



Historic Preservation Commission

Regular Meeting

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

~ Agenda ~

Jane Shook
828-268-6960

Tuesday, May 2, 2023

3:00 PM

WebEx

This meeting will be held using video conferencing software (WebEx).

For information on how to watch, listen, and/or participate in the meeting, please see the WebEx Video Conferencing Information section at the end of this agenda.

I. Call to Order

II. Adoption of Agenda

III. Approval of Minutes

April 4, 2023 Advisory Meeting Minutes

IV. Public Comment

V. Boone Cemetery Interpretative Panel Draft Panel Text and Design

VI. Stoneman's Raid Interpretative Panel Draft Panel Text and Design

VII. HPC Intern Landmark Report Update

Revised Draft Report of R.L. Clay/R.C. Rivers House Local Landmark Report

VIII. R.L. Clay/Rivers House Local Landmark Designation Draft Design Standards

Draft Local Landmark Design Standards - R.L. Clay/R.C. Rivers House

IX. Update on the Doc & Merle Watson Mural

Memo Regarding Text for Informational Plaque

X. Staff Updates*CLG Update**Statement of Conformity Report***XI. HPC Member Updates****XII. June Advisory Session Material****XIII. Other Discussion****XIV. Adjournment****XV. WebEx Video Conferencing Information**

WATCH OR PARTICIPATE IN THE MEETING: Individuals who wish to watch the meeting or speak during public comment may do so through WebEx either online (by computer or smartphone) or by telephone. To do so, please email Jessica Mitchell, Long-Range/Special Projects Planner at jessica.mitchell@townofboone.net or call 828-268-6960 and you will be provided with an email invitation to the meeting. All requests for participation must be completed by 2 pm on the day of the meeting.

Staff will moderate the WebEx session to ensure all participants have an opportunity to speak. Individuals who require user assistance registering or joining the WebEx event on the day/night of the meeting can call 828-268-6960 for support.

**TOWN OF BOONE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 4, 2023, 3:00 p.m.
WebEx Video Conferencing**

Historic Preservation Commission Members in Attendance:

Chair Eric Plaag, Vice-Chair Bettie Bond, Chuck Watkins, and James Sharp

Student Member: Riley Ziegler

Council Liaison: Virginia Roseman

Town Staff in Attendance:

Jessica Mitchell-Long-Range/Special Projects Planner, Christy Turner-Senior Planner, Marlene Crosby-Board Secretary,

Others in Attendance: Ellie McCorkle-HPC Intern

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Eric Plaag called the Boone Historic Preservation Commission meeting via WebEx to order at 3:00 p.m.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Chair Plaag said that he would like to modify the agenda to add the topic of two building alterations under agenda item seven, Staff Updates.

Vice-Chair Bond made a motion, seconded by Student Member Ziegler, to approve the agenda as amended.

Vote: Aye – All
Nay – None
The motion passed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Plaag made the following corrections to February 7, 2023, meeting minutes:

- Packet Page 4, paragraph three, sentence three: add the word "asked" between "and" & "if"
- Packet Page 7, paragraph five, sentence one: change "concluding" to "assuming that"
- Packet Page 7, paragraph seven, sentence two: change "not an issue" to "not an issue;" & "up the wall with terracotta tiles" to "up the wall to the terracotta tiles"
- Packet Page 8, paragraph 4, sentence one: delete "that the HPC would normally be concerned about under the design standards"
- Packet Page 8, paragraph five, sentence two: change "colors are" to "colors is"
- Packet Page 9, paragraph three, sentence one: change "building" to "mural"
- Packet Page 10, paragraph one, sentence one: change "the block" to "the concrete block"
- Packet Page 10, paragraph one, sentence three: change "with a block" to "with the block"
- Packet Page 10, paragraph one, sentence five: change "plaque" to "mural"
- Packet Page 10, paragraph two, sentence four, change "1940s" to "1940s and 1950s"
- Packet Page 11, paragraph three, sentence four, change "Photography" to "Watauga"
- Packet Page 12, paragraph six, last line, add a comma after "Street"

- Packet Page 13, paragraph seven, sentence one, remove the word “of” after requirements
- Packet Page 13, paragraph two, sentence four, add a comma after “North Carolina”
- Packet Page 13, paragraph two, sentence six, add comma after “North Carolina”
- Packet Page 13, paragraph two, sentence eight, remove comma after “completes”
- Packet Page 13, paragraph five, sentence one, change “juridical” to “judicial”

Student Member Ziegler made a motion, seconded by Member Sharp, to approve the amended February 7, 2023, meeting minutes.

Vote: Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Chair Plaag made the following corrections to March 7, 2023, meeting minutes:

- Packet Page 16, paragraph three, sentence one, change “Digital Watauga Project,” to “Digital Photography Project,”
- Packet Page 16, paragraph three, sentence one, change “the Watauga Historical Society” to “treasurer of the Watauga Historical Society”
- Packet Page 21, first partial paragraph, delete “He encouraged including another brochure box for one of the cemetery panels in addition to the one that is already at the entrance to the Boone Cemetery for the walking tour map”
- Packet Page 22, paragraph two, last sentence, delete “panels” add “union soldier panel”
- Packet Page 22, paragraph five, sentence five, insert after issue “with the Rivers House”
- Packet Page 22, paragraph five, sentence eight, change “landscaping” to Historical landscapes”

Vice-Chair Bond made a motion, seconded by Member Sharp, to approve the amended March 7, 2023, meeting minutes.

