



Historic Preservation Commission

Regular Meeting

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

~ Agenda ~

Jane Shook
828-268-6960

Tuesday, April 9, 2019

3:00 PM Planning and Inspections Conference Room

I. Call to Order

II. Adoption of Agenda

III. Approval of Minutes

March 12, 2019 Meeting Minutes

IV. Linville River Railway 100th Anniversary Celebration Task List Update

V. Historic Context on Phase One Survey Review

Boone's Second Boom: 1936-1941

VI. Turner House Update

VII. Funding Request for Digital Watauga

VIII. Dan'l Boone Gardens Update

IX. Other Matters by Commission Members or Staff

Set Agenda for next meeting

X. Adjournment

Boone Historic Preservation Commission
Meeting Minutes
March 12, 2019
3:00 p.m.

Historic Preservation Commission Members in Attendance: Eric Plaag-Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson Phoebe Pollitt, Bettie Bond, Teresa Pearman, Loretta Clawson and Rennie Brantz

Town Staff in Attendance: Christy Turner-Senior Planner and Marlene Crosby-Board Secretary

Others Present: None

Call to Order

Chairperson Eric Plaag called the meeting of the Boone Historic Preservation Commission, held in the Planning & Inspections upstairs conference room located at 680 West King Street, to order at 3:05 p.m.

Adoption of Agenda

Member Bond made a motion, seconded by Member Brantz to accept the agenda as amended with the following additions by Chairperson Plaag: add Mountaineer Bail Bonds Discussion after the Approval of Minutes, add Boone Cemetery Headstones Discussion after the Fire Station Update, add Dan'l Boone Native Gardens Update after Historic Context on Phase One Survey Review.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Approval of Minutes

Member Clawson made a motion, seconded by Member Brantz to approve the January 8, 2019 meeting minutes with the following changes: on page two, in the first sentence under Approval of Minutes change “agenda” to “ January 8, 2019 meeting minutes”, on page four in the second paragraph in the last sentence add “ usually” between is reversible, on page four in paragraph three, change “eligible” to “ eligibility”, on page four in the fourth paragraph add at the end of the paragraph “Chairperson Plaag declined to quote a range on costs and on page four in the fifth paragraph add “ The County has since purchased the property back from Mr. Turner, on page five in paragraph two add “Chairperson Plaag emphasized a lot of ideas, not a negotiation, on page five in the second paragraph at the end of the third sentence after 150 parking spaces add “by excavating to the Queen Street level” on page seven in the first paragraph in the last sentence between event and ask add “and”, on page seven in the seconded paragraph of the Motion and Vote remove “possibilities on activities” and add “possible activities”, on page

Communication: March 12, 2019 Meeting Minutes (Approval of Minutes)

seven in the third paragraph in the first sentence change “possibly” to “possibility”, on page seven in the third paragraph in the last sentence change “suggesting” to suggested”, on page eight in the second paragraph in the first sentence change “Spiceland” to Spiceland, on page eight in the third paragraph in the first sentence add “Boone” before railway, on page eight in the fifth paragraph remove “might” from the second sentence and on page nine in the second paragraph in the last sentence remove “and there were a number of one-armed bandits found in the basement”.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – Nay

The motion passed.

Mountaineer Bail Bonds Discussion

Chairperson Plaag talked about the Wade Brown office being removed, he noted this is the location of the former Mountaineer Bail Bonds business on W. King Street. He said the building has been purchased and there are different types of modern changes that had been proposed on the building including adding a second story to it. He asked Ms. Christy Turner, Senior Planner to explain what is going on with this building. Ms. Turner said the new owners approached the Town last December 2018 and wanted to tear the building down. She said they submitted proposed plans for the same building except for a penthouse on top of the building for the rooftop equipment. Ms. Turner said the Planning Staff had many meetings on the proposed plans which included consulting with the Town Attorney and Town Manager. Ms. Turner said the Planning Staff had to determine if it was an insignificant, minor, or major modification. Ms. Turner said it was determined that it was a minor modification.

Motion and Vote:

Chairperson Plaag made a motion, seconded by Member Brantz to ask Council to revisit the Unified Development Ordinance Section 4.16 and redefine major change to indicate the demolition of any portion or the whole of the building is considered by definition a major change.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Discussion ensued on the minor and major change. Ms. Turner clarified that the Council has approved part of a section of the UDO that if a building has been demolished and the applicant proposed to re-build with a higher than what was originally there, a conditional district rezoning is required. Chairperson Plaag clarified that, if the Council was willing to take a chance on a conditional-use permit rather than working with what they have. Ms. Turner said this UDO modification was made after they turned in their original zoning permit.

Member Brantz said if it had been declared a historic district, they would have needed to go through the process of seeking a permit through the Historic Preservation Commission. Chairperson Plaag said we should be clear that state law permits you to demolish a building after a waiting period of 365 days. Chairperson Plaag said the idea with the waiting period is to encourage those who do not want to use what is on the site to either move it or to come up with a better plan for it. Ms. Turner noted that the Planning Staff did try to work with the applicant during both the demolition and the new design applications, when they were submitted. Ms. Turner said if this had been a major modification, the applicant would have had to start all over with the said project. Chairperson Plaag asked Ms. Turner to keep the HPC posted on what happens with the UDO conditional district use modification on said topic.

Ms. Turner suggested changing the definitions in the UDO section for both minor and major modifications because the same thing could happen in a minor and major modification.

