boone, 28 October 1998, Book of Record 480, Page 494; Rachel Rivers-Coffey and Armfield Coffey to Town of Boone, 28 October 1998, Book of Record 480, Page 496; and Armfield Coffey, personally and as Executor of the Estate of Rachel Rivers-Coffey, to Town of Boone, 26 January 2000, Book of Record 553, Page 297 (Tract III). All references are from the Watauga County Register of Deeds.

buildings associated with the home and its human inhabitants, and the associated parcels are contiguous, making for an uninterrupted boundary. The proposed boundary parcels surrounding the home and garage provide context for understanding the use of the property by those who lived in the home during its historically significant periods in the mid-twentieth century.

The first of these parcels, 2900-78-3934-000, contains the R. L. Clay House, the garage, and part of Clay House Drive. It totals 0.26 acres. The second parcel, 2900-69-9070-000, is located to the northeast, north, west, and south of the house parcel and contains Rivers Park, the reconstructed Daniel Boone Monument, and what was once the horse pasture (“Rachel’s Meadow”) for the horses owned by Rachel Rivers-Coffey. It totals 8.15 acres. This parcel and/or the third parcel slightly to the northwest (2900-79-0308-000) contains “Baby,” a champion sugar maple registered with the North Carolina Register of Big Trees.⁴ This last parcel contains 1.13 acres.

In total, there were seven parcels historically associated with the Rivers family in this vicinity. The smaller parcel to the southeast (2900-78-3881-000) was donated to the Town of Boone by Paul Armfield Coffey in 2004. This parcel originally contained the small frame house that appears to have been the original R. L. Clay House that previously stood on the 1933 Clay House site but was moved in late 1932 to make way for construction of the newer stone residence.⁵ This house was burned and then demolished by the Town of Boone on May 30, 2015, as part of a firefighting training exercise after attempts to sell or relocate the house failed.⁶ Because the Rivers family did not control this parcel until 1984, it is not included in the designation boundary. Three other parcels (2900-69-6458-000, 2900-69-4353-000, and 2900-69-8483-000) to the west and northwest do not adjoin the parcels proposed for designation or were not originally part of the Rivers holdings; they are thus excluded from the proposed boundary.

IV. Historical Background

John L. Hickerson (ca. 1889-1938)

Completed in 1933, the R. L. Clay House was the work of a prominent, Black stonemason and contractor, John L. Hickerson (ca. 1889-1938), a Yadkin County native who relocated to Boone about 1920. He was married to Sallie Shearer Hickerson and had no children. In October 1930, Hickerson and his wife took out a deed of trust along with two of his wife’s family members on the lot at the northwest corner of present-day Church Street and North Street, although this property originally appears to have been purchased by the other three parties in 1924, without Hickerson’s participation, suggesting that this was the Shearer residence where Hickerson lived

⁴ Direct access to “Baby” is prohibited by the presence of a tall, aluminum, decorative fence around the base of the tree, and aerial GIS maps with parcel lines place the fenced area around the tree on both parcels (9070 and 0308).

⁵ “Local Affairs,” *Watauga Democrat*, 1 Jun 1933: 5.

⁶ Josiah Clark, “‘Nearly Once-in-a-Lifetime Opportunity’ for Public to Watch House Burning Last Saturday,” *High Country Press*, 1 June 2015, online, <https://www.hcpress.com/front-page/boone-fire-department-burns-down-old-white-house-at-rivers-park-to-demonstrate-the-dangers-of-house-fires-in-a-nearly-once-in-a-lifetime-opportunity.html>.

with his wife and in-laws following their marriage.⁷ Little else has been documented about Hickerson's private life.

Hickerson built the R. L. Clay House for Robert Luther "R. L." Clay (1889-1945) in 1933, and it's likely that his work also included the stone garage on the property, given that the stonework there closely resembles the stonework found on the house.⁸ Hickerson was considered "renowned for his masonry work throughout Boone in the 1920s and 1930s."⁹ A single-family dwelling built of native stone by a local, Black mason was not unusually notable in North Carolina at the time, as there were many non-White laborers engaged in the building trades throughout the state during the early twentieth century. Hickerson, however, is the only Black brick mason listed in the 1930 US Census for Watauga County, North Carolina, suggesting that he possessed a unique set of skills among his Black peers for that time period.¹⁰ In particular, the local press noted Hickerson for the quality of his work and for leading his own team of laborers, indicating that he would have been in high demand by those who could afford to create such homes during the Great Depression.¹¹ In June 1934, a year after Hickerson completed the R. L. Clay House, "Mr. Ed Luttrell of Shulls Mills [was] erecting a nine-room stone dwelling.... J. L. Hickerson [was] taking care of the masonry." Hickerson also apparently teamed with a prolific local White contractor, Wiley Gordon "W. G." Hartzog (1885-1976), as the primary brick or stone mason on a number of local projects during the 1920s and 1930s.¹² Hickerson was also credited with completing the masonry work on "almost all the newer brick structures of the town," including the First Baptist Church auditorium (WT0611, 1936), the Rivers Printing Company Building (WT0585, 1937), the second Newland Hall dormitory on the Appalachian

⁷ Etta Shearer and Lola Shearer, J. L. Hickerson and Sallie Hickerson, to John E. Brown and J. M. Hodges, 30 October 1930, Deed of Trust Book 39, Page 57; and A. E. South and Mae Bell South to Ella Shearer, Lola Shearer, and Sallie Shearer, 11 March 1924, Deed Book 31, Page 486. A frame house is visible at this location in a 1950 aerial image (Pal-Bla-02-002) by Palmer Blair but no longer stands today. This image is visible at <http://digitalwatauga.org/items/show/6030>.

⁸ "Real Estate Trade Active: Many Building Projects," *Watauga Democrat*, 29 June 1933: 1; "Local Affairs," *Watauga Democrat*, 1 June 1933: 5; and "John Hickerson Dies on Sunday," *Watauga Democrat*, 13 October 1938: 1.

⁹ Plaag, et al, "Comprehensive Architectural Survey," 50.

¹⁰ See Ancestry.com, "Watauga County, North Carolina," *1930 United States Federal Census*, [database online], (Provo, UT: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2002). The 1930 Census listed dozens of Black laborers in Watauga County, most described as being odd jobbers of farmers. There was also a large contingent of Black laborers from the Watauga County State Prison Farm who were apparently leased out as construction workers. None of these other individuals, however, appear to have possessed sufficient training and experience to have been labeled as a skilled mason.

¹¹ The most prominent White masons working in Watauga County during the 1930s were probably Earl, Clarence, and Leslie Lyons, three contractors with deep roots in Watauga County. See Eric Plaag, "Watauga County Historical Society Announces the Lyon Brothers as Next Inductees to the WCHS Hall of Fame," *Watauga County Historical Society*, 30 June 2022, online, <https://www.wataugacountyhistoricalsociety.org/blog-1/2022/7/1/watauga-county-historical-society-announces-the-lyons-brothers-as-next-inductees-to-the-wchs-hall-of-fame>. For an account of a laborer who worked for Hickerson, see "Leroy Kirkpatrick, Sr., 1910-1993," *Junaluska: Oral Histories of a Black Appalachian Community*, Edited by Susan E. Keefe, (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 2020), 68.

¹² "Much Building Now Going on in County," *Watauga Democrat*, 14 June 1934: 1.

State Teachers College campus (masonry in 1938, completed in 1939), and the Appalachian Theatre (WT0609, 1938).¹³

The R. L. Clay House in an Architectural Context

The R. L. Clay House was built in 1933 of native stone, a material that was not readily available in Boone until after the arrival of the Linville River Railway in October 1918.¹⁴ Before the mid-1930s, few private homes were constructed using native, cut stone, and the few stone buildings that did exist in Boone prior to 1933 tended to be constructed from stacked fieldstone in mortar or roughly cut fieldstone. Two such Boone buildings were the Advent Christian Church (WT0577, 1926), constructed from native graystone, and the original Linney Law Office (WT0587, 1923), featuring stacked “surface rock.”¹⁵ Institutional building schemes also occasionally incorporated stone construction, such as the 1928 project to build several cottages at the Grandfather Orphans Home in Banner Elk.¹⁶ Another such project just outside Watauga County was a four-story, native stone hospital built in Banner Elk in 1930 by the same people who constructed stone buildings on the Lees McRae campus in 1926.¹⁷ As a residential building material, however, native stone appears to have been used somewhat rarely in single-family dwellings before the mid 1930s. Among the few early examples were a handful of summer cottages built at Blowing Rock in 1913 and Ben Smith’s bungalow built near Appalachian State Teachers College in 1927, better known as the Bushnell Cabin (WT0522). Another example was Dr. R. C. Ellis’s summer home built on Orchard Street (WT0546) in 1927 by local contractor Will Hodges. Another such home was the Howard Miller House (WT0509) on Delmar Street, presumed to have been built about 1930. None of these examples rivals the R. L. Clay House in size or architectural sophistication.¹⁸

The construction of the stone residence for R. L. Clay in 1933, however, marked the beginning of a new and popular trend that continued throughout the middle and late 1930s. In the summer of 1934, for example, single-family, stone dwellings were being built in the Boone area for Professor J. A. Williams near the Appalachian State campus, R. T. Greer on Boone Trail

¹³ “David Horton,” *Junaluska*, 107. B. G. Teams was the contractor on the Rivers Printing Company building, suggesting that Hickerson was subcontracted to lay the brick. See Plaag, et al, “Comprehensive Architectural Survey,” 110-11; and “John Hickerson Dies on Sunday,” *Watauga Democrat*, 13 October 1938: 1.

¹⁴ For a history of the Linville River Railway, see John R. Waite, *The Blue Ridge Stemwinder*, (Johnson City, TN: Overmountain Press, 2003).

¹⁵ The Advent Christian Church is frequently attributed incorrectly to 1920; it was actually completed in 1926. See “Advent Christian Church to Open,” *Watauga Democrat*, 19 August 1926: 1. Regarding the Linney Law Office, see “Local Affairs, Town and County,” *Watauga Democrat*, 6 December 1923: 5. For all survey-referenced properties, see the survey files listed by number, which are held by the NC State Historic Preservation Office in Asheville, NC.

¹⁶ “Banner Elk News,” *Watauga Democrat*, 19 July 1928: 1.

¹⁷ “New Hospital at Banner Elk Is Near Completion,” *Watauga Democrat*, 24 July 1930: 1.

¹⁸ “Blowing Rock in Brief,” *Watauga Democrat*, 1 May 1913: 2; and “The Tattler,” *Watauga Democrat*, 7 July 1927: 5. Smith built the Bushnell Cabin using stone quarried from a mountain a short distance away on Highway 105; no mortar is visible in the stonework. Regarding the Ellis summer house, see “Local Affairs,” *Watauga Democrat*, 4 August 1927: 4. The Ellises spent just one summer in the house after its completion, then routinely rented it out and stayed at the W. H. Gragg House on Gragg Street as boarders in subsequent summers. See “Local Affairs,” *Watauga Democrat*, 10 July 1930: 5. Regarding the Howard Miller House, the property was actually sold by J. E. and Nannie Edmisten to Charles and Bettie Lou Wilfong in 1951 (Deed Book 70, Page 161), with no predecessor deed listed or found, long before Miller’s ownership. Its construction date has not been independently verified.

Highway (now US 421), Charles T. Zimmerman in Daniel Boone Park (224 Grand Blvd.), James E. Holshouser, Sr., (WT0544) in Daniel Boone Park, Owen Wilson on the western end of King Street, and H. L. Lyons near the Lovill House at the west end of Boone.¹⁹ Of these, the Holshouser house is probably most analogous to sophistication and size to the R. L. Clay House and was built a year later. It features stone quarried from Shulls Mill; this stone is not cut to provide a flat finish, as at the R. L. Clay House, and instead features boulders that provide a distinctly different appearance. The house also includes unusual Gothic-style features.²⁰ Ernest Banner of Banner Elk is credited as the mason for this home.

Other stone homes quickly followed during the 1930s. The W. Ralph Winkler House (WT0515) on Blowing Rock Road also features stone masonry and is attributed to Midas Wheeler as stone mason in 1936. Unfortunately, numerous additions and alterations have destroyed the architectural integrity of this property. That same year, Wheeler was also reportedly the stone mason for the construction of the W. F. Miller House on Cherry Drive (WT0539). This home is smaller than the R. L. Clay House, and additions to the house in the late twentieth century have adversely impacted the integrity of the property. In 1937, Guy Hunt reportedly had his home built on Orchard Street (WT0547), with the masonry conjecturally attributed by the surveyor to the Lyons brothers. The Hunt house compares favorably with the R. L. Clay House but appears to postdate its construction. About 1938, yet another stone home with a rock garage was completed nearby for Herman W. Wilcox on present-day Wallace Circle (WT0548). Unfortunately, several late twentieth-century additions have marred the integrity of this property.