Vote: Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No individuals requested the opportunity to speak during public comment.

HPC INTERN LANDMARK REPORT UPDATE

Chair Plaag opened the floor for Ms. Ellie McCorkle, HPC Intern, to present the draft landmark report in the meeting packet. Ms. McCorkle explained that this draft is in the final stages. She updated the architectural context in the draft, comparing the stonework on the R.L. Clay/Rivers House to other stone buildings and private homes in the Downtown Boone area. She also added more clarity in the historical context of the draft. She pointed out that she had subsequently used the 100 hours that she was contracted to use on this project.

Ms. Jessica Mitchell, Long-Range/Special Projects Planner, pointed out that this is the first time that the proposed draft has been seen by the HPC, except for Chair Plaag and Planning staff.

Chair Plaag asked the HPC for their feedback on the draft landmark report. Vice-Chair Bond said that she liked the historical context of the other stonemasons’ work on the private homes in the Grand Boulevard area. Chair Plaag recommended that the HPC email their proposed changes to Ms. Mitchell, and she would

forward them to Ms. McCorkle. He noted that he would email directly to Ms. McCorkle his proposed changes.

Vice-Chair Bond asked if there was any indication of when aluminum doors and windows began to appear. She said that aluminum was certainly not original to the building. Chair Plaag said he didn't think we knew when the aluminum was starting to be used. He said it was very common in the 1970s during the Carter Presidency when there were a lot of weatherizing homes because of the energy crisis. He guessed that the Rivers family added storm windows around that time. He said that the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) is generally not concerned with traditional aluminum storm windows because they are removable and very common. He said SHPO would be more concerned if vinyl storm windows had been put all around the property.

Ms. Mitchell asked the HPC when they might want to begin drafting standards for this property. Chair Plaag pointed out that he had spoken to the Planning Staff about the standards for the landmarks, but he still needed to discuss them with the HPC. He said we already have numerous landmarks that still need standards written. He said the HPC needs to return and do that work at some point. He said the Planning staff suggested that the HPC, for future landmarks, set those standards when proposing the designation. He said the work should be completed all at once and not left lingering on the HPC's task list.

Chair Plaag explained that the standards for an individual landmark should be specific to that landmark property. He said the discussion should be about the elements specific to a property. He said the basic standards that we have for residential architecture already in the Downtown Boone Historic District Standards are, broadly speaking, going to apply to a property. He said it is just a matter of going through and removing anything that isn't relevant. He gave an example and said that if there were a discussion of the standards for brick masonry, those would not apply to the Rivers House because there was something other than brick on it. He believed that the Rivers House is all native stone, or weatherboard, and probably asbestos shingles. Chair Plaag noted that since the HPC has already written a guiding set of standards for many properties, with the Downtown Historic District Standards, it makes it easier for the HPC when dealing with individual properties.

Chair Plaag explained that the Blue Ridge Tourist Court is a more challenging property for the HPC to write standards for. He said it had shotcrete over at least two buildings, and the Downtown Historic District Standards do not discuss shotcrete. He said the design standard for this property would have to be invented. He said the standard would have to be pulled from the National Park Service (NPS) guidance for what they recommend on the treatment for shotcrete. He clarified that things become more challenging when you encounter something that does not exist elsewhere. He further explained that drafting the standards for the Rivers House should be relatively easy to do given the guidance the HPC already has; it's just a matter of someone going through and editing those standards to fit the Rivers House.

Chair Plaag noted that he would be delighted if somebody else would want to write the proposed design standards for the Rivers House. He asked Student Member Ziegler if she would like the opportunity to write these proposed design standards. He noted that she could add this achievement to her resume. Student Member Ziegler agreed to write the proposed design standards for the Rivers House. Chair Plaag asked Ms. Mitchell to email Student Member Ziegler a copy of the residential architecture section of the Downtown Historic Design Standards to use when working on the proposed Rivers House landmark design standards. Chair Plaag told Student Member Ziegler that he would be happy for her to email him if she has questions. Member Sharp noted his appreciation to Student Member Ziegler for taking on this project; he explained that his time is currently being consumed with working on his dissertation.

Chair Plaag voiced his comments about the draft landmark report. He referred to packet page 27 under Section II. Abstract. He suggested in the first paragraph that Ms. McCorkle write about the architectural significance by saying the property is designated as a local historic landmark first because of its architectural significance, then add all the information in that summary paragraph related to architectural significance. He continued that the second paragraph should include the information that the property is also significant for its association with the Rivers family. He said the second paragraph talks about the buildings, which should be included with the architectural significance. He suggested adding a separate paragraph mentioning “Baby” and a reference to Rivers Park in that summary paragraph or abstract.

Vice-Chair Bond referred to packet page 27 under Section II. Abstract. She agreed with Chair Plaag on his suggestions to re-arrange the first two paragraphs. She thought the first paragraph should include the importance of the families living in the Rivers House, then discuss the architecture. Chair Plaag pointed out that if we think about the National Register criteria and their sequence, the events and patterns of events would go under Criterion A, the people would go under Criterion B, and the architecture would go under Criterion C. He recommended to Ms. McCorkle whatever sequence she adopts in the abstract, to make sure that it's the same sequence she adopts when she gets to the significance section so when people read it, they are not getting there and expecting “people” first and they get the “architecture” first.