Motion and Vote:

Chairperson Plaag made a motion, seconded by Member Brantz based on the additional concern for the minor modification, Chairperson Plaag asked to resend the previous motion in anticipation of a new motion that will more accurately address the applicable section of the UDO.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Motion and Vote:

Chairperson Plaag made a motion, seconded by Member Pearman to ask the Council to visit UDO Section 4.16 to address the language within this entire section to make it clear that either a demolition of a portion or a whole of any building by definition would be considered a major change to the property.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Discussion ensued on having a HPC member attend the March 2019 Council meeting to answer questions on the motion for the proposed UDO modification. Chairperson Plaag said he would be at the March 21, 2019 Council meeting for another agenda item. Ms. Turner said she would ask the Town Clerk, if this topic can be placed on the Council agenda for said date.

Fire Station Update

Chairperson Plaag explained that Mr. John Ward, Boone Town Manager had become aware of a maintenance issue with the arcade along the front of the Boone Fire Station and the Eggers,

Eggers, Eggers and Eggers Law Office Building on W. King Street, formerly the Newton building. Mr. Ward said it would be cost more to repair the arcade than to replace it.

Discussion ensued on the arcade. Chairperson Plaag showed a Google maps view and a You Tube clip to the HPC of the arcade along the front of the buildings. After viewing the arcade, Chairperson Plaag said he was strongly in favor of removing the whole arcade and the brick veneer and working with the Eggers, Eggers, Eggers and Eggers Law Firm to appropriately rehabilitate the front of their building. Chairperson Plaag said this would be an opportunity to remove an architectural feature that does not fit into the Downtown area. Chairperson Plaag also talked about the possibility of the windows being used to let light into the second floor of the Newton building.

Discussion ensued on a façade incentive grant. Member Brantz asked if there are any grants available for removing the arcade; as well as possibly adding some type of covering over the front of the buildings after the removal of the arcade. Chairperson Plaag said it is possible to get a façade incentive grant applied for through the Downtown Boone Development Association and he explained the application process.

Discussion ensued on applying for outside grants for said arcade removal. Chairperson Plaag explained that the Newton building is not on the National Register and it is not in a Historic District and it is not eligible for tax incentive, Chairperson Plaag added that in the building's current condition there is no way to succeed in it becoming a local landmark.

Discussion ensued on tax credits. Member Brantz talked about the tax credit bill in the State Senate expiring. He pointed out that right now there is nothing to replace it.

Discussion ensued on the funding for the changes to the buildings. Chairperson Plaag said he is not negotiating; he is suggesting ideas for the changes to the buildings. Chairperson Plaag suggested the Eggers, Eggers, Eggers and Eggers Law Firm pay for the removal of the arcade in front of their building and the Town pay for the rehabilitation for the front of their building.

Motion and Vote:

Member Bond made a motion, seconded by Member Brantz to recommend to the Boone Town Council and the Boone Town Manager that the arcade running in front of the Boone Fire Station and the former Newton Department Store Building which currently houses the Eggers, Eggers, Eggers and Eggers Law Office be completely removed and the Town of Boone work with the owners of the Newton Department Store Building to appropriately and historically rehabilitate the northern elevation of the Newton Department Store Building to possibly include removal of the brick veneer back to the original fabric that the Historic Preservation Commission believes still exists.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Boone Cemetery Headstones Discussion

Member Pearman explained that recently, she had been by the Boone Cemetery and she noticed there were about six head stones either leaning or turned over. She showed some cell phone photos of the headstones showing the damage that has occurred to them.

Discussion ensued on the future possibility of getting Tsunami cameras at the Boone Cemetery. Ms. Turner explained that these type cameras cost about \$15,000 per year for two cameras. Chairperson Plaag asked about the cost to reset or repair the head stones. After reviewing the cell phone photos, Chairperson Plaag noted that it looked like the ground was perking up the headstones rather than the cause of the damage being vandalism. He suggested monitoring the headstones and waiting for Ms. Turner to do some research on long-term care of the headstones and other needs of the cemetery. Chairperson Plaag said that long-term care is a budget type item that would need to be discussed for the upkeep of the cemetery and to better track the around the clock activities in the cemetery. Ms. Turner said she would follow-up with Mr. John Ward, Boone Town Manager about it. Chairperson Plaag noted that he had emailed Mr. Ward several months ago regarding the cemetery issues. Chairperson Plaag suggested that the HPC continue to monitor the cemetery until they hear back from Mr. Ward.

Junaluska Community Marker Application Review Update

Chairperson Plaag said the Junaluska Heritage Association is waiting on a revision from the HPC on the marker application. He noted that Ms. Roberta Jackson of the JHA was in support of the clustering idea discussed at a previous HPC meeting. He confirmed that Vice-Chairperson Pollitt and Member Bond were researching items for the application and he encouraged them to continue with their research to revise the draft application. He said he would send Vice-Chairperson Pollitt the state version of the draft application for the flood marker for her and Member Bond to follow as they revise the draft application. He asked for them to complete the draft application and present it at the next HPC meeting for the HPC to review. Vice-Chairperson Pollitt said she would email it to the HPC prior to the next meeting.

Linville River Railway 100th Anniversary Celebration Task List

Chairperson Plaag explained that he had researched to see if the passengers used a “box lunch menu” when they rode on the train. He said he could not find where a box lunch was used nor could he find a menu. He said he tried to find menus that may have existed in the Towns between roughly 1919 and 1940. He did find a reference to the Boone Trail Café and their Thanksgiving Dinner menu.

Discussion ensued on the Downtown Boone Development Association involvement of the Linville River Railway 100th Anniversary Celebration. Member Bond said she attended the Downtown Boone Development Association meeting on March 12, 2019 at 8:30 a.m. along with Member Clawson. Member Bond said she informed the DBDA about what the HPC is doing for the said event and the DBDA will discuss what they can do for it and give their feedback to the HPC.