The popularity of stone construction in domestic architecture aligns with the introduction of the Works Progress Administration programs of the mid-1930s, which were designed to ease the effects of the Great Depression. In Boone and Watauga County, four schools of stone construction were completed using WPA funding in 1937 alone, and at least six other stone buildings were completed for the local community, county government, and the Appalachian State Teachers College in Boone in 1938 and 1939.²¹ Stone buildings were perceived as especially desirable during this period because they were “not only durable but absolutely fire-proof.”²² Institutional buildings, such as the United States Post Office in downtown Boone (WT0049, 1939), the Courthouse Annex building on North Water Street (WT0607, 1939), various school buildings throughout Watauga County, and about a dozen single-family, faculty homes constructed at Appalachian State Teachers College (WT0529, ca. 1938-1940), less than a mile east of the R. L. Clay House, were of stone construction, indicating a ready supply and relatively easy access to the material in large quantities in the later 1930s after government programs allowed for massive mining of stone for buildings.²³ All of those faculty homes were moved or destroyed as the Appalachian State University rapidly expanded after 1967, decreasing

¹⁹ “Much Building Now Going on in County,” *Watauga Democrat*, 14 June 1934: 1; and “Work on Dwelling to Start,” *Watauga Democrat*, 9 August 1934: 8. Midas Wheeler was the stone mason on the Zimmerman property.

²⁰ On construction of the Holshouser residence, see “Much Building Now Going on in County,” *Watauga Democrat*, 14 June 1934: 1, 4.

²¹ “Ellerbe Lauds School Projects,” *Watauga Democrat*, 22 October 1936: 1; and “26,000 Allotted to Local College,” *Watauga Democrat*, 24 February 1938: 1.

²² “Lees-McRae Institute Opening at Banner Elk,” *Watauga Democrat*, 16 September 1926: 1.

²³ “Faculty Homes are Completed,” *Watauga Democrat*, 20 October 1938: 8. The homes were completed in stages from 1938 to 1940.

or otherwise destroying their architectural integrity as significance representations of stone, domestic architecture at Boone during the Depression era.

Local lore has spread the belief that many of these stone buildings constructed from the early 1930s to 1940 were made using the stone moved to create the nearby Blue Ridge Parkway. Construction on the Parkway began in 1938, years after the construction of many of these buildings. Furthermore, the portion of the Blue Ridge Parkway nearby to Boone did not begin construction until after World War II and was not completed until the mid-1980s. Nevertheless, the mistaken belief that these stone homes were built using stone quarried from the construction of the historic scenic route persists.

The 2021 Downtown Boone Historic Resources Survey listed several native stone buildings, all of which were commercial buildings except for the R. L. Clay House. The Cook-Nichols Motor Company Building (WT0603), which eventually burned in 1996, and the Duncan Motor Company Building (WT0887) were both completed in 1940.²⁴ The Boone Bus Station (WT0612) was also a W. G. Hartzog project, but its native stone façade was completed in 1946. Following demolition of the entire building in 2011 after its acquisition by Appalachian State University, ASU officials promised to “rebuild” the façade as a curtain wall, allegedly using the original stones in a pattern that mimicked the original design and door and window openings. Close analysis, however, supports recent contentions that there is considerable doubt that the extant stones are the original stonework that comprised the façade of the original bus station.²⁵ Beyond these later examples of stone construction in Boone, native stone can also be seen in various appurtenant structures and landscape objects around downtown Boone, mostly in retaining walls, sheds, and steps that lead to house sites, many of which no longer stand.

Additional Historic Context, R. L. Clay (1889-1945)

Robert Luther “R. L.” Clay, for whom the R. L. Clay House was originally built in 1933, was a native of Avery County, having moved to Watauga County after the Linville River Railway was built in the late 1910s.²⁶ He worked at the Shulls Mill station as an agent until he moved to Boone in the 1920s, where he remained working with the railway. The Clays did have a home in Boone before the native stone house was built, as there are reports of Mrs. Clay entertaining the Friday Afternoon Club in her home in May of 1931.²⁷ This original home was a simple, wood-frame farmhouse that was a commonplace type of residential construction in the early twentieth century in Boone. The first home was moved from the present R. L. Clay House site a short distance to the southeast in order to make space for the native stone building, possibly as part of an agreement between the Clays and Poly C. Wyke, who owned those lots. After a default by the Wykes, the former Clay house and the land surrounding its location were sold to Esther Boone, who was R. L. Clay’s sister-in-law, in 1940.²⁸ Boone remained in that home for more than four

²⁴ Plaag, et al, “Comprehensive Architectural Survey,” 165, 329.

²⁵ Plaag, et al, “Comprehensive Architectural Survey,” 190-92.

²⁶ “Brief Illness Proves Fatal to R. Luther Clay,” *Watauga Democrat*, 29 March 1945: 1.

²⁷ “Friday Afternoon Club with Mrs. R. L. Clay,” *Watauga Democrat*, 21 May 1931: 5.

²⁸ Watauga Building and Loan Association to Esther Boone, 27 July 1940, Deed Book 52, Page 518.

decades. The original Clay home was, unfortunately, destroyed by the Town of Boone in a fire exercise in 2015.²⁹

In 1933, Clay, his wife Annie Stansbury Clay, and his daughters moved to Greensboro so Clay could work with the Internal Revenue Department, now known as the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). As this move happened, the stone house was being completed by a local Black brick mason and contractor, John L. Hickerson (ca. 1889-1938).³⁰ It is likely that Clay also had the separate, two-car garage built at about the same time to the southeast of the home, given that the stonework closely resembles that found on the house.³¹ Rather than residing full-time in the new home at Boone, the Clays maintained the house as a summer and weekend residence for the family. Mrs. Clay would entertain in the home regularly while she and her daughters were in town, based on multiple *Watauga Democrat* articles regarding the Friday Afternoon Club during the 1930s and 1940s.³² In 1943, Clay was promoted to the Field Division Chief in the Greensboro office of the IRS. When Clay was in residence in Boone, he was an active Free Mason and Shriner. He was a member of the Boone Methodist Church, where he served as the Sunday school superintendent for two years and as steward for many more. While in Greensboro, Clay was a member of the West Market Street Methodist Church.³³

The promotion in 1943 appears to have influenced the Clay family's decision to abandon the house at Boone. In December 1944, Clay and his wife sold the house property and some of the surrounding land to Robert Campbell "R. C." Rivers, Jr. (1899-1975), and his wife Bonnie Jean Lewis Rivers (1910-1991).³⁴ Shortly thereafter, Clay died from complications following an operation to remove his appendix in 1945. He was survived by his wife and five daughters.³⁵

The R. L. Clay House in the Context of the R. C. Rivers, Jr., Family

Robert Campbell Rivers, Sr. (1861-1933), was born in Tennessee and moved to Boone at some point before 1888, marrying Sarah Locke "Sallie" Jurney (1861-1924) in 1892. They had three children, R. C., Jr., being the eldest surviving son. In 1889, Rivers, Sr., purchased the *Watauga Democrat*, the local paper that had flopped after its first fall edition in 1888, from Joseph Spainhour and John S. Williams. Rivers initially had a noteworthy partner in this purchase—Daniel B. Dougherty—but Rivers bought out his partner later that year. Rivers continued to print the paper as the mouthpiece of the local Democratic Party and run the printing business until his death in 1933.³⁶ Following his death, the business passed to R. C. Rivers, Jr., via inheritance. R.

²⁹ "Local Affairs," *Watauga Democrat*, 1 June 1933: 5; Plaag, et al, "Comprehensive Architectural Survey," 97; and Clark, "Nearly."

³⁰ "Brief Illness Proves Fatal to R. Luther Clay," *Watauga Democrat*, 29 March 1945: 1; and Plaag, et al, "Comprehensive Architectural Survey," 50.

³¹ The garage is visible in a 1940 aerial image taken for the Department of Agriculture. This image is not yet published and available online but is held as part of the Watauga County Agricultural Extension Aerial Images Collection, Digital Watauga Project.

³² For one example, see "Alice Stansbury Taylor Circle Holds Meeting," *Watauga Democrat*, 4 July 1935: 5.

³³ "Brief Illness Proves Fatal to R. Luther Clay," *Watauga Democrat*, 29 March 1945: 1.

³⁴ R. L. Clay and Annie S. Clay to R. C. Rivers and Bonnie Jean Rivers, 22 December 1944, Deed Book 58, Page 308.

³⁵ "Brief Illness Proves Fatal to R. Luther Clay," *Watauga Democrat*, 29 March 1945: 1.

³⁶ "History of the Watauga Democrat," *Watauga Democrat*, 3 January 2012, updated 11 August 2014, online, <https://www.wataugademocrat.com/aboutus/history-of-the-watauga-democrat/article>.

C. Rivers, Jr., was responsible for the growth of the *Watauga Democrat* during the middle twentieth century, and he acquired both the *Blowing Rocket* and the *Avery Journal* during his tenure as editor and publisher, significantly expanding the influence of the Rivers Printing Company, Inc. Rivers, Jr., was also a member of the Board of Directors of Northwestern Bank of Boone, Vice President of the Watauga Savings and Loan, a member of the Board of Directors of the North Carolina Press Association, and director of the Journalism Foundation at UNC Chapel Hill. He was also a very influential political operative, serving as a delegate to the 1944, 1952, 1956, and 1960 National Democratic Conventions. Politically, he is probably best known as one of the “Dirty Dozen” who stood for the Democratic Party nomination of John F. Kennedy. Rivers’ comments on the assassination of John F. Kennedy were published in the *Watauga Democrat* and entered into the *Congressional Record* by Senator Sam Ervin.³⁷

Rivers, Jr., and his wife Bonnie Jean Rivers had four children in total: Lucinda Jane Rivers (1935-2017), two children born between 1939 and 1940 who were unnamed and did not survive infancy, and Rachel Ann Rivers (1943-1999). Having lived in the apartment above the brick Rivers Printing Company shop located at what is today 747 West King Street since its construction in 1937, the Rivers family realized in 1945 that they could relocate to the R. L. Clay House just down the street and still be close to the business.³⁸ Following their purchase of the Clay House, the Riverses also purchased surrounding land that significantly increased their holdings. In 1968, Rivers then used the Rivers Printing Company to purchase additional lands to the northwest and west of the property, presumably as a buffer to their existing property, since he immediately flipped the land to himself. Then, in 1984, Bonnie Jean Rivers secured the Esther Boone lands that lay to the southeast of the house.³⁹ Bonnie Jean Rivers continued to live in the R. L. Clay House following the death of her husband in 1975, and it is believed that she stayed live there until her death in 1991.⁴⁰

From an early age, both Jane and Rachel Rivers showed a keen interest in journalism, but it was Rachel’s interest that survived into adulthood. Born at the Hagaman Clinic on King Street in downtown Boone in 1943, Rachel—initially named Bobbie Jean Rivers—was an accomplished equestrian from a young age. She was frequently seen riding her pony Patsy along King Street, typically feeding the parking meter in front of the Rivers Printing Company building or elsewhere along her journeys after tying up Patsy to the meter. She began writing for the *Watauga Democrat* at the age of eleven and completed her high school education at Appalachian

³⁷ “Publisher R. C. Rivers, Jr., Dies; End Brought to Unique Career,” *Watauga Democrat*, 24 April 1975; and “Watauga Newspaperman Is Dead,” *Winston-Salem Journal*, 24 April 1975: 21.

³⁸ “Hands Across the State,” *Watauga Democrat*, 21 July 1938: 4.