Member Watkins joined the meeting at approximately 3:40 p.m.

Chair Plaag said he thought he had previously talked about the parcels that make up this conglomerate being included as a part of the boundary. He said the report only contains the building parcels, parcels for Rivers Park and parcels containing “Baby”. He said these are separate parcels, and the other parcels are excluded. He said he was curious about Ms. McCorkle's rationale for not including the others and if she was open to discussing why she did not include the other parcels.

Ms. McCorkle said she would be happy to include those other parcels. She explained that based on the aerial images, she saw no portion of either “Baby,” Rivers Park, or any of the significant areas included in those parcels. She did not consider them as significant as the parcels that she noted in the report, and that she would include them if that is what the HPC wanted.

Chair Plaag explained that the NPS and SHPO both look at National Register and Local Landmarks boundaries with a justification as, if somebody from that time period came forward in time, would they recognize what you have designated in terms of location and all of the other elements of integrity. He explained when you exclude farmland, or in this case, woodland, from a fairly large parcel, R.C. Rivers, Jr., Rachel Rivers-Coffey's father, probably would ask where is Rachel's Meadow and the rest of the woods around it and why they are gone? He explained an example regarding a farm parcel where the NPS would rather consider all of the land rather than a portion of it. He said it is his understanding that those additional parcels were important to the Rivers family. He said that Rachel kept her horse in Rachel's Meadow, located southwest of the Rivers house. He said the woods was an important buffer for the River's family. He added that when the Rivers family donated the land to the Town of Boone, they included the deed restriction for this parcel to remain intact. He explained the deed restriction to include that it is only to be used for these particular types of uses that will not denigrate the integrity of the land, as they wish for it to be remembered. For this reason, he recommended that Ms. McCorkle include all of the parcels and explain in her argument that these are the lands historically associated with R.L. Clay/Rivers House during the period of ownership by the Rivers’ family.

Ms. McCorkle said that in her draft report, the two parcels included are the single parcel the house is on and the eight acres surrounding it. She asked Chair Plaag if Rachel's Meadow and the other parcels were outside of those eight acres. Chair Plaag told Ms. McCorkle that he had sent her an email containing information about where he had located the original deeds for her. She said she looked at the deeds, which either needed to be digitized or did not mention the correct people. She said she has been unable to find the property transfer from Clay to Rivers, or from the eight people when there was joint land transferred. Chair Plaag told Ms. McCorkle that he would help her with that topic.

Chair Plaag said it is his recollection from the current GIS system that there are six or seven parcels owned by the Town that came to them through the transfer from the Rivers' family, and those are the parcels that he would include. He said he would not include the one house within the boundary on Poplar Grove Road, even though the River's family owned it at some time. He said that the house had been altered and lacked the integrity to what it would have had during the Rivers' family ownership.

Chair Plaag asked Ms. McCorkle if the other survey reports from SHPO he sent her helped identify the stone buildings. Ms. McCorkle said yes, the survey reports were beneficial. He asked her if the survey reports altered her findings about how early the construction of this stone house was relative to other stone houses in the Boone, Watauga County area. She said it reinforced her findings because the Rivers House is earlier than most other stone buildings except for maybe two.

Chair Plaag talked about a property going out of Boone on Junaluska Road; he said if you follow this road to the split. He said a stone house is in a field near the Green Family tree farm. He said up on a ridge, and to the right is a stone house that is believed to be the Romulus Linney vacation house. He said it was built before the Junaluska Turnpike, which would be around 1905. He said he was curious to know if this property had ever been surveyed. He told Ms. McCorkle that she could contact Ms. Beth King, at SHPO, to see if it had been surveyed. He said the house was built roughly about 1902 or 1903. He added that Mr. Linney made the Junaluska Turnpike specifically so that he would have a way to get his car from the Silverstone area into Boone. He told Ms. McCorkle that if she used this house in the report, it would bolster its strength along with its predecessors in the County. He noted that this building does not have great integrity and is now a ruin, but it could be used to say that stone buildings that precede lack integrity.

Chair Plaag told Ms. McCorkle that when she is talking about stone buildings to distinguish between stacked stone buildings, like the Linney Law Office, which predates this type of complex particular masonry pattern. Ms. McCorkle said that she noted in the latest draft the Holshouser House has a different type of stone.

Vice-Chair Bond asked Ms. McCorkle if the stone house on Bear Trail was of the same era because it is not in the draft report. Ms. McCorkle said that particular house could be under another name. She said she used the dates provided in previous surveys, which might have been dated past the area of significance, and she did not include it for that reason. Chair Plaag talked about a stone house above the Watauga County library called the Little Castle. Ms. McCorkle said it was in the draft report. He mentioned a stone house on Green Street that is similar in appearance to the stone house above the library.

Chair Plaag discussed Section IV. Architectural Context section of the draft report. He urged Ms. McCorkle to rewrite this section regarding John L. Hickerson, a local Black brick mason, to not describe him as unique for being a black stonemason but for the amount of credit he received from the community for the work he was doing in Watauga County during this period of time. He explained that there were other black

stonemasons during this time period as well. Ms. McCorkle noted that she did mention in the draft report other brick masons when she wrote about the other stone houses and other contractors mentioned in their building.