Member Clawson said that she talked with Ms. Lane Weiss, Downtown Boone Development Coordinator. Ms. Weiss said she would meet with her Promotions board about the said event. Chairperson Plaag confirmed that the DBDA will support the HPC during the said event. Member Clawson and Member Bond will inform the HPC of what the DBDA is doing after they attend the next DBDA meeting on April 9, 2019.

Discussion ensued on having signs made for the Linville River 100th Anniversary Celebration. Ms. Turner asked the HPC if they wanted her to look into having signs made for the said event. The HPC was in favor of the signage. Chairperson Plaag suggested to have the following put on the signs “Linville River Railway 100th Anniversary Celebration” and “Celebrate Tweetsie”.

Chairperson Plaag talked about the closing of certain streets and having food trucks at the event. He suggested that notifications be sent out to the local food businesses explaining that possibly certain streets would be blocked during the event. He suggested the Town waiving the fee for participation for the event on a first come, first serve basis because the event is for the Town. Ms. Turner said she would check with the Town regarding the food trucks.

Discussion ensued on having a drawing for Tweetsie tickets at the Linville River Railway 100th Anniversary Celebration. Ms. Turner suggested the drawing be for a family pass. Member Bond said she would contact Tweetsie Railroad regarding the donation of the family pass.

Ms. Turner said she would check with Mr. Paul Forte at Appalachian State University regarding the use of their space on the corner of Rivers Street and South Depot Street.

Member Bond suggested purchasing 100 whistles to hand out at the event. Chairperson Plaag suggested for Member Bond to ask Tweetsie Railroad, if they could provide the whistles.

Discussion ensued on providing train photos for the said event. Chairperson Plaag said he could locate some images but this would create a printing cost. Chairperson Plaag asked if the Planning & Inspections Department could pay for the images to be printed. Ms. Turner said she could check with Ms. Jane Shook, Director of Planning and Inspections.

Chairperson Plaag said at the last HPC meeting, Ms. Shook, said she would check on a projector to be used at the Jones House during the said event to show a Tweetsie Railroad film. Ms. Turner said she would follow up with Ms. Shook on the projector. Chairperson Plaag showed the film to the HPC.

Historic Context on Phase One Survey Report Review

Chairperson Plaag explained that he has completed another section of the Historic Context called “Boone’s Second Boom: 1936-1941 located in the meeting packet. He further explained that at the next HPC meeting, he will have the last section of the Historic Context completed. He said at the next HPC meeting, the HPC should be able to review these last two sections of the draft Historic Context and made a recommendation to send the revised draft to Council for their review. Chairperson Plaag noted that he is not tabling this agenda item, he is assigning the

review of the “Boone’s Second Boom: 1936-1941” to the HPC to be discussed at the next HPC meeting.

Dan’l Boone Native Gardens Update

Chairperson Plaag confirmed that the Town of Boone owns the land where the Dan’l Boone Native Gardens is located. Chairperson Plaag asked Member Pearman to give the HPC an update on what is happening at the Dan’l Boone Native Gardens and the Town’s role in what is happening at the gardens.

Member Pearman asked Member Bond to read a memo from the President of the Dan’l Boone Gardens. She explained that the memo included background information of the gardens.

Discussion ensued on the contract between the Town of Boone and the Dan’l Boone Gardens. Member Bond read in the said memo that the contract is for 25 years and it ends in 2036. Ms. Turner said she would try to locate a copy of the lease for the HPC to review.

Discussion ensued on the North Carolina State garden groups. Member Bond and Member Pearman explained how the three garden groups work. Member Bond said each group are individual groups.

Discussion ensued on the plan created by Mr. Eric Woolridge. Ms. Turner said she would try to locate said plan for the HPC to review.

Member Pearman explained that the Dan’l Boone Gardens board wants to keep the gardens. Member Pearman added that some of the problems at the Dan’l Boone Gardens are that some of the plants that were being planted by other garden clubs were not indigenous. Member Pearman also noted that there were mismanagement problems. Member Pearman said that the Dan’l Boone Gardens allows weddings at the gardens and they charge for the wedding events. Member Brantz said he thought that wedding type events were allowed in the terms of the lease. Ms. Turner said she would check on the wedding events.

Chairperson Plaag noted that Ms. Pilar Fotta, Director of Cultural Resources would be in charge of events held at the gardens. He said he would like to send two HPC members to talk to Ms. Fotta and gather information and discuss the possible implementations from the said memo read at this meeting. Chairperson Plaag said the goal is to explore ways in which the Town could support ongoing use of the Dan’l Boone Native Gardens in their present configuration for the remainder of the lease period whether or not the lease is broken.

Motion and Vote:

Chairperson Plaag made a motion, seconded by Member Brantz to ask HPC Members Bond and Pearman to schedule a meeting with Ms. Pilar Fotta, Director of Cultural Resources to gather information and discuss possible implementations of the memo written to Ms. Pearman, ways in which the Town could support ongoing use of the Dan’l Boone Native Gardens in their present configuration for the remainder of the lease period.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Other Matters by Commission Members or Staff

Chairperson Plaag set the next meeting agenda with the following items: Linville River Railway 100th Anniversary Celebration Task List Update, Historic Context on Phase One Survey Review, Update on the Turner House, Funding Request for Digital Watauga and Dan'l Boone Gardens Update.

Adjournment

With no other matters to discuss, Member Bond made a motion, seconded by Member Brantz to adjourn the meeting at 5:07 p.m.