³⁹ See R. L. Clay, et al, to R. C. Rivers and Bonnie Jean Rivers, 1 January 1945, Deed Book 59, Page 214; Lala Clay Rolfe and Shelley R. Rolfe to R. C. Rivers and Bonnie Jean Rivers, 21 February 1945, Deed Book 58, Page 406; Luther Moretz and Maggie Moretz to R. C. Rivers, Jr., and Bonnie Jean Rivers, 20 August 1945, Deed Book 60, Page 127; P. W. Moretz and Alice Moretz to R. C. Rivers and Bonnie Jean Rivers, 1 May 1947, Deed Book 63, Page 334; P. W. Moretz to R. C. Rivers and Bonnie Jean Rivers, 28 April 1948, Deed Book 67, Page 41; Joe Williams and Laura Ruth Williams to Rivers Printing Company, Inc., 14 April 1962, Deed Book 89, Page 437; Joe Williams and Laura Ruth Williams to Rivers Printing Company, Inc., 5 August 1968; Deed Book 103, Page 419; Rivers Printing Company, Inc., to R. C. Rivers, Jr., 26 November 1968, Deed Book 110, Page 17; Esther S. Boone to Eddie A. Caudill, 10 April 1984, Deed Book 246, Page 724; and Eddie A. Caudill and Shirley N. Caudill to Jean L. Rivers, 27 April 1984, Deed Book 246, Page 727.

⁴⁰ “Publisher R. C. Rivers, Jr., Dies; End Brought to Unique Career,” *Watauga Democrat*, 24 April 1975.

High School—now Chapell-Wilson Hall (WT0564)—before earning a journalism degree at the University of Missouri. Rachel returned to work for the *Watauga Democrat* full-time in 1965, serving as both a writer and a photographer. Shortly thereafter, she married Paul Armfield Coffey (1934-2007), whom she probably knew from growing up in Boone, but with whom she also worked at the *Democrat*, where Coffey served as a journalist and photographer. Rachel reportedly worked an average of 70 hours per week during this period, by which time the operations of the Rivers Printing Company included two other newspapers, the *Blowing Rocket* and the *Avery Journal*. She also published two novels in the 1970s: *A Horse Like Mr. Ragman* (1977) and *The City Man* (1978).⁴¹

Following the death of R. C. Rivers, Jr., in 1975, Rachel and Armfield inherited the *Watauga Democrat*, the Rivers Publishing Company, and the other papers under its banner. They continued to run the company for the next two decades, eventually selling it to the owners of the *Bristol Herald-Courier* in 1994. Rachel also served as president of the North Carolina Press Association in 1994 and 1995. Today, the various papers and other media operations are owned by Jones Media, who acquired those concerns in 2002, and the *Watauga Democrat* remains the oldest continually operating business in Watauga County.⁴² Outside of her journalistic and writing pursuits, Rachel was also an influential and active participant in numerous cultural programs and initiatives in Boone and Watauga County. She helped found the Doc and Merle Watson Mountain Folk Art Museum in Cove Creek and the first Firefly Festival in Boone, served on the Watauga County Hospital Board and its Foundation Board, helped found the Watauga Humane Society, and was a prominent leader in her service with the boards of Historic Boone and the Watauga County Community Foundation. One of her most lasting contributions was her vigilant and persistent efforts to preserve the historically Black and White sections of the Boone Cemetery (WT0055). She and her husband also sponsored a professorship in creative writing at Appalachian State University shortly before her untimely death in 1999.

Following the death of her mother, Rachel Rivers-Coffey acquired most of the Rivers family land and held it for only a few years until she and her husband began conveying it to the Town of Boone in October 1998, along with the adjacent Esther Boone lands (not part of the designation boundary) acquired by Bonnie Jean Rivers in 1984 and bequeathed to Armfield Coffey in 1993.⁴³ As a condition of conveying these lands to the Town of Boone, Rachel and Armfield

⁴¹ Eric Plaag, “Watauga County Historical Society Announces Rachel Rivers-Coffey as Next Inductee to the WCHS Hall of Fame,” 23 July 2022, Watauga County Historical Society, online, <https://www.wataugacountyhistoricalsociety.org/blog-1/2022/7/23/watauga-county-historical-society-announces-rachel-rivers-coffey-as-next-inductee-to-the-wchs-hall-of-fame>. See also “Publisher R. C. Rivers, Jr., Dies; End Brought to Unique Career,” *Watauga Democrat*, 24 April 1975.

⁴² “History of the Watauga Democrat,” *Watauga Democrat*, 3 January 2012, updated 11 August 2014, online, <https://www.wataugademocrat.com/aboutus/history-of-the-watauga-democrat/article>; and Brad Hodges, “Former Newspaper Publisher Dies after Falling from Horse: Rachel Rivers-Coffey Was Long-Time County Civic Leader,” *Watauga Democrat*, 25 August 1999.

⁴³ Executrix’s Deed in Distribution, Rachel A. Rivers-Coffey to Rachel A. Rivers-Coffey and Jane Rivers Krida, 23 December 1993, Book of Records 272, Page 585; and Executrix’s Deed in Distribution, Rachel A. Rivers-Coffey to Rachel A. Rivers-Coffey, 23 December 1993, Book of Record 272, Page 579. Rachel and Armfield briefly surrendered their interest in part of the land to Jane in 1993—see Rachel A. Rivers-Coffey and Paul Armfield Coffey to Janes Rivers Krida, 31 December 1993, Book of Record 273, Page 244. Jane then transferred the land to a trust in her name before selling (or donating) it to the Appalachian State University Foundation in 1997. ASU returned

included a life estate to Rachel Rivers-Coffey and to Jim Butler, a family friend, during their lifetimes, as well as restrictions to the property and its future use by the Town of Boone. These restrictions read, “The Grantee may use said property only for the following purposes:... 1. Recreational purposes. 2. Green space 3. The Installation of utility lines; provided however, that all lines must be installed underground, and in such a way as to cause a minimum disturbance to the natural environment. 4. Flood mitigation. 5. A wildlife sanctuary. 6. Historical Purposes.”⁴⁴ Jim Butler, who resided in the home at the time of its donation to the Town, passed away in 2011, leaving the home empty as it sits today.⁴⁵

The R. L. Clay House is probably the best surviving resource with the highest degree of integrity in Watauga County associated with the Rivers family. The original Rivers “Old Home Place,” located at the southeast corner of King Street and Water Street in downtown Boone, was demolished in 1959.⁴⁶ The Rivers Printing Company Building (WT0585) does still stand and was the workplace for R. C. Rivers, Jr., and Rachel Rivers-Coffey for several decades. Nevertheless, changes to the original windows (now metal, with different sash and light details) and dramatic changes to both the rear elevation and the interior of the building (where no signs of the original printing operations survive) have reduced the overall integrity of the Rivers Printing Company Building in comparison to the high level of integrity of the R. L. Clay House.

Historical Significance

The R. L. Clay House possesses special significance at the local level for its association with members of the Rivers family, specifically Robert Campbell “R. C.” Rivers, Jr., and Rachel Rivers-Coffey, who were prominent figures in the publishing industry in Boone throughout the twentieth century. As consecutive editors and publishers of the *Watauga Democrat*, Boone’s

the land to Rachel in 1999. For this convoluted deed history, see Jane Rivers to Jane Rivers, Trustee of the Jane Rivers Living Trust Agreement, 13 December 1995, Book of Record 354, Page 410; Jane Rivers, Trustee of the Jane Rivers Living Trust Agreement to Appalachian State University Foundation, Inc., 17 December 1997, Book of Record 438, Page 124; and Appalachian State University Foundation, Inc., to Rachel Rivers-Coffey, 25 February 1999, Book of Record 507, Page 170. For the transfer of the house and garage parcel, as well as the parcel containing Rachel’s Meadow, to the Town of Boone, see Rachel Rivers-Coffey and Armfield Coffey to Town of Boone, 28 October 1998, Book of Record 480, Page 494; and Rachel Rivers-Coffey and Armfield Coffey to Town of Boone, 28 October 1998, Book of Record 480, Page 496. For the parcel fronting on Poplar Grove Road, which Armfield conveyed to the Town after Rachel’s death, see Armfield Coffey, personally and as Executor of the Estate of Rachel-Rivers Coffey, to the Town of Boone, 26 January 2000, Book of Record 553, Page 297. Armfield also acquired the old Esther Boone lands to the southeast of the house, which are not part of the designation boundary, in 1993, and he later donated these lands to the Town of Boone in 2004. See Rachel A. Rivers-Coffey, Executrix under the Last Will and Testament of Bonnie Jean L. Rivers, to Paul Armfield Coffey, 23 December 1993, Book of Record 272, Page 591; and Paul Armfield Coffey to Town of Boone, 12 March 2004, Book of Record 980, Page 689.

⁴⁴ Rachel Rivers-Coffey and Armfield Coffey to Town of Boone, 28 October 1998, Book of Record 480, Page 494. Similar language appears in the Esther Boone property conveyance to the Town, with the exception that the old Boone house could be torn down, and the lot could be used for “free, unmetered parking for park users.” See Paul Armfield Coffey to Town of Boone, 12 March 2004, Book of Record 980, Page 689.

⁴⁵ Anna Oakes, “Boone to Consider Uses for Property Near Rivers Street,” *Watauga Democrat*, 12 March 2012, online, https://www.wataugademocrat.com/news/boone-to-consider-uses-for-property-near-rivers-street/article_ca471d55-6394-58b2-8a82-d68129b847bb.html. This article includes an image showing the proximity of the Boone house to the property proposed for designation.

⁴⁶ Rob Rivers, “King Street,” *Watauga Democrat*, 5 November 1959: 4.

primary local newspaper since 1888, and owners of the Rivers Publishing Company for 61 years from 1933 to 1994, they dominated and controlled Boone’s most significant news media outlet for generations. R. C. Rivers, Jr., was responsible for the growth of the Rivers Printing Company outside of Boone, with the acquisition of both the *Blowing Rocket* and the *Avery Journal* during his publishing tenure, and he transformed the *Watauga Democrat* from an eight-page weekly publication to one that averaged 40 pages twice per week at the time of his death. His principal residence from 1945 to 1975 was the R. L. Clay House. Following his death in 1975, his daughter Rachel—who was raised in the R. L. Clay House—took over at the *Watauga Democrat* as editor and publisher and continued to own and operate the Rivers Printing Company with her husband Armfield Coffey until 1994. Their donation of the house parcel and several parcels of surrounding land in 1998 and just after Rachel’s death was critically important to the property’s long-term, ongoing preservation.

Built in 1933, the R. L. Clay House also possesses special significance in architecture at the local level as an unusually early, domestic example of architecturally sophisticated, native stone construction in Boone. This masonry work was completed by John L. Hickerson (ca. 1889-1938), a prominent Black mason and contractor in Boone and Watauga County from about 1920 until his death in 1938. He remains the only documented Black mason in Watauga County working during that period. The R. L. Clay House and its nearby garage remain intact and largely unchanged since their construction in 1933. The integrity and sophistication of the masonry work are exemplary when compared to other stone structures from the period of significance in downtown Boone. While not part of this proposed designation, even the interior floor plan of the R. L. Clay House appears to be largely unchanged from its original design.

V. Supporting Documentation

Appendix A: Digital Photography

Appendix B: Site Plan, Boundary Map, and Tax Map

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Winston-Salem Journal.

Appendix A: Digital Photography

All photographs were taken by Eric Plaag on July 25, 2023.