Chair Plaag asked Ms. McCorkle to remove the seventh sentence under Section IV. Architectural Context that reads: "At one time, it was believed that the Lyons Brothers were also not white, but recent research has indicated that they were Caucasian." Chair Plaag asked for this sentence to be removed because anybody from this area would not have mistakenly thought that the Lyons Brothers were people of color. He explained that this was recent confusion about the Lyons Brothers and older families of Watauga County know they were not.

Chair Plaag asked Ms. McCorkle to email him the version of the draft report in the meeting packet in a Word document, and he will comment on that document.

Member Watkins asked Chair Plaag if the HPC would see the draft report again. Chair Plaag said the HPC would see the draft report again before the HPC votes for it to go to Town Council.

Member Watkins said that very often you heard the idea expressed that the tradition of dressed stone construction was imported into this area through the building of the Blue Ridge Parkway through masons that the Parkway had hired. He said he wondered if that is still an idea or if they discarded it. Chair Plaag responded that the Blue Ridge Parkway portion that passed through Watauga County was not completed until after the war. He continued that we have all the stone buildings, which Ms. McCorkle described as WPA buildings. He said a more accurate way of describing this interest in stone construction is it is more likely the WPA programs popularized them and one of those programs was the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Member Watkins said probably the most comprehensive stone building exercise was the Little Village created on the Appalachian State University campus. He was unsure of the date but lived in one of those faculty houses. He continued to say that the argument was that these buildings were WPA buildings with the same dressed stone. He wondered how those federal efforts interfaced with what was happening locally. When comparing other stone buildings, Ms. McCorkle mentioned the faculty houses in the contextual part, and said those buildings were built in 1937. She said there was an announcement in the Watauga Democrat in 1935 about the grants used to construct the houses of stone, after the creation of the Rivers House in particular.

Member Watkins said there was part of the Federal tradition during the Roosevelt Administration to build Colonial Revival architecture. He wondered how all of this works together for his curiosity rather than for the draft report. Chair Plaag explained that Ms. McCorkle is arguing that what is unusual about the Rivers House is that it is adopting this style at a time that predates when the WPA is popularizing it. In that respect, it makes it unusual for Watauga County, which is a compelling argument.

Member Watkins said he would like to see Ms. McCorkle's argument made ferociously. He said once the University demolished its dining hall, it removed that kind of identity from the University campus. He said when you think about it in its broader sense, the text makes the Rivers House less unique but more interesting in the global sense of the Boone architecture at that time.

Chair Plaag asked Ms. McCorkle to look at *A Field Guide to American Houses* by Virginia McAlester to see what it says about the revival of stone construction in the early 20th century. He said if Ms. McCorkle can pin down a date for that and cite the source, it will strengthen the narrative.

Chair Plaag agreed with Member Watkins that Ms. McCorkle could argue more forcefully that this house precedes the popularization. He said it might be helpful to pinpoint when these WPA Post Office projects featuring gray stone were first done and how it was popularized.

Member Watkins added that this stone house revival has been going on since probably the 1920s. He talked about other stone work being done in Pennsylvania that is replicating 18th-century stonework. He said they are not doing dressed stone, but the Colonial Revival aspect of it is very strong.

Vice-Chair Bond talked about the information she received about the stone buildings when she moved here in 1971. She was told that the stone buildings had been built by the Italians who came to build the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Chair Plaag asked if there were other comments regarding the draft report. Ms. McCorkle asked for feedback on the historical context of the draft report. Chair Plaag said he would email Ms. McCorkle additional input on the historical context. Member Watkins said giving feedback by reviewing the latest draft report would be easier. He said he would like to see strong connections made to the Colonial Revival because it is an important influence around here that has somehow been forgotten that at one time was intense. He said even the bungalows have Colonial Revival elements attached to them.

Chair Plaag asked Ms. Mitchell how we should manage Ms. McCorkle's payroll hours since she has run out of hours for the Rivers House report. He said he did not think the revisions to the draft report would take more than a few more hours to complete. He asked Ms. Mitchell if they could borrow some of the hours from the Jones House Project to finish this draft report with the understanding that the Jones House probably will take less time in part because there's already a National Register nomination for it. Ms. McCorkle agreed with Chair Plaag that the Jones House would take less time to complete its draft report. Ms. Mitchell stated that she thought the 200 hours were for both draft reports to be completed. She did not see a problem with it now, but if she found out otherwise, she would let Chair Plaag know as soon as possible. Ms. McCorkle said she hoped to have the final edit of the draft report for the HPC to review at their next advisory meeting in May.

FIELDSTONE LINE AT BOONE CEMETERY – UPDATE ON JHA PROJECT

Chair Plaag said he met with Dr. Alice Wright at the Boone Cemetery. He took the past plats that showed exactly where the fence line was. He said they were able to find several of the fence posts holes in the ground there. Dr. Wright flagged a line there and was very confident, and Chair Plaag agreed with her about where that line would have been. He said the current perimeter fence was slightly askew from where the corners were originally. He said that was because of things that had to be done to put in the new perimeter fence. He said once the line is established, it will not look awkward.

Ms. Mitchell added that at the end of February 2023, the Junaluska Heritage Association (JHA) got approval from the Town Manager and the Public Works Department to continue with their project. She said the last thing she heard was that Dr. Wright would work with Chair Plaag to determine where the fence line was. Then, it would be up to Dr. Wright and her students, that would be volunteering to put the stones where the fence line was.