Vote:

Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Eric Plaag, Chairperson

Marlene Crosby, Board Secretary

Boone's Second Boom: 1936-1941

The Great Depression certainly played a role in restricting downtown development during the early 1930s, but by 1936, there were signs of hope for the future. Established in 1921, the Watauga Building and Loan Association had played a secondary role in the “Watch Boone Grow” campaign, primarily funding domestic construction while being overshadowed by the large banks in town—the Watauga County Bank and the People’s Bank & Trust (later People’s Industrial Bank)—when it came to funding commercial construction.¹ The early 1930s, though, saw the collapse of both of Boone’s banks. Trouble was evident as early as January 1931, when the county’s banks required depositors to sign agreements that they would not make withdrawals from their accounts and would maintain their checking account balances for another ten months.² By 1933, though, both banks were closed.³ While the Watauga County Bank struggled to get back on its feet in the mid-1930s, the Watauga Building and Loan began to take up the slack, often funding commercial projects through the late 1930s.⁴

Initially, much of the activity of Boone’s second construction boom was centered along King Street, often resulting from the demolition of an architectural relic of Boone’s history or a desire to build infill. The first signs of this reinvestment in commercial construction came in 1936, with the demolition of the old and derelict Critcher Hotel and the construction of a new Shell gas station on the southeast corner of Depot and King Streets (WT0851). Built for R. T. Greer as a small, one-story, brick building with basement, the filling station also contained a small restaurant known as the Shell Café. Four years later, the Crest Five and Ten Cent Store arranged with Greer for the construction of a much larger building on the site, essentially incorporating the small brick Shell structure into the new building.⁵

The following year, 1937, saw the first clear signs of a building boom in downtown Boone. Just east of the Shell Cafe, a one-story, commercial block building with double storefront entrances opened up on the old Critcher Hotel site—the Belk-White Department Store Building (WT0850)—and a few months later, the three-story, brick, commercial block Hamby and Winkler Building (WT0592) opened with an A&P Store on its ground level and offices and apartments on its upper levels. Like many of the earlier commercial block buildings in Boone, the Hamby and Winkler Building featured occasional architectural flourishes that suggested a modicum of sophistication—a wood and plate glass store front with inverted entrance, soldier

¹ On the founding of the Watauga Building and Loan, see “Attention, Stock Holders,” *Watauga Democrat*, May 5, 1921: 2.

² “Depositors in Watauga Banks Sign Agreement,” *Watauga Democrat*, January 8, 1931: 1.

³ “No Objectors to Bank Opening,” *Watauga Democrat*, August 24, 1933: 1.

⁴ For an early reference to the Watauga Building and Loan funding commercial projects, see “Building & Loan Finds Year 1936 Most Successful,” *Watauga Democrat*, January 7, 1937: 1.

⁵ “New Filling Station on Critcher Corner,” *Watauga Democrat*, April 16, 1936: 1; “Shell Café Will Be Enlarged by Owners,” *Watauga Democrat*, January 21, 1937: 1; “Two New Business Buildings Being Erected,” *Watauga Democrat*, July 25, 1940.

courses serving as a spanning lintel, corbel bands, and frieze panels of running bond brick. This building also featured what would become a familiar trope on Winkler-associated buildings: wagon wheel, limestone medallions near the top of the main elevation.

Another major addition along King Street in 1937 was the new Rivers Printing Company Building (WT0585), which replaced a brick, one-story building housing the Carolina Store that had been built in 1925 during Boone's first boom near the site of the original *Watauga Democrat* building. Marking the return to Boone of architect E. A. Poe from Lenoir, the new Rivers building was celebrated for its "distinctive type of architecture" and was constructed by B. G. Teams.⁶ The new quarters featured a style that evoked Georgian Revival, even as it subverted some of its traditional forms. This was perhaps most obvious in its north sloping roof, which was clad in terracotta tile, and its parapeted east and west rooflines with faux, end chimneys, all designed to hide the otherwise pedestrian, rubber roof behind the north elevations disguised parapet. The face of the north elevation was composed of an irregularly cut stone veneer on the first floor, which transitioned to stone quoins at the corners, with running bond brick at the second elevation—a rather unconventional pairing for a single elevation of a Georgian Revival building.

The following year, 1938, saw the construction of one of Boone's grand jewels, the Art Deco-style Appalachian Theatre (WT0609). Believed to be Watauga County's only true example of Art Deco architecture, the theater was designed for Hamby and Winkler by Clarence Coffey, a Lenoir architect who enjoyed a long career of producing institutional and educational architecture throughout North Carolina, including the WPA-funded Cove Creek High School in nearby Sugar Grove (1941). Featuring a gorgeous, structural glass veneer over brick and a large, projecting marquee, both infused with numerous Art Deco flourishes and motifs, the Appalachian Theatre was grand by Boone standards, even if it did not rise to the status of a movie palace. The building was also notable for being one of the last in Boone to rely on the Linville River Railway for delivery of its construction materials, most importantly its large, 50-foot-long, steel beams, which otherwise never would have reached Boone at that time using the inferior surface highways.

Simultaneous to the Appalachian Theatre construction, Boone saw a rather fortuitous infusion of funds from the Works Progress Administration that facilitated construction of several Boone landmarks. The first was the Boone Post Office (WT0049), started in 1938 and completed in 1939. Designed by federal architect Louis A. Simon, the one-story with basement, side-gabled, Colonial Revival-style post office features the stunning natural stonework of brothers Leslie, Clarence, and Earl Lyons. Also of note is the infamous Alan Tompkins mural in the lobby, the only such mural from among dozens to survive in a US Post Office of this era in the northwestern part of the state. So reviled was Tompkins's initial design that locals protested and demanded a new one—and got it. The Town of Boone designated the

⁶ "New Democrat Building Opens," *Watauga Democrat*, November 25, 1937: 1.

building—along with the mural and much of its interior—as a Local Historic Landmark in 2016.



The Appalachian Theatre as it appeared on November 15, 1938, just after opening. Image courtesy of the Sams Family, the Appalachian Theatre of the High Country, and the Digital Watauga Project.



Dedication of the US Post Office in Boone, center left, April 10, 1940. Image courtesy of the Town of Boone Cultural Resources Department.