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0001.JPG

Clay House Drive, looking northwest



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0002.JPG

Moretz Drive, looking west toward Boone house site



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0003.JPG

Moretz Drive, looking north toward Rivers Park



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0004.JPG

R. L. Clay House, looking west from Clay House Drive



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0005.JPG
 R. L. Clay House and Garage, looking southwest from Clay House Drive



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0006.JPG
 R. L. Clay House, looking west



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0007.JPG
 R. L. Clay House and Garage, looking south



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0008.JPG
 R. L. Clay House entrance detail, looking southwest

Communication: R.L. Clay (Rivers) House - Landmark Report (150 Clay House Drive - R.L. Clay (Rivers) House Bathrooms - Pre-Application



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0009.JPG

R. L. Clay House entrance detail, looking south



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0010.JPG

R. L. Clay House entrance detail, looking southwest



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0011.JPG

R. L. Clay House, looking south



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0012.JPG

R. L. Clay House, looking south



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0013.JPG
R. L. Clay House, looking southeast



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0014.JPG
R. L. Clay House, looking east



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0015.JPG
R. L. Clay House, looking east



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0016.JPG
R. L. Clay House, looking east



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0017.JPG
R. L. Clay House, looking northeast



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0018.JPG
R. L. Clay House, looking north



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0019.JPG
R. L. Clay House, looking northeast



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0020.JPG
R. L. Clay House, looking north

Communication: R.L. Clay (Rivers) House - Landmark Report (150 Clay House Drive - R.L. Clay (Rivers) House Bathrooms - Pre-Application



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0021.JPG

R. L. Clay House, looking north



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0022.JPG

R. L. Clay House, looking northwest



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0023.JPG

R. L. Clay House, looking northwest



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0024.JPG

R. L. Clay House, looking northwest



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0025.JPG

R. L. Clay House, east porch detail, looking northwest



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0026.JPG

R. L. Clay House, east porch detail, looking northwest



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0027.JPG

R. L. Clay House, east porch walkway with Clay House Drive, looking southeast



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0028.JPG

R. L. Clay House, looking southwest



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0029.JPG
R. L. Clay House Garage, looking southwest



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0030.JPG
R. L. Clay House Garage, looking south



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0031.JPG
R. L. Clay House Garage, looking southeast



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0032.JPG
R. L. Clay House Garage, looking east

Communication: R.L. Clay (Rivers) House - Landmark Report (150 Clay House Drive - R.L. Clay (Rivers) House Bathrooms - Pre-Application



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0033.JPG

R. L. Clay House Garage, looking northeast



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0034.JPG

R. L. Clay House Garage, looking north



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0035.JPG

R. L. Clay House Garage, looking west



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0036.JPG

"Rachel's Meadow," looking northwest



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0037.JPG
 "Rachel's Meadow," looking west



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0038.JPG
 "Baby" with perimeter fence, looking northwest



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0039.JPG
 "Baby" with perimeter fence, looking southeast



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0040.JPG
 "Baby" interpretive signage, looking southeast



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0041.JPG

Southwest side of "Baby" perimeter fence, looking southeast toward house site (not visible)



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0042.JPG

Daniel Boone Monument at Rivers Park, looking northwest



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0043.JPG

Daniel Boone Monument at Rivers Park, looking west



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0044.JPG

Northeast side of Rivers Park, looking northwest

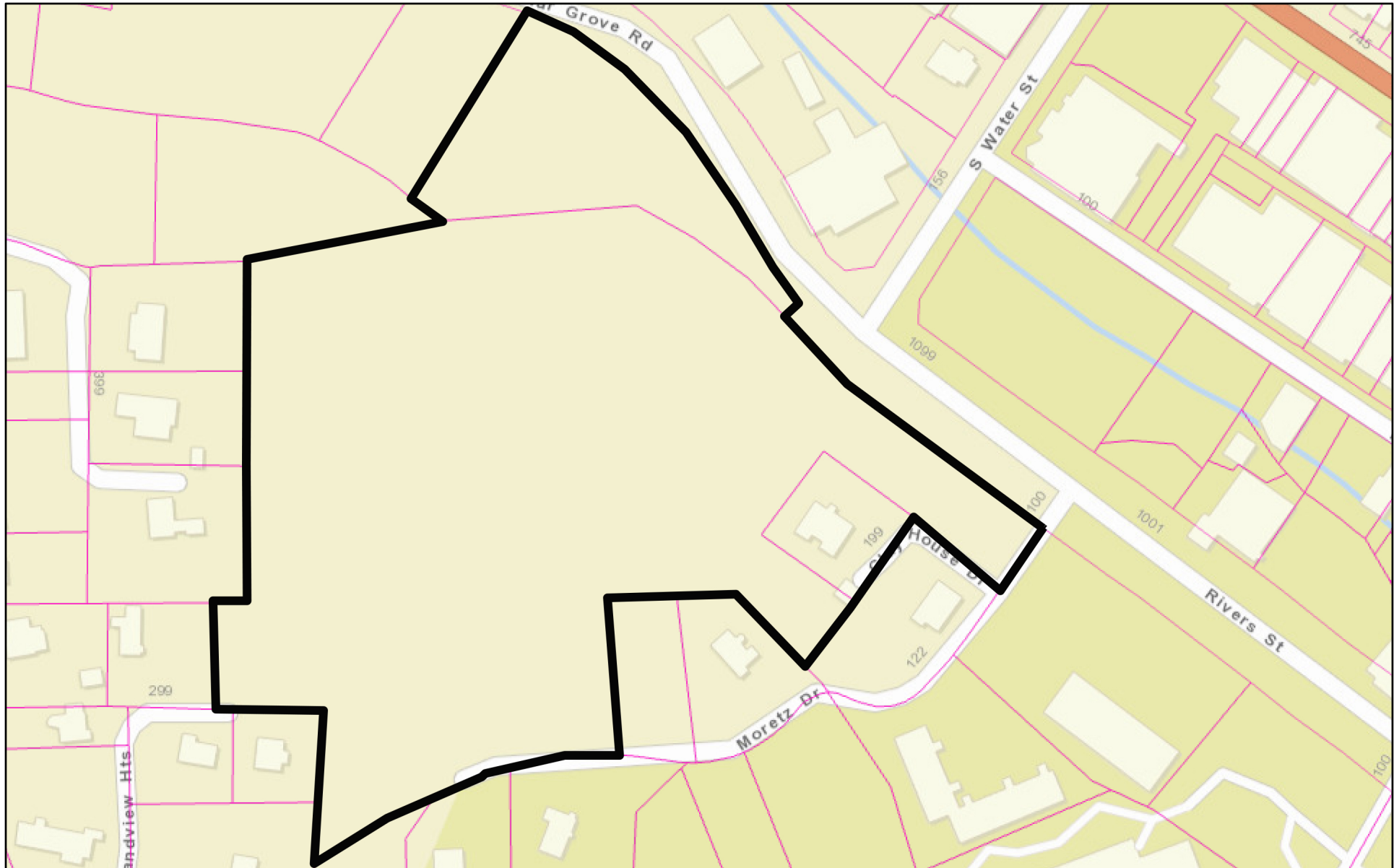


NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0045.JPG
Daniel Boone Monument at Rivers Park, looking southeast



NC_WataugaCounty_RLClayHouse_0046.JPG
Daniel Boone Monument at Rivers Park, looking east

Local Historic Landmark Boundary Map

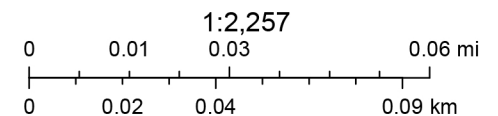


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- Parcels
- Local Historic Landmark Boundary

WT0530 RL Clay House
150 Clay House Drive
Boone, Watauga County, NC

Map created by Eric Plaag
Carolina Historical Consulting, LLC
December 1, 2023



State of North Carolina DOT, Esri, HERE, Garmin, INCREMENT P, NGA, USGS, NC Center for Geographic Information and Analysis (NCCGIA), NC

North Carolina State Historical Society

Local Historic Landmark Site Plan

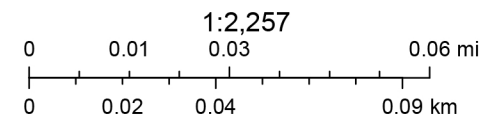


12/1/2023, 12:40:34 PM

- Parcels
- Local Historic Landmark Boundary

WT0530 RL Clay House
150 Clay House Drive
Boone, Watauga County, NC

Map created by Eric Plaag
Carolina Historical Consulting, LLC
December 1, 2023



State of North Carolina DOT, Esri, HERE, Garmin, INCREMENT P, NGA, USGS, NC Center for Geographic Information and Analysis (NCCGIA), NC

North Carolina State Historical Society

Packet Pg. 46

Parcel

ParID
Tax Year
SITUS Address
City, State, Zip
Unit #
Unit Description
NBHD
Class
Land Use Code
Living Units
CAMA Acres
Zoning
Map #

Jan 1 Values

Land Value.	821,100
Building Value	0
=====	=====
Appraisal Total	821,100
Exemptions or Exclusions	821,100
Land Deferred Value	
	=====
Taxable Total	0

Owner Mailing

Tax Year	2023
Sequence Number	0
Owner Number	1161496
Owner	BOONE TOWN OF
Mailing Address	567 W KING ST
City, State, Zip	BOONE NC 28607

Legal Description

Township	05 - BOONE
City Code	
Jurisdiction (Tax Code District)	MS1 - MUNICIPAL SERVICE DIST
Unit Desc	
Unit #	
Book	480
Page	496
Legal Desc 1	RIVERS HOME
Deeded Acres	8.15

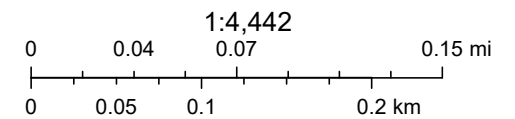
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29-OCT-98	480	496		0	

Watauga County Auditor



December 1, 2023

R. L. Clay House (WT0530), Boone, Watauga County, North Carolina
Tax Map for Parcel 2900-69-9070-000



Parcel

ParID
Tax Year
SITUS Address
City, State, Zip
Unit #
Unit Description
NBHD
Class
Land Use Code
Living Units
CAMA Acres
Zoning
Map #

Jan 1 Values

Land Value.	55,300
Building Value	626,900
=====	=====
Appraisal Total	682,200
Exemptions or Exclusions	682,200
Land Deferred Value	
	=====
Taxable Total	0

Owner Mailing

Tax Year	2023
Sequence Number	0
Owner Number	1161496
Owner	BOONE TOWN OF
Mailing Address	567 W KING ST
City, State, Zip	BOONE NC 28607

Legal Description

Township	05 - BOONE
City Code	
Jurisdiction (Tax Code District)	MS1 - MUNICIPAL SERVICE DIST
Unit Desc	
Unit #	
Book	
Page	
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Deeded Acres	0.26

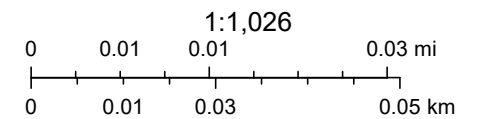
Sale Date	Book	Page	Sale Price	Grantor	Grantee
29-OCT-98	480	494		0 COFFEY, RACHEL RIVERS AND ARMFIELD	JIM BUTLER LIFE ESTATE

Watauga County Auditor



December 1, 2023

R. L. Clay House (WT0530), Boone, Watauga County, North Carolina
Tax Map for Parcel 2900-78-3934-000



Communication: R.L. Clay (Rivers) House - Landmark Report (150 Clay House Drive - R.L. Clay (Rivers))

Parcel

ParID
Tax Year
SITUS Address
City, State, Zip
Unit #
Unit Description
NBHD
Class
Land Use Code
Living Units
CAMA Acres
Zoning
Map #

Jan 1 Values

Land Value.	108,600
Building Value	0
=====	=====
Appraisal Total	108,600
Exemptions or Exclusions	108,600
Land Deferred Value	
	=====
Taxable Total	0

Owner Mailing

Tax Year	2023
Sequence Number	0
Owner Number	1161496
Owner	BOONE TOWN OF
Mailing Address	567 W KING ST
City, State, Zip	BOONE NC 28607

Legal Description

Township	05 - BOONE
City Code	
Jurisdiction (Tax Code District)	C02 - BOONE
Unit Desc	
Unit #	
Book	553
Page	297
Legal Desc 1	LOTS 167-173\ R F GREENE SUB
Deeded Acres	1.13

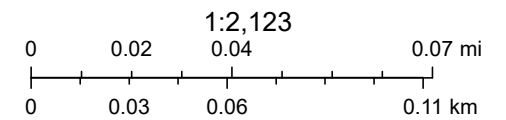
Sale Date	Book	Page	Sale Price	Grantor	Grantee
26-JAN-00	553	297		0	