Chair Plaag asked Ms. Mitchell to confirm with Dr. Wright if she needed anything else to begin the work. He assumed Dr. Wright was authorized to do that work now that the line had been established. Ms. Mitchell said she would contact Dr. Wright to see if she needs anything to proceed with this project.

STAFF UPDATES

Ms. Mitchell said at the last Council meeting, it was approved to have the Hayes-Bryan-Greene Cemetery historical marker ceremony on Friday, June 2, 2023, at 1 p.m. She said before she put in the Council action request for this topic, she made sure the Public Works Department had the staff needed and that they understood about the road closure. She said closer to the ceremony date, she would do a public notice and advertise the event through social media.

Ms. Mitchell talked about the Interpretative Panel Examples starting on packet page 42 of the meeting packet. She said she saw these examples when she made a recent trip to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and thought these would be beneficial to the interpretative panel project. She explained that it is an NPS sign. She said this panel had some coating on it, it was in a high-traffic area, and it had little debris. She noted that she saw a metal sign in another area of the park where several parts were illegible because of the scratches or gouging on it that the HPC previously discussed concerns about. She said after seeing the metal sign, she agreed that picking a laminate material would be a good choice for the sign because it looked like it held up better. She explained the other sign she saw, a Civil War Trails marker, located near a restaurant and in a parking lot in Pigeon Forge, TN. She could tell it had a coating on it and there was some text distortion. She thought showing these examples would help the HPC decide on the interpretative panels project. She said these were examples of the framed options. She said she was surprised that there was not much build-up using the framed-style panel; she said this may have been because they were in popular, highly trafficked areas.

Member Watkins talked about the Interpretative Panel Example 1. He felt that the graphic work is not inspiring; he explained it is the standard thing to do when you had to cut out photographs and mount them one over the other. He said the white lettering on a gradually darker background and the white lettering on black is the hardest type to read for most individuals. He said the point size is quite reduced as well. He concluded that the installation is good but the graphics in this example is not one that he would like to see replicated for our panels. He thought a graphic designer could develop something more contemporary and far more readable. Discussion continued that these were examples of panels that the HPC could use for what they would and would not like to see in the interpretative panels project.

Ms. Mitchell talked about the SHPO Certified Local Government Orientation that will be held on Wednesday, April 12, 2023, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon in the Planning and Inspections Department Conference Room. She said the orientation would be held in a hybrid format. She said since the orientation is next week she wanted to find out if everyone could attend it. She noted that Council Liaison Virginia Roseman, Member Sharp and Ms. McCorkle had requested to attend the orientation virtually. She said that she had not heard back from Member Watkins and Student Member Ziegler if they could attend the orientation; Member Watkins and Student Member Ziegler confirmed their attendance. Member Watkins said he would let Ms. Mitchell know by early afternoon on Tuesday, April 11, 2023, if he wanted to attend virtually, and Ms. Mitchell would send him an invitation to the orientation if needed. She said that she and Ms. Marlene Crosby, Board Secretary, would be attending the orientation. She added that she had invited Ms. Allison Meade, Town Attorney, to attend if she is able to, and she could possibly attend remotely. She said that Ms. Kristi Brantley, from SHPO, would be attending with several other team members, and they would present information on various topics such as powers of the Commission, quasi-judicial process, National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) process, NRHP properties, tax credits for designated properties, Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation, Architectural Survey, and CLG benefits and grants. She said there might be a small discussion about local landmark properties.

Ms. Mitchell said that Ms. Brantley wanted to know if the HPC had specific topics they wanted to cover while the SHPO representatives were here. She said she could send the SHPO representatives a list of topics from the HPC. Chair Plaag noted that the topics the SHPO said they wanted to cover were a comprehensive list, and he did not know how the SHPO representatives would cover them in three hours. She explained to Ms. Brantley that the HPC's focus was on Certificates of Appropriateness (COA) cases and trying to learn a better process from other jurisdictions. Chair Plaag said that what will more than likely happen is that during the orientation, things might occur that the HPC will ask about in the moment.

Ms. Mitchell talked about Appendix D Revisions. She noted that there were no draft revisions in the meeting packet. She did not know a timeframe of when there would be draft revisions for the HPC to review. She said in the last two months some things had come to her attention that she wanted to clarify about proposed revisions. She said her concern stems from the UNC School of Government quasi-judicial training that the HPC had last December, where they mentioned not labeling historic district standards as "guidelines" but listing them as "standards". She said we have them listed as "standards" within the Appendix D document, and it is actually on the Planning and Inspection website where Appendix D is listed as "guidelines." She saw no immediate need to do a complete revision to make them "standards" because they already are standards. She said Staff would be responsible for fixing some formatting and making it more in line with the formatting of other Town documents, but it would not necessarily be a whole reworking like she had initially stated. She did not see doing all of Appendix D at one time, but to do it in phases if changes are to be done. She said that she has started working on the formatting of the Introduction section and adding to the Design Review Process section to clarify how an applicant comes forward for a COA application. She said this proposed language is not ready to be presented to the HPC.

Ms. Mitchell explained that she expected to see two different text amendments for Appendix D at some point. She explained that when SHPO reviewed the Town of Boone CLG application, they made three different comments about Appendix D. She foresees those comments being included with the other discussions that the HPC had about historically appropriate features on neighboring buildings and complementary colors and possibly adding to the table about landmark properties.