Another WPA-funded project that featured the natural stonework of the Lyons Brothers was Watauga County Office Building (WT0607), located just north of the northwest corner of King and Water Streets. Begun in 1938 and completed in 1939, this one-story with basement building was designed as an annex to the overcrowded Watauga County Courthouse located just to the west; it has served for many years as the home to various county offices and its basement, for a time, as the garage for the county school buses. Indeed, WPA activity in Boone was quite high during this period, including vast road improvements and construction of various institutional properties. Other WPA-funded projects completed in Boone but outside the downtown area before 1940 were the Watauga Handicrafts Building (WT0527), the ASTC Faculty Houses (WT0529, seven moved and no longer recognizable; five demolished), the former Watauga Consolidated School (WT0551), and Smith-Wright Hall (WT0565) on the ASU campus.

The demolition or removal of old landmarks continued to shape Boone during this second boom period. In 1938, for example, the move of the old W. L. Bryan home to a lot on Howard Street opened the way for a Sinclair gas station (portions later incorporated into WT0862) and the one-story, commercial block D. L. Wilcox Building (WT0861) in 1939, the latter built by Walter C. Greene. Razing of the old Episcopal Church near the corner of Appalachian and King Streets resulted in the construction of several buildings in this vicinity, including the one-story, commercial block Daniel Boone Shoe Shop/Carolina Pharmacy Building #1 (WT0841) in 1939 and the two-story, side-gabled, brick Dr. H. B. Perry Building (WT0844) in January 1942. The demolition of the old Methodist Church on the west end of town, meanwhile, triggered the construction of two adjoining, one-story,

brick, commercial block buildings in 1940—the Boone Body Shop (WT0879), built by J. E. Clay, and the Wykes Grocery Building (WT0879), also built by Clay at the behest of the Watauga Building and Loan, which had acquired the lot through the prior owner's default in 1933. Also in 1940, N. B. Smithey demolished the old Blackburn Hotel at the west end of King Street and began erection of his new one-story with basement, commercial block storehouse for Smithey's Department Store (WT0584). That same year, John W. Hodges finished his two-story, brick, commercial block building (WT0847)—another Walter C. Greene creation—on the site of the old, wooden frame Watauga Drug Store that had stood there for decades, just east of the Qualls Block. Shortly thereafter, J. L. Qualls filled in the gap between the Hodge Building and the Qualls Block with a tiny, narrow, one-story brick building that came to be known as the J. L. Qualls Library Building (WT0848) because it served as the county library from 1943 to 1946.

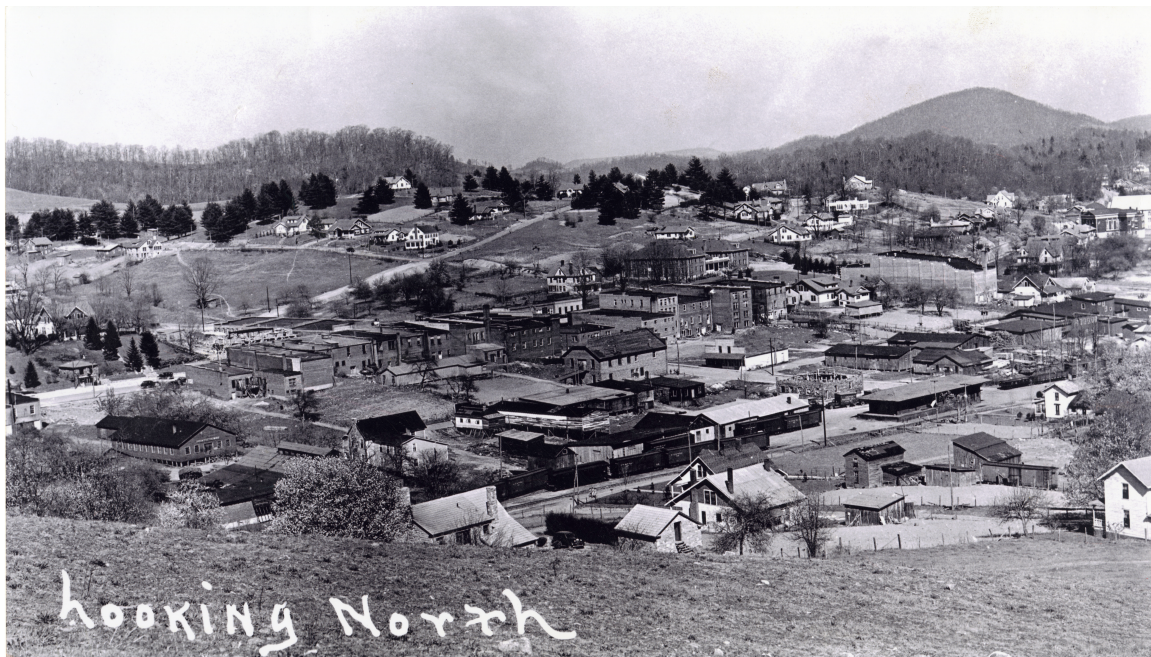
Other, less architecturally significant buildings included the narrow, two-story, brick, commercial block B. W. Stallings Jewelry Store (WT0596), built in 1937 immediately east of the proposed Appalachian Theatre lot, and the one-story, brick, commercial block Wilson Building (WT0842) on the other (east) side of the Hahn building, initially built as a grocery store. Also going up on King Street in 1938 were the one-story, brick and native stone, front-gabled, Wade E. Brown Law Office Building (WT0586) and the one-story, brick, commercial block King Street Grocery Building (WT0881), located at the west end of town, opposite the courthouse. In 1939, E. L. Teague built a new brick structure (WT0807) on the site of his old wooden gas station building at the northeast corner of King and Water Streets. The following year, work began on the one-story, masonry, commercial block Colvard Chevrolet Garage (WT0817) on the east side of North Depot Street.