Watauga County Auditor



December 1, 2023

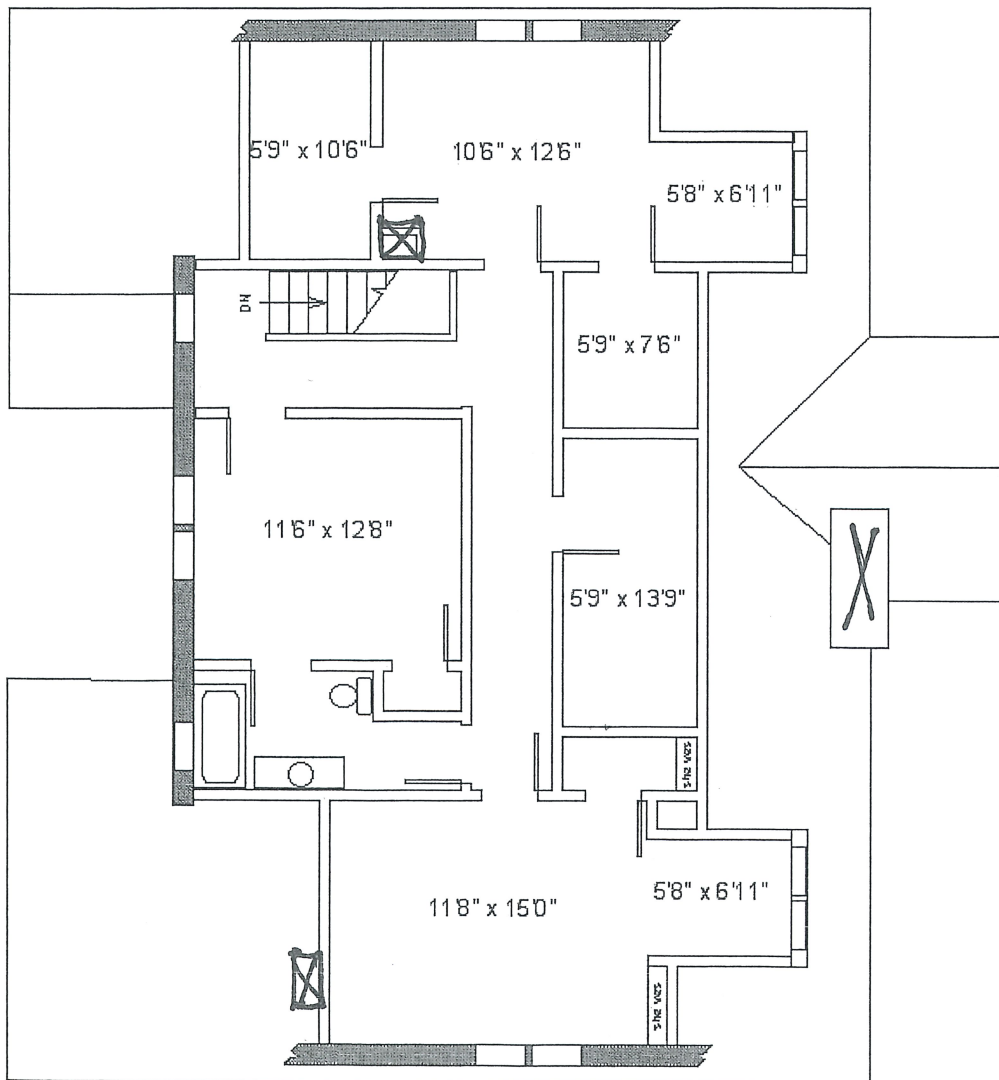
R. L. Clay House (WT0530), Boone, Watauga County, North Carolina
Tax Map for Parcel 2900-79-0308-000



Communication: R.L. Clay (Rivers) House - Landmark Report (150 Clay House Drive - R.L. Clay (Rivers) House Bathrooms - Pre-Application



WT0530 R. L. Clay House
150 Clay House Dr.
Boone, Watauga County, NC



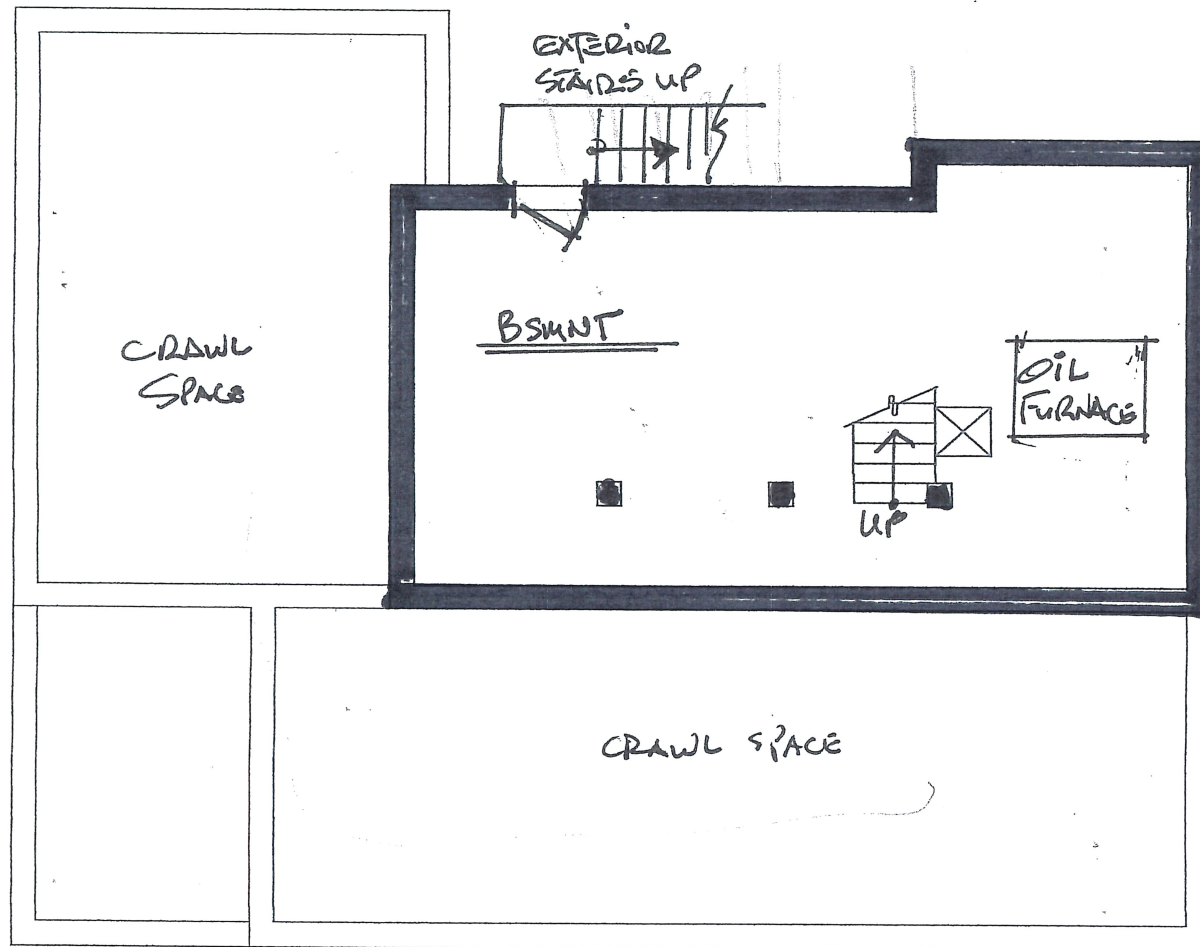
RIVERS HOUSE

2ND FLOOR

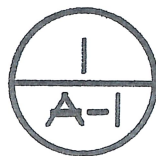
1/8" = 1'-0"

5-18-2017 FCM

WT0530 R. L. Clay House
150 Clay House Dr.
Boone, Watauga County, NC



Appalachian Architecture, P.A.
703 W. King Street, Suite #201
Post Office Box 179
Boone, NC 28607



BASEMENT PLAN

03/10/21
1/8" = 1'-0"

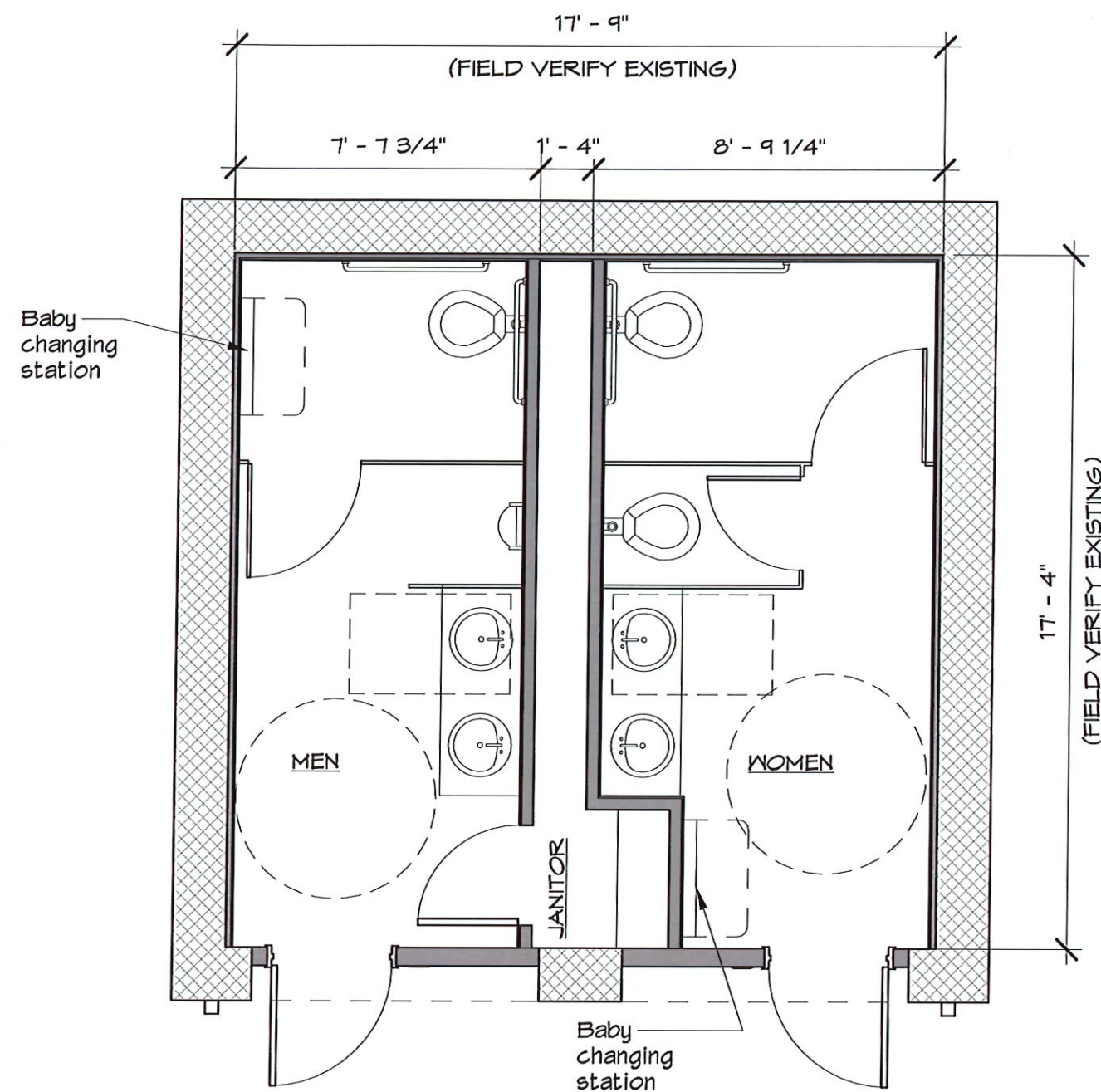
SCOPE OF WORK PROPOSED RESTROOMS RIVERS HOUSE GARAGE 03/27/2025

EXTERIOR

1. No exterior work to be performed that would damage or change the existing historic building. All repair or replacement of the existing materials on the building would be replaced with similar materials, size, shape and colors.
2. Remove multi-trunk wild cherry tree that is against left side east facing wall that is causing damage to the building. Remove other bushes, vines and briars immediately around the building.
3. Excavate around left side, right side and back of building to evaluate the existing rock walls, apply waterproofing and drainage mat to the underground foundation walls and install new French drain in gravel bed around perimeter-draining to daylight. Backfill to current existing grades.
4. Install new underground water, sewer and electrical service to serve the new restrooms. Install new electrical service and meter independent of the building (t.b.d.). New water and sewer service to be designed to also serve the River's House in future renovation.
5. Evaluate the existing bypass garage doors to remain in place as historical features or remove and discard-pending HPC's consideration and recommendations.
6. Evaluate existing asphalt shingle roof and sheathing for reuse or replacement with similar material.
7. Evaluate all wood trim elements for reuse or replacement with similar materials.
8. Evaluate existing exterior stone and mortar. If damaged, repair or replace with similar material. Stain any new mortar to match existing mortar color.
9. Replace existing 6/6 true divided lite wood window and trim in attic with new insulated true divided 6/6 lite wood window and similar trim.
10. Replace the existing attic wood door and trim with similar materials. Install new electronic lock and door hardware per Town's specifications.
11. Replace the existing rotten wood steps to attic storage room with new pressure treated wood steps, guardrails and handrails. Construct so that the steps are independent of the building and can be removed.