Ms. Mitchell pointed out that because of the Town's CLG status, when there is a text amendment it has to be reviewed by SHPO and it takes approximately 30 days for them to review it. She explained that between when the text is drafted and the HPC reviews it and before it is sent to through the text amendment process for a Public Hearing and Planning Commission meeting, it has to be sent to the SHPO for their review. She said she would like for the HPC to review it before it goes to SHPO and possibly review it again before it goes to Public Hearing.

Chair Plaag asked Ms. Christy Turner, Senior Planner, to give a Statement of Conformity application status report to the HPC. Ms. Turner said there was one for the Town of Boone Fire Station because they had to put in a new heat pump. Chair Plaag asked where was the heat pump located; Ms. Turner said it was located on the roof towards the back of the building and could not be seen. She noted that Elevated Piercing, located beside the Allen Tate real estate building, got a Statement of Conformity for a new HVAC unit. Chair Plaag asked if it was a tertiary installation; Ms. Turner said yes, it was installed on the back of the building. Ms. Turner said the Country Manor Apartments, located at 237 Queen Street, received a Statement of Conformity to replace the shingled roof, paint the exterior, and add some landscaping around the building. She said at 593 W. King Street, formally Yogi's Sub Shop, there was a Statement of Conformity for a mini-split unit that was in between two buildings. Chair Plaag asked if this one was also in the tertiary elevation and if it was in the back of their building in the alley; Ms. Turner confirmed that it

was in the tertiary and in the back of their building. Ms. Turner said this is all of the Statement of Conformity's since the last report.

Chair Plaag talked about Dr. H.B. Perry building on Appalachian Street. He said last Friday, he made a photo and he emailed it to Planning Staff today that shows work going on to the multiple front gabled, wood framed awnings over the entrance to the building. He said as part of that work, it appeared that somebody had cut the brick above the awnings. He said he asked the Planning Staff in the email if they knew anything about this. He noted that this might come before the HPC in the future, which is why he had not shared the photo with the HPC. Ms. Turner responded; she said after receiving Chair Plaag's email, she consulted with the property owner about Appendix D. She continued that the property owner told her they were replacing the old awnings, which is allowed under repair and maintenance in Appendix D. She further explained that the property owner told her that they did not cut the brick. She said she would visit the site to verify what the property owner had told her. Chair Plaag said it is clear that multiple lines have been cut above the awnings. He asked, at a minimum, do we have the assurance that what is being done is the only way to avoid this under repair and maintenance, if it is a like-kind of repair or replacement? Chair Plaag further asked if we know with certainty that this is what is happening? She said from the Google photo she saw and the photo that Chair Plaag sent look highly similar. She said she would take the photo to the site and make sure.

Ms. Turner said that Chair Plaag had mentioned the shutters on the building. She said the property owner said the shutters were falling off the building. She told him that he should have contacted the Planning and Inspections Department to tell them about it. She said that he had ordered new shutters. She pointed out that to install the shutters under the Statement of Conformity, the shutters have to be of like-kind, and she would check the shutters.

Chair Plaag mentioned to the Planning Staff a mural he saw at 277 Howard Street. Ms. Turner said they received a building permit to add the artwork on July 7, 2021, before Council adopted the Historic District.

Chair Plaag asked the Planning Staff about 260 Howard Street, where they were removing garage doors. Ms. Turner explained that the Planning and Inspections Department received their application the day before the Historic District was adopted by Council. She said that Planning Staff reviewed the application and assured the applicant that they were meeting all of the requirements of the Unified Development Ordinance Appearance Standards passed at that date. The zoning permit for the project was issued on April 7, 2022, after going through many iterations of the plan. She said their building permit was delayed from being issued because she had asked them to put the same windows back in, and they told Ms. Turner that they could not get those windows. She told them that they had to find the same windows. She said they did start the work before their zoning permit ran out, and they have already spent ten percent of the project costs. She said they are now in good standing with the Planning and Inspections Department. She consulted with SHPO on the handicap ramp required for that building and the doors on the front of the building.

Chair Plaag expressed his concern that the garage door at the old Miller Salvage building on Howard Street appeared to have been carved up with a chainsaw and obliterated. He said the concrete stoop out front consisting of several steps had been completely removed.

Chair Plaag encouraged other HPC members if they see work going on to contact Planning Staff to see if they know it is going on and ask Planning staff to let the HPC know in case it might be work that qualifies for a COA case or maintenance work which might not require a permit of any kind.

Ms. Mitchell explained that at the last advisory meeting, the HPC and Planning Staff talked about how often the Statement of Conformity reports should be given. She said she found in the minutes from last fall that it had yet to be decided how often Planning Staff would give this report. She said that Planning Staff talked about it, and the Planning and Inspections Department has software that can run a monthly report. She said she and Ms. Turner could review the report and put it on the monthly advisory agenda. She said we could move on to the next agenda item if there was nothing to report.

HPC MEMBER UPDATES

Chair Plaag said there were no HPC member updates to report.