This building boom also saw the construction of a new, brick Baptist Church in the downtown area to replace an older structure that no longer served its purpose. The long-delayed auditorium of the Boone Baptist Church was clad in yellow brick and replaced a more modest (but arguably more architecturally significant) red brick church building that stood on the same site from 1916 until 1936. Built by J. A. Campbell, the new auditorium featured a grand, double-gabled, temple front supported by stout Doric order columns inexplicably set on bases.⁷

At the east end of town, houses continued to go up along the fringes of the business district, including the one-story, brick Van G. and Kate Hinson House (WT0823) on Hippie Hill in 1937, and the rather modest Chapell Wilson/B. G. Teams House (WT0845) built on the old Episcopal Church lot at the east end of Howard Street that same year. About this same time, Chapell Wilson began expanding his rental empire, building the first of several rental properties on Hippie Hill. The Chapell and Myrtle Wilson Rental House #1 (WT0829) is an intriguing, one and a half-story, Craftsman-inspired, fieldstone house. Wilson soon added his second rental house (WT0830) just to the east—a two-story, brick, vernacular building with an open

⁷ "Newest Unit of Baptist Church Now Being Built," *Watauga Democrat*, July 30, 1936: 1.

side porch on its southeast end, overlooking King Street. Also added on this hillside during the second boom was the Hinson Garage (WT0825), which appears to have started as a garage building for WT0823, then later became the narrow, two-story, front-gabled shop space that it is today. Nearby and just slightly to the west, the Hinson's successors, the Masts, appear to have built the first two-story, commercial block building in this Hippy Hill vicinity, presumably to house Priscilla Mast's Boone Flower Shop (WT0824); it was likely completed by 1943. Closer to downtown, the two-story, brick, Colonial Revival-style A. E. and Robert Hodges House on the southwest corner of Grand Boulevard and Queen Street was indicative of higher end domestic construction going on throughout Boone in 1940. Closer to Water Street and near the new resting place for the old W. L. Bryan House, G. F. and Josie Critcher built a small, vernacular, one-story, side-gabled, frame house on a concrete block basement, probably in early 1940 (WT0876).



Boone from the southwest, circa April 1939, showing Ray Brendell's garage (WT0604) underway just north of the Linville River Railway depot. The Howard Street corridor was dramatically altered over the next ten years. Image courtesy of the Cy Crumley Collection.

Away from King Street, this second boom period also saw the proliferation of new buildings in the Howard Street corridor. In contrast to the more architecturally sophisticated buildings of the King Street corridor, the buildings of Howard Street and South Depot Street were instead meant for more industrial purposes, leading to the creation of what was essentially a warehouse district to the south of King Street. While this area between the Linville River Railway depot and King Street already possessed wooden warehouse structures, these new buildings were decidedly more permanent in design. The first of these projects was Brendell's Garage Building #1, a one-story, brick and brick tile, commercial block building located on the north side of Boone Creek near the depot. More architecturally significant buildings included the one-story, native stone automobile dealerships along South Depot Street—the

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Boone's Second Boom: 1936-1941

The Great Depression certainly played a role in restricting downtown development during the early 1930s, but by 1936, there were signs of hope for the future. Established in 1921, the Watauga Building and Loan Association had played a secondary role in the “Watch Boone Grow” campaign, primarily funding domestic construction while being overshadowed by the large banks in town—the Watauga County Bank and the People’s Bank & Trust (later People’s Industrial Bank)—when it came to funding commercial construction.¹ The early 1930s, though, saw the collapse of both of Boone’s banks. Trouble was evident as early as January 1931, when the county’s banks required depositors to sign agreements that they would not make withdrawals from their accounts and would maintain their checking account balances for another ten months.² By 1933, though, both banks were closed.³ While the Watauga County Bank struggled to get back on its feet in the mid-1930s, the Watauga Building and Loan began to take up the slack, often funding commercial projects through the late 1930s.⁴

Initially, much of the activity of Boone’s second construction boom was centered along King Street, often resulting from the demolition of an architectural relic of Boone’s history or a desire to build infill. The first signs of this reinvestment in commercial construction came in 1936, with the demolition of the old and derelict Critcher Hotel and the construction of a new Shell gas station on the southeast corner of Depot and King Streets (WT0851). Built for R. T. Greer as a small, one-story, brick building with basement, the filling station also contained a small restaurant known as the Shell Café. Four years later, the Crest Five and Ten Cent Store arranged with Greer for the construction of a much larger building on the site, essentially incorporating the small brick Shell structure into the new building.⁵

The following year, 1937, saw the first clear signs of a building boom in downtown Boone. Just east of the Shell Cafe, a one-story, commercial block building with double storefront entrances opened up on the old Critcher Hotel site—the Belk-White Department Store Building (WT0850)—and a few months later, the three-story, brick, commercial block Hamby and Winkler Building (WT0592) opened with an A&P Store on its ground level and offices and apartments on its upper levels. Like many of the earlier commercial block buildings in Boone, the Hamby and Winkler Building featured occasional architectural flourishes that suggested a modicum of sophistication—a wood and plate glass store front with inverted entrance, soldier

¹ On the founding of the Watauga Building and Loan, see “Attention, Stock Holders,” *Watauga Democrat*, May 5, 1921: 2.

² “Depositors in Watauga Banks Sign Agreement,” *Watauga Democrat*, January 8, 1931: 1.

³ “No Objectors to Bank Opening,” *Watauga Democrat*, August 24, 1933: 1.

⁴ For an early reference to the Watauga Building and Loan funding commercial projects, see “Building & Loan Finds Year 1936 Most Successful,” *Watauga Democrat*, January 7, 1937: 1.