INTERIORS

12. Remove all materials, equipment, trash, etc. from garage and attic areas.
13. Insulate attic knee walls and ceiling and install new T & G wood throughout knee walls and ceiling as the finished material. Evaluate existing wood flooring for reuse. Replace damaged wood if rotten.
14. Prepare the existing dirt garage floor to receive new concrete floor w/ 4" gravel base and vapor barrier.
15. Evaluate existing rock and mortar walls and repair/repoint mortar if required to make water tight.
16. Furr-out exterior walls w/ 2x4 PT wood laid flat against rock. Install rigid foam insulation between furring. Install ½" water resistant sheetrock as finish material or concrete backer board for substrate behind walls to be tiled.
17. Insulate existing attic floor system and prepare framing to receive new smooth sheetrock ceiling.
18. Install new 2x6 insulated frame wall within the existing rock openings w/ (2) 3' x 6'-8" door openings. Install new T&G vertical wood siding on exterior to match the existing original garage doors.
19. Install new insulated hollow core flush metal doors on hollow metal frames. Install thin strips of wood on exterior surface of door to match the new vertical siding. Install new door hardware and electronic locks per Town of Boone specifications.
20. Interior finishes – T.B.D. ..durable & easy to maintain, indestructible. easily cleanable.



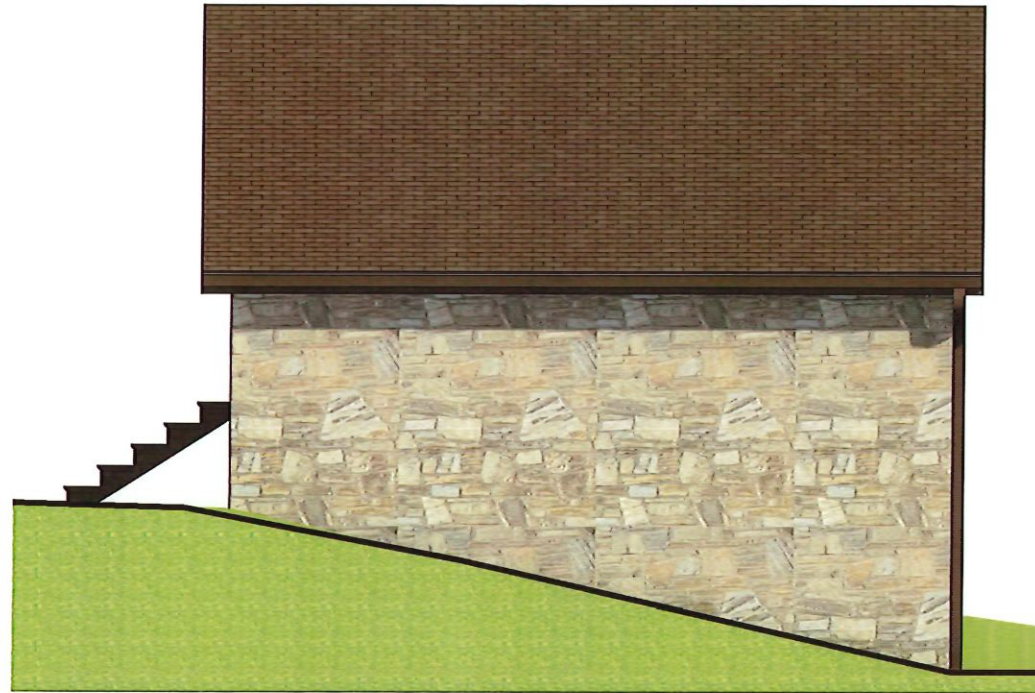
① FLOOR PLAN
1/4" = 1'-0"

▲ ● ■
APPALACHIAN ARCHITECTURE, P.A.



② FRONT VIEW

RIVERS HOUSE
GARAGE RESTROOMS
3/26/25



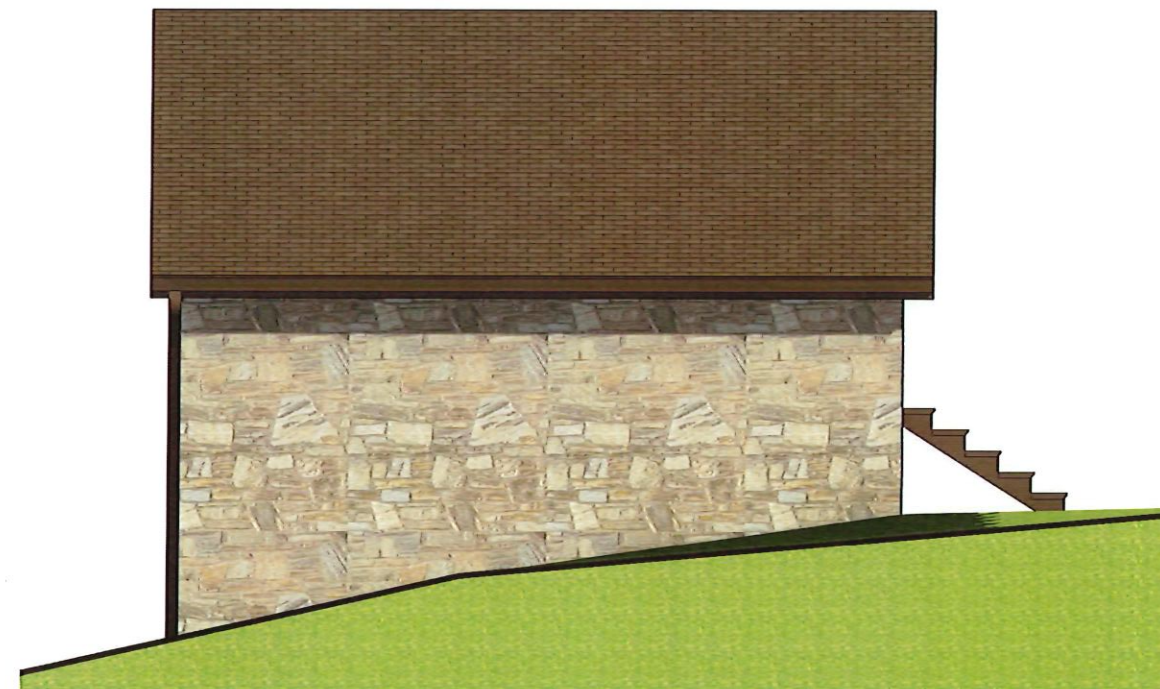
② LEFT SIDE ELEVATION
3/16" = 1'-0"



① FRONT ELEVATION
3/16" = 1'-0"



③ REAR ELEVATION
3/16" = 1'-0"



④ RIGHT SIDE ELEVATION
3/16" = 1'-0"

RIVERS HOUSE
GARAGE RESTROOMS
3/26/25

▲ ● ■
APPALACHIAN ARCHITECTURE, P.A.

**TOWN OF BOONE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
ADVISORY MEETING MINUTES
March 4, 2025, 3:00 p.m.
Planning & Inspections Department & WebEx Video Conferencing**

Historic Preservation Commission Members in Attendance: Vardell Smyth-Chair, Bettie Bond-Vice-Chair, and Ayden Basinger

Council Liaison: Virginia Roseman (via WebEx)

Town Staff in Attendance: Jessica Mitchell-Advanced Planning Specialist, Amy Snider-Commercial Zoning Administrator, Brandon Wise-Deputy Director, Laney Wise-Grants Coordinator/Communications, and Alyson Wuagneux-Board Clerk

Call to Order

Chair Smyth called the Boone Historic Preservation Commission meeting held in the Planning & Inspections Conference Room at 680 West King Street and via WebEx to order at 3:00 p.m.

Adoption of Agenda

Commission Member Basinger made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Bond, to adopt the agenda.

Vote: Aye – 3
Nay – 0

The motion passed.

Public Comment

Ms. Mitchell shared the updated guidelines for public comment recently approved by Town Council and noted that the update would impact advisory boards. For HPC Advisory meetings, new guidelines require a sign-up sheet for anyone who wants to speak under public comment. She went on to explain that in-person attendees are guaranteed to speak while virtual attendees would be at the discretion of the board. Chair Smyth asked for clarification about whether participants are expected to sign up in advance or at the meeting. Ms. Mitchell explained that attendees will sign up at the meeting and referred to the Town of Boone Public Comment Guidelines.

There was no public comment.

150 Clay House Drive – R.L. Clay (Rivers) House – HPC Pre-Application Workshop

Ms. Mitchell explained that the intention of the workshop is to provide guidance and is a voluntary and informal process where comments made by the Commission are non-binding. She directed members to the signed waiver and explained this process is separate from the quasi-judicial meeting. Ms. Mitchell went on to explain that the task for HPC members is to review what is suggested and provide feedback on preliminary project ideas.

Ms. Laney Wise, Grants Coordinator/Communications, introduced herself and stated that the project is funded through the RTP (Recreational Trails Program) grant program with the purpose of bringing recreation to downtown Boone. She went on to recognize the efforts of Jordan Sellers, Northern Peaks State Trail Coordinator with Blue Ridge Conservancy, DBDA (Downtown Boone Development Association), and the Town Council. Ms. Wise then directed the conversation to Mr. Sellers for more details about the project.

Mr. Sellers recognized the community wide effort and offered a brief background of his work with Blue Ridge Conservancy and the Northern Peaks State Trail – a designated North Carolina state trail stretching from Boone to West Jefferson. He explained the proposal of two trail types at the property and directed members to page 66 of the packet, specifically explaining the green and grey marked trails. Mr. Sellers began with the grey trail, proposing the trailhead to begin on Rivers Street with an aggregate surface. He communicated the challenge of making an ADA-compliant trail on the property and offered the two surface types as a possible accessibility solution. Mr. Sellers mentioned the proposed trailhead as an item requesting guidance from HPC members. He then directed members to the burgundy line on the map as the switch in surface type from aggregate to natural surface constructed to modern day, sustainable trail construction standards. He explained that the trails would be designed to function as erosion control measures without the need of water bars or other water runoff diversion methods. Mr. Sellers went on to describe the qualities of the current trail and areas for improvement, namely, renovating the section of the trail from behind the house up to the North Carolina Champion maple tree, to make it sustainable and designating it as an official Northern Peaks State Trail. He also provided details of the proposed trail and proposed trailhead kiosk located at the intersection of the aggregate surface trail and natural surface trail. He went on to explain that the proposed kiosk would have a map of the trails and some interpretive signage about the park including its history as well as information about Northern Peaks State Trail. Mr. Sellers mentioned that this location – the intersection of the two surface types – would be the most appropriate location if trying to limit disturbance at the park, but vocalized his concern of its visibility from Rivers Street. Mr. Sellers welcomed questions and thoughts from Commission members.

Vice-Chair Bond asked for clarification on the trailhead location and size, specifically asking about parking a car there. Mr. Sellers responded no. Vice-Chair Bond asked for clarification on trailhead signage. Mr. Sellers communicated his willingness to comply to Town standards and welcomed any suggestions. He referenced the Blue Ridge Parkway and the MST (Mountains-to-Sea Trail) as examples of general trailheads. Ms. Wise mentioned potentially modeling it after historic, metal signage used in the past and welcomed any suggestions from Commission members. Vice-Chair Bond asked what the proposed signage would say. Mr. Sellers responded that the proposed trailhead sign would be for wayfinding only and would ideally have the Northern Peaks State Trail logo with a minimal description of the trails. He went on to explain that the proposed trailhead kiosk would provide a more detailed description and be constructed of timber frame. Commission Member Basinger asked for clarification on the design of the burgundy marked trail, specifically whether or not this proposed trail was the existing trail or new construction. Mr. Sellers answered that the burgundy marked trail would be new construction. Chair Smyth questioned the location of the proposed Rivers Street trailhead. Mr. Sellers stated that the location is not firm and is open for suggestions from Commission members.

Members discussed the challenge of installing a NCDOT approved crosswalk at that location. Mr. Sellers referred to public visibility and the attempt to decrease lawn disturbance as two factors of decision making. He reiterated his willingness to take suggestions from Commission members. Vice-Chair Bond voiced her concerns with the proposed trailhead location as presented in the packet. Ms. Wise made reference to the opinion of Town Council in prior meetings and asked Mr. Sellers to elaborate. He recalled Town Council Member Eric Plaag's preference of the Rivers Street trailhead being located near the monument. Mr. Sellers and Commission members discussed possible design options if the trail were shifted to the lawn and the importance of accessibility. Ms. Wise noted a future project at the R.L. Clay (Rivers) House location for public restroom funded through the Accessible Parks Grant Program and voiced the importance of ADA accessibility for a portion of the trail. Commission members voiced their desire to incorporate the monument into the design of the trail, and they did not see any conflicts with the historic district standards.