MAY ADVISORY SESSION MATERIAL

Chair Plaag suggested including the following agenda items in the next advisory meeting agenda: Draft Boone Cemetery Interpretative Panels text and images, draft Stoneman's Raid Interpretative Panels text and images, final R.L. Clay/Rivers House draft landmark report, draft design standards for the R.L. Clay/Rivers House, and possibly information on the adaptive reuse of the Rivers Property.

OTHER DISCUSSION

Vice-Chair Bond noted that the next Watauga County Historical Society meeting would be held on April 19, 2023, at 6 p.m. at the Watauga County Public Library. Dr. Tim Silvers, a former colleague of hers and Member Watkins, will present his latest book about the environment and the Civil War. Chair Plaag noted that this is a free event.

Ms. Mitchell said she would email the CLG orientation invitations before Friday of this week and to please let her know if you need one as soon as possible.

ADJOURNMENT

Member Watkins made a motion, seconded by Student Member Ziegler, to adjourn the meeting at 4:59 p.m.

Vote: Aye – All
Nay – None
The motion passed.

Eric Plaag, Chair

Marlene Crosby, Board Secretary

R.L. CLAY/R.C. RIVERS HOUSE (WTO53O)

I. General information

A. Common and Historical Property Names

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

B. Physical Address or Location

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

C. Tax Parcel Identification Numbers (PIN)

1. Parcel ID: 2900-78-3934-000
2. Parcel ID: 2900-69-9070-000
3. Parcel ID: 2900-78-3881-000
4. Parcel ID: 2900-79-0308-000
5. Parcel ID: 2900-69-6458-000
6. Parcel ID: 2900-69-4353-000
7. Parcel ID: 2900-69-8483-000

D. Current Owner Name

1. Current Owner is the Town of Boone and has been since the donation of the house and property in 1998. There was a life tenant included with that deed that left the property in 2011. It has been uninhabited since and used for storage.

E. Current Owner(s) Mailing Address(es)

1. 567 W King St, Boone, NC 28607

F. Appraised Value of the Property 2022

1. Parcel ID 2900-78-3934-000: Total value \$682,200. Land value is \$55,300 and building value of \$626,900.
2. Parcel ID 2900-69-9070-000; Land value of \$821,100.
3. Parcel ID 2900-78-3881-000; Total value \$335,000. Land value of \$47,600 and building value of \$287,400.
4. Parcel ID 2900-79-0308-000; Land value of \$108,600.
5. Parcel ID 2900-69-6458-000; Land value of \$113,300.
6. Parcel ID 2900-69-4353-000; Land value of \$85,600.
7. Parcel ID 2900-69-8483-000; Land value of \$78,900.

G. Date of Construction

1. Circa 1933 House
2. Circa 1945 Garage

H. Historical Significance

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

II. Abstract

This property is being designated as a local historical landmark due to its significance in architecture and in regard to its proximity to influential individuals in the town of Boone. The building of native stone construction built in circa 1933 is considered unique for location and time of construction. The buildings included in this designation are the one and a half-story native stone house and the two-story native stone garage to the south-east of the home. Seven legal parcels are proposed for designation. This is not all of the land once associated with the property as some of the original parcel was divided and developed by private individuals and companies. All parcels proposed are owned and maintained by the Town of Boone, thanks to donations from the Rivers and Coffey families. There is a prize Sugar Maple, *Baby*, on one of the more north-west parcels that once was owned by the Rivers'. 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.

Members of the Rivers family resided in and owned the home for more than 50 years as they ran 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., daughter of R.C. Rivers Jr., was raised in the home before she went on to take over the *Watauga Democrat* after her father passed. She is responsible for the donation of the property to the Town of Boone in 1998. These factors create a high significance at a local level.

III. Architectural Description

The R.L. Clay House is one and a half-story, side-gabled home with natural cut stone exterior. It is three bays wide and built to face north, towards the present day Rivers Street. This would have historically been facing north towards Water Street (now Burrell 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 that also features natural 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 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. These were removed in 2015 and replaced with more traditional asphalt shingles.

The north facade of the Clay/Rivers home 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 is not used for interior access by the Town of Boone. Immediately to the east of the porch is a prominent

exterior stone chimney with alternating steps that narrow the chimney as it rises. There is a pale stone diamond in the center of the chimney, a stone feature that is continued throughout the design of the home, interior and exterior. The chimney includes a pronounced concrete cap with brick pier at the 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 with 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 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 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 window with a wooden surround, stone sill, and an 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 parged bulkhead treatment, with a centered, four-light door with an aluminum storm door over it and 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 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 still, 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 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 creek 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 rising 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 roof line includes an aluminum boxed soffit that terminated in prominent cornice returns. The west and east of the garage are essentially featureless stone while the south elevation, which is built partially on a grade includes a set of wooden steps rising to the upper level of the garage, which is accessed via wooden door with a deep wooden surround. The roofline on the gable end also includes an aluminum, boxed soffit that terminated 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 north east corner of the larger parcel being designated there is a monument and small park, Rivers Park, that is included in this designation. The monument is a stone column with a metal obelisk on top, together they stand approximately 10 feet tall. This marker is a replica of one built twice before meant to denote where a cabin once stood nearby that may have been inhabited by Daniel Boone in the late 18th - early 19th century. There is a circular cement platform around this monument with benches denoting the name of the park. No known archaeological features on the property are known at this time.