⁵ “New Filling Station on Critcher Corner,” *Watauga Democrat*, April 16, 1936: 1; “Shell Café Will Be Enlarged by Owners,” *Watauga Democrat*, January 21, 1937: 1; “Two New Business Buildings Being Erected,” *Watauga Democrat*, July 25, 1940.

courses serving as a spanning lintel, corbel bands, and frieze panels of running bond brick. This building also featured what would become a familiar trope on Winkler-associated buildings: wagon wheel, limestone medallions near the top of the main elevation.

Another major addition along King Street in 1937 was the new Rivers Printing Company Building (WT0585), which replaced a brick, one-story building housing the Carolina Store that had been built in 1925 during Boone's first boom near the site of the original *Watauga Democrat* building. Marking the return to Boone of architect E. A. Poe from Lenoir, the new Rivers building was celebrated for its "distinctive type of architecture" and was constructed by B. G. Teams.⁶ The new quarters featured a style that evoked Georgian Revival, even as it subverted some of its traditional forms. This was perhaps most obvious in its north sloping roof, which was clad in terracotta tile, and its parapeted east and west rooflines with faux, end chimneys, all designed to hide the otherwise pedestrian, rubber roof behind the north elevations disguised parapet. The face of the north elevation was composed of an irregularly cut stone veneer on the first floor, which transitioned to stone quoins at the corners, with running bond brick at the second elevation—a rather unconventional pairing for a single elevation of a Georgian Revival building.

The following year, 1938, saw the construction of one of Boone's grand jewels, the Art Deco-style Appalachian Theatre (WT0609). Believed to be Watauga County's only true example of Art Deco architecture, the theater was designed for Hamby and Winkler by Clarence Coffey, a Lenoir architect who enjoyed a long career of producing institutional and educational architecture throughout North Carolina, including the WPA-funded Cove Creek High School in nearby Sugar Grove (1941). Featuring a gorgeous, structural glass veneer over brick and a large, projecting marquee, both infused with numerous Art Deco flourishes and motifs, the Appalachian Theatre was grand by Boone standards, even if it did not rise to the status of a movie palace. The building was also notable for being one of the last in Boone to rely on the Linville River Railway for delivery of its construction materials, most importantly its large, 50-foot-long, steel beams, which otherwise never would have reached Boone at that time using the inferior surface highways.

Simultaneous to the Appalachian Theatre construction, Boone saw a rather fortuitous infusion of funds from the Works Progress Administration that facilitated construction of several Boone landmarks. The first was the Boone Post Office (WT0049), started in 1938 and completed in 1939. Designed by federal architect Louis A. Simon, the one-story with basement, side-gabled, Colonial Revival-style post office features the stunning natural stonework of brothers Leslie, Clarence, and Earl Lyons. Also of note is the infamous Alan Tompkins mural in the lobby, the only such mural from among dozens to survive in a US Post Office of this era in the northwestern part of the state. So reviled was Tompkins's initial design that locals protested and demanded a new one—and got it. The Town of Boone designated the

⁶ "New Democrat Building Opens," *Watauga Democrat*, November 25, 1937: 1.

building—along with the mural and much of its interior—as a Local Historic Landmark in 2016.



The Appalachian Theatre as it appeared on November 15, 1938, just after opening. Image courtesy of the Sams Family, the Appalachian Theatre of the High Country, and the Digital Watauga Project.



Dedication of the US Post Office in Boone, center left, April 10, 1940. Image courtesy of the Town of Boone Cultural Resources Department.

Another WPA-funded project that featured the natural stonework of the Lyons Brothers was Watauga County Office Building (WT0607), located just north of the northwest corner of King and Water Streets. Begun in 1938 and completed in 1939, this one-story with basement building was designed as an annex to the overcrowded Watauga County Courthouse located just to the west; it has served for many years as the home to various county offices and its basement, for a time, as the garage for the county school buses. Indeed, WPA activity in Boone was quite high during this period, including vast road improvements and construction of various institutional properties. Other WPA-funded projects completed in Boone but outside the downtown area before 1940 were the Watauga Handicrafts Building (WT0527), the ASTC Faculty Houses (WT0529, seven moved and no longer recognizable; five demolished), the former Watauga Consolidated School (WT0551), and Smith-Wright Hall (WT0565) on the ASU campus.

The demolition or removal of old landmarks continued to shape Boone during this second boom period. In 1938, for example, the move of the old W. L. Bryan home to a lot on Howard Street opened the way for a Sinclair gas station (portions later incorporated into WT0862) and the one-story, commercial block D. L. Wilcox Building (WT0861) in 1939, the latter built by Walter C. Greene. Razing of the old Episcopal Church near the corner of Appalachian and King Streets resulted in the construction of several buildings in this vicinity, including the one-story, commercial block Daniel Boone Shoe Shop/Carolina Pharmacy Building #1 (WT0841) in 1939 and the two-story, side-gabled, brick Dr. H. B. Perry Building (WT0844) in January 1942. The demolition of the old Methodist Church on the west end of town, meanwhile, triggered the construction of two adjoining, one-story,

brick, commercial block buildings in 1940—the Boone Body Shop (WT0879), built by J. E. Clay, and the Wykes Grocery Building (WT0879), also built by Clay at the behest of the Watauga Building and Loan, which had acquired the lot through the prior owner's default in 1933. Also in 1940, N. B. Smithey demolished the old Blackburn Hotel at the west end of King Street and began erection of his new one-story with basement, commercial block storehouse for Smithey's Department Store (WT0584). That same year, John W. Hodges finished his two-story, brick, commercial block building (WT0847)—another Walter C. Greene creation—on the site of the old, wooden frame Watauga Drug Store that had stood there for decades, just east of the Qualls Block. Shortly thereafter, J. L. Qualls filled in the gap between the Hodge Building and the Qualls Block with a tiny, narrow, one-story brick building that came to be known as the J. L. Qualls Library Building (WT0848) because it served as the county library from 1943 to 1946.