Ms. Wise asked for guidance on proposed trailhead signage. Chair Smyth directed the question to Mr. Wise for guidance. Mr. Wise noted that it would be a government sign based on UDO standards but didn't foresee

any issue with the proposed designs. Mr. Sellers communicated that he would like for the sign to maintain cohesion with the sign set in West Jefferson. Mr. Wise recommended Commission members take the proposed designs into consideration and offer suggestions upon review, paying attention to the trailhead sign that will be publicly visible. He discussed further that the sign should not exceed four square feet and could be temporary if needed. Ms. Wise asked if there would be any issues with placing the sign at the corner of River Street and Moretz Drive. Commission members did not see any issues with the proposed trailhead signage design or location.

Mr. Sellers raised concern about the stability of the fence enclosing the maple tree. He inquired about the feasibility of erecting a monument at that location to mark the Southern Terminus of the entire Northern Peaks State Trail. Mr. Wise and HPC Members did not recall or foresee any complications with a potential monument.

Ms. Wise communicated that the goal is to complete the project this year (2025) pending RTP approval and notice to proceed. Mr. Wise advised Ms. Wise and Mr. Sellers to finalize the signage and trail design before the April Quasi-Judicial Meeting. Ms. Wise asked if this project would need to go back to Town Council if the project is approved. Mr. Wise advised her to double-check with Town Manager Davis. Chair Smyth asked that Ms. Wise and Mr. Sellers draft and offer a few examples of the proposed signage. Mr. Wise directed Ms. Wise and Mr. Sellers to speak with Public Works Staff, Greg Hollars, for any signage that the Town would be responsible, and for guidance and suggestions.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Commission Member Basinger made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Bond, to approve the February 11, 2025, advisory meeting minutes.

Vote: Aye – 3
Nay – 0

The motion passed.

Discussion of HPC Tasks

Ms. Mitchell noted that the Stoneman's Raid Interpretative Panel with the Civil War Trails marker program (CWT) is paused for any work by HPC while waiting for CWT's review. She suggested two different tasks that are Town Council directed projects, and where there is potential for collaboration with an ASU History class. She began by describing the two Town Council directed projects, the first task being "Ice House Alley," as part of the Dana Folk Way discussion. She explained that Town Council previously considered the Commission's suggestion to include interpretive signage for acknowledging the alleyway as it was historically known as "Ice House Alley." She explained that it would be similar to the plan for the Dana Folk Way sign but would describe the history of the alleyway located on the Howard Street side. The second task was recently discussed at the February 12, 2025, Town Council meeting, for a historic marker of Kraut Creek (Boone Creek). The historic marker is to capture the history of the sauerkraut plant along Boone Creek as well as its relationship to nearby buildings. Ms. Mitchell went on to explain that the current food hub location was part of the operations, as a cabbage root cellar, but was not all of the operations as the plant also canned other items. She clarified that the focus would be about Boone/Kraut Creek and the sauerkraut plant.

Ms. Mitchell then described a proposed collaboration with Appalachian State University History Professor, Dr. Deathridge, in which students from her class might assist with an upcoming HPC project. Ms. Mitchell clarified that the Town would not be funding this project and that the scope of the project would need to be specific.

Council Member Liaison Roseman raised attention to the Hickory Ridge Homestead and the Daniel Boone Park amphitheater and asked for clarification on the role of HPC or potentially for collaboration with ASU. Mr. Wise stated that the Hickory Ridge Homestead and Daniel Boone Park amphitheater are not within the

purview of HPC at this time. He recalled that Town Council Member Eric Plaag is currently working on local landmark designation and it might come to HPC in the future.

Ms. Mitchell discussed the proposed collaboration with ASU, reiterating that the suggested project needs to be specific. Vice-Chair Bond noted that Dr. Deathridge has also requested to do a project with Digital Watauga and are doing a show at the Jones House later this year. Vice-Chair Bond mentioned that one class only meets every other Fall semester, and Ms. Mitchell stated that she believed Dr. Deathridge was referring to a class during the Spring 2025 semester. Commission Member Basinger stated the importance of knowing which class this project would be for in order to offer an appropriate scope of work. Vice-Chair Bond went on to suggest the possibility of presenting a specific project to see if it fits within the scope of any of her classes. Ms. Mitchell suggested presenting Dr. Deathridge with the Kraut Creek project. She added that since it would be for a historic marker, she could suggest the scope of this project and provide examples of previous historic markers and their accompanying reports. Ms. Mitchell stated that she would clarify timing and deliverables as a report, or something similar for Commission members to review. She welcomed suggestions from Commission members.

Chair Smyth suggested the possibility of the students researching the history of local buildings for potential interpretative signage for each building, aiming to keep a summary for each building to roughly one paragraph. Ms. Mitchell raised concern regarding the cost associated with producing signage. Chair Smyth and Vice-Chair Bond suggested having the students draft the documents for a potential future project. Commission Member Basinger suggested giving the students a single project with a broad scope and allow the students to focus on individual details that contribute to the final report. Chair Smyth recalled one of the broader goals to have a database of historical information and recommended using the additional resources, if possible. Ms. Mitchell proposed giving the students specific archival resources from Digital Watauga of Boone/Kraut Creek as a start. She then asked if there was a general consensus to move forward with the discussion with Dr. Deathridge based off of this discussion, to which all members agreed. Ms. Mitchell then inquired whether any Commission members would be interested in researching Ice House Alley. Chair Smyth and Commission Member Basinger volunteered to perform research to the best of their ability.

Staff Updates

Boone Cemetery Interpretative Panels

Ms. Mitchell updated Commission members that all of the required pieces have been received and are ready to be installed, weather dependent, for the Boone Cemetery Interpretive Panels. She asked for Commission members' thoughts of an unveiling ceremony. Commission members expressed a consensus to an unveiling ceremony. Ms. Mitchell noted that the promotion for the ceremony would include various outlets including, social media, a press release, and other communication. Commission members did not suggest a specific date as Ms. Mitchell stated the unveiling ceremony would need Town Council consideration. Commission members expressed flexibility with choosing a date, and Chair Smyth stated that he could prepare for a brief talk, if requested.

Statement of Conformity Report

Ms. Mitchell stated there were no new applications for Statements of Conformity within the last 30 days. Mr. Wise brought attention to the removal of the Mast General Store green awnings (located on King Street) and advised Commission members that this could come before them, depending on whether or not they will be replacing the awning.

Mr. Wise reminded Commission members of two Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) cases to be presented at the next quasi-judicial meeting: Come Back Shack and 713 W King Street. He also made note that the COA case for the Northern Peak State Trail would be coming in the following month's quasi-judicial hearing. Chair

Smyth asked for clarity on the Come Back Shack project and the role of HPC. Mr. Wise stated that even though the building is not historical, it is within the Historical District and must meet those standards.

HPC Member Updates

Vice-Chair Bond provided details of an upcoming event at the Watauga County Library in association with the Watauga County Historical Society on March 13, 2025 at 5:30 p.m.

Other Discussion

Commission Member Basinger noted his observation that the sign for the restaurant, The Social, had been hung on the John W. Hodges Building.

Adjournment

Vice-Chair Bond made a motion, seconded by Commission Member Basinger, to adjourn the meeting at 4:06 p.m.

Vote: Aye – 3
Nay – 0

The motion passed.

Vardell Smyth, Chair

Alyson Wuagneux, Board Clerk

**TOWN OF BOONE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 11, 2025, 3:00 PM
Planning & Inspections Department & WebEx Video Conferencing**

Historic Preservation Commission Members Present: Vardell Smyth-Chair, Bettie Bond-Vice-Chair, and Ayden Basinger (via WebEx)

Council Liaison: Virginia Roseman (via WebEx)

Planning Staff Present: Brandon Wise-Deputy Director, Jessica Mitchell-Advanced Planning Specialist, Amy Snider-Commercial Zoning Administrator, and Brenda Henson-Board Clerk

Other Town Staff/Representatives Present: Allison Meade-Town Attorney (via Webex)

Call to Order

Chair Smyth called the Boone Historic Preservation Commission meeting to order at 3:06 p.m. The meeting was held in the Planning & Inspections Conference Room at 680 West King Street and via WebEx.

Adoption of Agenda

Vice-Chair Bond made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Commission Member Basinger seconded the motion.

Vote: Aye – 3
Nay – 0

The motion passed.

Case A25-0045 713 W King St – Certificate of Appropriateness

J. Swartz Construction, LLC has submitted an application, on behalf of the property owner, for a Certificate of Appropriateness for Major Work for 713 W King St (D.L. Wilcox Building) located in the Downtown Boone Local Historic District to alter the primary elevation by applying a new layer of stucco to existing stucco creating a smoother texture.

Jessica Mitchell, Brandon Wise, and Amy Snider, Town Staff members, were sworn in by Chair Smyth.

Commission members indicated they had no fixed opinions, no conflicts of interest, and had not participated in ex-parte communication regarding this case.

Josh Swartz, applicant for the case, was sworn in by Chair Smyth.

Chair Smyth asked Mr. Swartz if he had any objections to the contents of the meeting packet. Mr. Swartz replied that he had no objections.

Ms. Snider presented the request as outlined in the meeting packet.

Vice-Chair Bond asked if there was damage to the building caused by Hurricane Helene. Mr. Swartz replied that there was no damage to the stucco. However, there was flooding in the basement. He suggested that replacing the stucco might help with potential future flooding in the basement but noted this replacement was primarily aesthetic.

Chair Smyth stated that the building's façade was dramatically changed from its original façade, so the current façade was no longer historic.

Mr. Swartz explained that the property owner wanted to redo the front of the building altogether but decided there were too many hoops to jump through. Because the intent was to sell the building, the property owner felt it would be easier to replace the stucco and repaint it to make the façade a little more attractive. Mr. Swartz asked if the paint color would need to remain the same. Ms. Snider replied that the paint color would need to stay the same. If the property owner wished to paint the exterior a different color or paint an unpainted surface, that request would require approval by the Historic Preservation Commission.

Chair Smyth stated that the entire front façade, except for the storefront windows, was no longer historical to the building because the building had been through several renovations.

Chair Smyth noted that Mast Store had removed the awning on the front of their building, and the gorgeous clerestory windows were now visible. He also stated that for this property, there were clerestory windows that were once there that might be under the current façade.

There was no public comment on this case.

Motion and Vote:

Vice-Chair Bond made a motion, seconded by Commission Member Basinger, that the proposed development is congruous with the special character of the Downtown Boone Local Historic District because the appearance and color of the building's façade will remain the same. The COA is approved subject to the following conditions:

- Where there is a conflict between the application information and the plans (January 21, 2025), the plans control. Insignificant deviations may be permitted to comply with the requirements of the UDO.
- Any commitments and representations concerning the proposed exterior modification made by the applicant or its representatives at the public hearing shall also become a condition of the permit and a basis for a stop work order and/or permit revocation if violated.
- The applicant shall submit the necessary applications, plans, details, and specifications which meet the requirements of the Town Code, UDO, Building Code, and any other applicable codes for review and approval necessary to issue Zoning and Building Permits.

Vote: Aye – 3
Nay – 0

The motion passed.

Case A25-0061 Come Back Shack – Certificate of Appropriateness

Elliot Coatney, on behalf of Family Only Inc., has submitted an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for Major Work for the Come Back Shack at 767 W. King Street, located in the Downtown Boone Local Historic District. The request is for the addition of a covered patio attached to the structure on the secondary elevation.

Mr. Wise presented the case as outlined in the meeting packet. He noted that the proposed covered area had open seating and an entry door. Mr. Wise stated that the building was newly constructed in the historic district. The patio area was in a "false alley" created during the new construction that would not block the walkways.

Steven Prewitt and Scott Prewitt, Family Only, Inc. members, and Elliot Coatney, applicant for Come Back Shack, were sworn in by Chair Smyth.

Chair Smyth stated that this was an extension to a new building that did not have to be historic because the building was not historic. Mr. Wise replied that the addition to the building should be compatible with the historic district. He added that some cable-hung awnings on the side of the building were approved with the building's construction, and this request would expand the awnings. However, the new awnings would require footers and attachment to the building because they were not cable-hung. Mr. Wise noted that the new construction of the building was approved before the enactment of the historic district.

There was no public comment on this case.