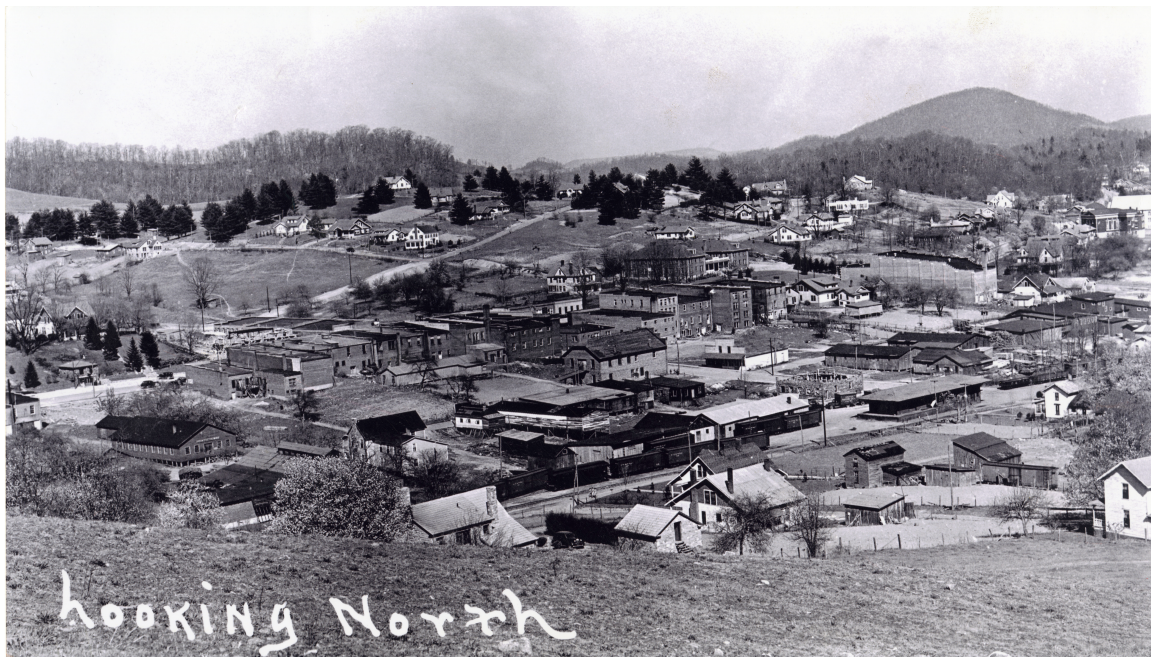
Other, less architecturally significant buildings included the narrow, two-story, brick, commercial block B. W. Stallings Jewelry Store (WT0596), built in 1937 immediately east of the proposed Appalachian Theatre lot, and the one-story, brick, commercial block Wilson Building (WT0842) on the other (east) side of the Hahn building, initially built as a grocery store. Also going up on King Street in 1938 were the one-story, brick and native stone, front-gabled, Wade E. Brown Law Office Building (WT0586) and the one-story, brick, commercial block King Street Grocery Building (WT0881), located at the west end of town, opposite the courthouse. In 1939, E. L. Teague built a new brick structure (WT0807) on the site of his old wooden gas station building at the northeast corner of King and Water Streets. The following year, work began on the one-story, masonry, commercial block Colvard Chevrolet Garage (WT0817) on the east side of North Depot Street.

This building boom also saw the construction of a new, brick Baptist Church in the downtown area to replace an older structure that no longer served its purpose. The long-delayed auditorium of the Boone Baptist Church was clad in yellow brick and replaced a more modest (but arguably more architecturally significant) red brick church building that stood on the same site from 1916 until 1936. Built by J. A. Campbell, the new auditorium featured a grand, double-gabled, temple front supported by stout Doric order columns inexplicably set on bases.⁷

At the east end of town, houses continued to go up along the fringes of the business district, including the one-story, brick Van G. and Kate Hinson House (WT0823) on Hippie Hill in 1937, and the rather modest Chapell Wilson/B. G. Teams House (WT0845) built on the old Episcopal Church lot at the east end of Howard Street that same year. About this same time, Chapell Wilson began expanding his rental empire, building the first of several rental properties on Hippie Hill. The Chapell and Myrtle Wilson Rental House #1 (WT0829) is an intriguing, one and a half-story, Craftsman-inspired, fieldstone house. Wilson soon added his second rental house (WT0830) just to the east—a two-story, brick, vernacular building with an open

⁷ "Newest Unit of Baptist Church Now Being Built," *Watauga Democrat*, July 30, 1936: 1.

side porch on its southeast end, overlooking King Street. Also added on this hillside during the second boom was the Hinson Garage (WT0825), which appears to have started as a garage building for WT0823, then later became the narrow, two-story, front-gabled shop space that it is today. Nearby and just slightly to the west, the Hinson's successors, the Masts, appear to have built the first two-story, commercial block building in this Hippy Hill vicinity, presumably to house Priscilla Mast's Boone Flower Shop (WT0824); it was likely completed by 1943. Closer to downtown, the two-story, brick, Colonial Revival-style A. E. and Robert Hodges House on the southwest corner of Grand Boulevard and Queen Street was indicative of higher end domestic construction going on throughout Boone in 1940. Closer to Water Street and near the new resting place for the old W. L. Bryan House, G. F. and Josie Critcher built a small, vernacular, one-story, side-gabled, frame house on a concrete block basement, probably in early 1940 (WT0876).



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