Motion and Vote:

Chair Smyth made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Bond, that the proposed development is congruous with the special character of the Downtown Boone Local Historic District because of the evidence presented in the meeting packet. The COA is approved subject to the following conditions:

- Where there is a conflict between the application information and the plans (August 30, 2024), the plans control. Insignificant deviations may be permitted to comply with the requirements of the UDO.
- Any commitments and representations concerning the proposed exterior modification made by the applicant or its representatives at the public hearing shall also become a condition of the permit and a basis for a stop work order and/or permit revocation if violated.
- The applicant shall submit the necessary applications, plans, details, and specifications which meet the requirements of the Town Code, UDO, Building Code, and any other applicable codes for review and approval necessary to issue Zoning and Building Permits.

Vote: Aye – 3
Nay – 0

The motion passed.

Other Matters

Ms. Meade suggested that at an advisory meeting, the HPC, staff, and herself should evaluate previous COA cases to see if there were matters that could be handled administratively instead of having to go before the Commission. They could also discuss past projects to see what elements worked and which did not turn out like the HPC thought they would.

Chair Smyth suggested the possibility of a paint color palette so that property owners who wanted to paint the exterior of their buildings downtown could do so without approval from the HPC if they chose an approved color.

Ms. Mitchell stated that revisions to Appendix D had been delayed due to work on the Comprehensive Plan and would still take several months to complete.

Chair Smyth noted that he could not attend the April 1, 2025, HPC advisory meeting. The HPC agreed to cancel the April 1, 2025, HPC meeting. The next meeting would be the April 8, 2025, quasi-judicial meeting.

Mr. Wise noted that one Statement of Conformity should be submitted for Mellow Mushroom to remove shutters from their building that were not historic.

Vice-Chair Bond noted that the quilting emblems over the antique mall were down. Mr. Wise replied that one fell off and the others deteriorated, so the property owner removed them. He added that work was completed to replace the previously damaged storefront window in kind.

Ms. Mitchell provided an update on HPC tasks and collaboration with an Appalachian State history class. She said she followed up with Dr. Deathridge regarding her class researching the Boone/Kraut Creek historic marker project. She gave Dr. Deathridge the project details she told the HPC last week. She stated that Dr. Deathridge would like to do the work this semester with her class. Ms. Mitchell noted that Dr. Deathridge expressed an interest in working on more than one project. Dr. Deathridge proposed having her students come up with other potential historical marker sites, understanding that HPC could hear them. Still, it would be up to the Town Council to decide if there would be interest in a historical marker for the other locations.

Ms. Mitchell anticipated that Dr. Deathridge's class would have their draft work ready to present at the June HPC advisory meeting. She provided Dr. Deathridge with information on previous historic marker reports and marker companies that the Town had worked with to give her an idea of what was expected.

Vice-Chair Bond felt that the history of Howard Street, from the Daniel Boone Inn to the former Watauga County Jail (Proper Restaurant), would be an interesting project.

Adjournment

Chair Smyth motioned to adjourn the meeting at 4:49 p.m. Vice-Chair Bond seconded the motion.

Vote: Aye – 3
Nay – 0

The motion passed.

Vardell Smyth, Chair

Brenda Henson, Board Clerk

**CASE A25-0045
713 WEST KING STREET
CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS**

**WRITTEN DECISION OF THE
TOWN OF BOONE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
APPROVING A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS**

This application for a Certificate of Appropriateness pursuant to the Town of Boone Unified Development Ordinance (“UDO”) came before the Town of Boone Historic Preservation Commission (the “Commission”) on March 11, 2025, for a quasi-judicial hearing. Commission members present were Vardell Smyth, Bettie Bond, and Ayden Basinger.

J. Swartz Construction, LLC, has submitted an application, on behalf of the property owner, for a Certificate of Appropriateness for Major Work for 713 W King St (D.L. Wilcox Building) located in the Downtown Boone Local Historic District to alter the primary elevation by applying a new layer of stucco to the existing stucco creating a smoother texture.

Based on the testimony of the witnesses, the Application, the Staff Report and related materials, and the exhibits and other evidence presented at the hearing, the Commission finds that the requested Certificate of Appropriateness should be granted and, in support thereof, makes the following Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law:

FINDINGS OF FACT

The Commission finds that substantial, material, competent evidence was presented establishing the following facts:

1. The property at issue consists of approximately 0.06 acres owned by Wigington GP, LLC, located at 713 West King Street, and consists of a parcel known as Watauga County PIN 2900-79-9238-000 (hereinafter, the “Property”).
2. The Property is zoned B1 Downtown Core in addition to the Downtown Boone Local Historic District Overlay.
3. The building was built in 1939 and was given an Inventory Classification of CH, which means the property contributes to the character of the district based on historical significance related to events or individuals associated with the property.
4. The basement of the building flooded during Hurricane Helene.
5. The façade of the building was dramatically changed from its original façade, so the current façade is no longer historic.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Based upon the application, the evidence submitted, the foregoing findings of fact, and UDO Section 6.01, the Historic Preservation Commission on March 11, 2025, makes the following Conclusions of Law:

Communication: Written Decision for Case A25-0045 713 W King St - COA (Approval of Written Decisions)

1. The proposed development is congruous with the special character of the Downtown Boone Local Historic District. (3-0 vote)

ACCORDINGLY, based on the foregoing FINDINGS OF FACT and CONCLUSIONS OF LAW, the Historic Preservation Commission hereby grants the Certificate of Appropriateness, subject to the following conditions:

1. Where there is a conflict between the application information and the plans (January 21, 2025), the plans control. Insignificant deviations may be permitted to comply with the requirements of the UDO.
2. Any commitments and representations concerning the proposed exterior modification made by the applicant or its representatives at the public hearing shall also become a condition of the permit and a basis for a stop work order and/or permit revocation if violated.
3. The applicant shall submit the necessary applications, plans, details, and specifications which meet the requirements of the Town Code, UDO, Building Code, and any other applicable codes for review and approval necessary to issue Zoning and Building Permits.

This decision shall be deemed filed with the Clerk of the Commission as of the date it has been signed by the Commission Chair and served on the Applicant/Appellant and any other Parties per the Certificate of Service attached hereto.

This the _____ day of _____, 20____.

Vardell Smyth, HPC Chair

Attest:

Brenda Henson, Board Clerk

***[Remainder of page intentionally left blank;
NOTICE OF RIGHT TO APPEAL and CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE FOLLOW ON NEXT PAGE]***

Communication: Written Decision for Case A25-0045 713 W King St - COA (Approval of Written Decisions)

Notice of Right to Appeal

If you are dissatisfied with the decision of this Commission, an appeal may be taken to the Boone Board of Adjustment within thirty (30) days after the date this order is filed with the Clerk of the Commission. See N.C.G.S. § 160D-947(e2) and Section 6.05 of the Town of Boone Unified Development Ordinance.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

The undersigned hereby certifies that on this _____ day of _____, 20_____, the foregoing written decision of the Town of Boone Historic Preservation Commission was filed with the Clerk to the Boone Historic Preservation Commission and served upon the following person(s), being the applicant/appellant/petitioner, the other parties to the Commission's proceedings (if any), and each person making a written request for a copy of this decision at the hearing (if any), by depositing a copy of same, enclosed in a first-class, postpaid wrapper in a post office or official depository under the care and custody of the United States Postal Service addressed as follows:

Applicant:

Joshua Swartz

PO Box 2954

Boone, NC 28607

jswartzconstructionllc@gmail.com

Property Owner:

Wigington GP, LLC

21 Hewit Drive

Corpus Christi, TX 78404

jwigington@wigrum.com

In addition, a copy of the foregoing document was provided on the same date by email if and as so indicated above.

By: _____

Brenda Henson, Clerk to the Town of Boone Historic
Preservation Commission

Communication: Written Decision for Case A25-0045 713 W King St - COA (Approval of Written Decisions)

**CASE A25-0061
COME BACK SHACK
CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS**

**WRITTEN DECISION OF THE
TOWN OF BOONE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
APPROVING A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS**

This application for a Certificate of Appropriateness pursuant to the Town of Boone Unified Development Ordinance (“UDO”) came before the Town of Boone Historic Preservation Commission (the “Commission”) on March 11, 2025, for a quasi-judicial hearing. Commission members present were Vardell Smyth, Bettie Bond, and Ayden Basinger.

Elliot Coatney, on behalf of Family Only Inc., has submitted an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for Major Work for the Come Back Shack at 767 W. King Street, located in the Downtown Boone Local Historic District. The request is for the addition of a covered patio attached to the structure on the secondary elevation.

Based on the testimony of the witnesses, the Application, the Staff Report and related materials, and the exhibits and other evidence presented at the hearing, the Commission finds that the requested Certificate of Appropriateness should be granted and, in support thereof, makes the following Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law:

FINDINGS OF FACT

The Commission finds that substantial, material, competent evidence was presented establishing the following facts:

1. The property at issue consists of approximately 0.48 acres owned by Howard Street Ventures, LLC, located at 767 West King Street, and consists of a parcel known as Watauga County PIN 2900-79-7562-000 (hereinafter, the “Property”).
2. The Property is zoned B1 Downtown Core in addition to the Downtown Boone Local Historic District Overlay.
3. The building was constructed in 2024 and is not an historic structure.
4. The covered patio and entrance area are located in a “false alley” that was created with the new construction of the building and is not blocking any walkways.
5. The proposed awning will be an extension of an existing covered patio on the secondary elevation.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Based upon the application, the evidence submitted, the foregoing findings of fact, and UDO Section 6.01, the Historic Preservation Commission on March 11, 2025, makes the following Conclusions of Law:

Communication: Written Decision for Case A25-0061 Come Back Shack - COA (Approval of Written Decisions)

1. The proposed development is congruous with the special character of the Downtown Boone Local Historic District. (3-0 vote)

ACCORDINGLY, based on the foregoing FINDINGS OF FACT and CONCLUSIONS OF LAW, the Historic Preservation Commission hereby grants the Certificate of Appropriateness, subject to the following conditions:

1. Where there is a conflict between the application information and the plans (August 30, 2024), the plans control. Insignificant deviations may be permitted to comply with the requirements of the UDO.
2. Any commitments and representations concerning the proposed exterior modification made by the applicant or its representatives at the public hearing shall also become a condition of the permit and a basis for a stop work order and/or permit revocation if violated.
3. The applicant shall submit the necessary applications, plans, details, and specifications which meet the requirements of the Town Code, UDO, Building Code, and any other applicable codes for review and approval necessary to issue Zoning and Building Permits.

This decision shall be deemed filed with the Clerk of the Commission as of the date it has been signed by the Commission Chair and served on the Applicant/Appellant and any other Parties per the Certificate of Service attached hereto.

This the _____ day of _____, 20____.

Vardell Smyth, HPC Chair

Attest:

Brenda Henson, Board Clerk

***[Remainder of page intentionally left blank;
NOTICE OF RIGHT TO APPEAL and CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE FOLLOW ON NEXT PAGE]***

Communication: Written Decision for Case A25-0061 Come Back Shack - COA (Approval of Written Decisions)

Notice of Right to Appeal

If you are dissatisfied with the decision of this Commission, an appeal may be taken to the Boone Board of Adjustment within thirty (30) days after the date this order is filed with the Clerk of the Commission. See N.C.G.S. § 160D-947(e2) and Section 6.05 of the Town of Boone Unified Development Ordinance.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

The undersigned hereby certifies that on this _____ day of _____, 20_____, the foregoing written decision of the Town of Boone Historic Preservation Commission was filed with the Clerk to the Boone Historic Preservation Commission and served upon the following person(s), being the applicant/appellant/petitioner, the other parties to the Commission's proceedings (if any), and each person making a written request for a copy of this decision at the hearing (if any), by depositing a copy of same, enclosed in a first-class, postpaid wrapper in a post office or official depository under the care and custody of the United States Postal Service addressed as follows:

Applicant:
Family Only, Inc.
Attn: Elliot Coatney
240 Shadowline Drive, Suite AA1
Boone, NC 28607
elliott@comebackshack.com

Property Owner:
Howard Street Ventures, LLC
PO Box 2675
Boone, NC 28607

In addition, a copy of the foregoing document was provided on the same date by email if and as so indicated above.

By: _____
Brenda Henson, Clerk to the Town of Boone Historic
Preservation Commission

Communication: Written Decision for Case A25-0061 Come Back Shack - COA (Approval of Written Decisions)



ToB - Statement of Conformity (SoC) Monthly Reporting for HPC

File Date	Application Number	Project Name	Permit Type	Permit Use	Location	Status	Issuing User
March 27, 2025	25-0214	Mellow Mushroom - Statement of Conformity	Zoning	Statement of Conformity	805 W KING ST	Pending	Amy Snider

1 Permits