The integrity of the association between this property and those who lived there is undivided and uninterrupted in their lifetimes until the property was transferred to the Town of Boone for its protection. The home itself has never been moved and is still associated with much of the original acreage the Rivers would have enjoyed. The addition of the two car garage circa 1940s, possibly after the Rivers acquired the property, denotes the affluence of the owners of the home in the mid-twentieth century. In approximately the 1970s, the alteration of the south porch from an open to an enclosed porch occurred. While the materials used do not match the stone work of the rest of the house, these changes were made by the Rivers family so it does not detract from the property's significance in relation to the family. The materials of the home's exterior siding are original and in good condition, the roof was replaced recently on both the house and the garage. The aluminum storm windows are not original to the home and are in fair condition to protect the original windows that are still in place. As the home has remained largely unchanged, excepting the south porch, there is little that detracts from the integrity of the home.

The proposed boundaries of the designation follow the surveyed boundaries for all parcels (except Parcel 2900-78-3934-000 as this plot is completely surrounded by other designated parcels) in the following order beginning with the boundary along Moretz Drive and

¹ Architectural description has been taken entirely, with minor adjustments, from Plaag, Dr. Eric W.; Fuller, Paul; Holladay, Nicole; Hamilton, Carson. "Comprehensive Architectural Survey of Downtown Boone, North Carolina." (PDF, Boone, NC, February 2021.) Pg 97-104. <https://dcr.lib.unc.edu/record/>

concluding along the adjoining parcel; 2900-78-3881-000, 2900-69-9070-000, 2900-69-4353, 2900-69-6458-000, 2900-69-8483-000, 2900-79-0308-000.² These parcels include the house, the garage, Daniel Boone monument, and Sugar Maple.³ The combined acreage for the area designated amounts to 12.91 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 home, it does include all pertinent buildings associated with the home and its human inhabitants. The surrounding parcels that are proposed provide context for those who lived in the home during its historically significant period in the mid twentieth century. It includes the house, the garage, and the drive directly in front of the home and walkways, along with the stone walls closest to the home. It also includes land along the ridgeline and a small hollow that was once used to allow horses to graze. The prize winning Sugar Maple, "Baby," is also included in this designation along with Rivers Park and its monument.

² Book of Records 980 Page 289, Book 480 Page 494, Book 553 Page 297, Book 553 Page 297, Book 604 Page 823, and Book 553 Page 297 . Originally recorded in Book 272 Page 579.

³ Book of Records 480 Page 496-498.

IV. Architectural Context

Built in 1933, this native stone house was originally constructed for Robert Luther “R.L.” Clay (1889-1945), by a local Black brickmason, John L. Hickerson (c1889-1938).⁴ Hickerson was considered “renowned for his masonry work throughout Boone in the 1920s and 1930s.”⁵ A single family dwelling made of native stone by a local Black man is not notable at the time, as there were many non-white laborers. However, Hickerson in particular was noted for his quality of work and for leading his own team of coworkers, indicating that he would have been in high demand by those who could afford to create such homes. In June of 1934, a year after Hickerson would have completed the Clay House, “Mr. Ed Luttreall of Shulls Mills [was] erecting a nine-room stone dwelling... J. L. Hickerson [was] taking care of the masonry.” Hickerson was apparently working with the contractor Wiley Gordon “W.G.” Hartzog (1885-1976). Other noted masons who built homes of native stone in the 1930s were the Lyons Brothers, who also worked with Hartzog.⁶ Hickerson is notable for the demand of his work and his position amongst his peers at the time.

The home was built of native stone, a material that was not considered readily available in Boone at the time of construction, especially during the Great Depression. Private homes constructed of this material were few in number in the community. Other stone buildings in the town were not of cut stone, but of stacked fieldstone in mortar or roughly cut fieldstone. There was the Advent Christian Church, built c.1920, and the original Linney Law Office, built c.1922, that were made of such stone.⁷ Other stone buildings in the area were single-family dwellings made of native stone that became more popular after the mid 1930s.

In the summer of 1934, there were single-family dwellings being built in the Boone area for Professor J.A. Williams near Appalachian State campus, Mr. R.T. Greer on Boone Trail Highway (now Highway 421), J.E. Holhouser in Daniel Boone Park, Owen Wilson on the western end of King Street, and H.L. Lyons near the Lovill house.⁸ Other stone buildings noted around the time of the Clay House construction was a four story native-stone hospital built in Banner Elk in 1930, built by the same people who constructed stone buildings on the Lees McRae campus in 1926.⁹ These institutional constructions were outside of the county and the only large buildings of stone noted by the *Watauga Democrat* before the 1930s.

⁴ “Real Estate Trade Active: Many Building Projects,” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC), Jun. 29, 1933. <https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/>

“Local Affairs” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC), June 1, 1933. Page 5. <https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/>

⁵ Plagg, Dr. Eric W.; Fuller, Paul; Holladay, Nicole; Hamilton, Carson. “Comprehensive Architectural Survey of Downtown Boone, North Carolina.” (PDF, Boone, NC, February 2021.) Pg 50.

⁶ “Much Building Now Going on in County” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC), June 14, 1934. <https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/>

⁷ “Boone Historic Property Survey” (PDF, Boone, NC, 2008), Pages 89, 95 of 144.

⁸ “Much Building Now Going on in County” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC), June 14, 1934. <https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/>

⁹ “New Hospital at Banner Elk is Near Completion” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC), July 24, 1930. <https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/>

Other buildings that were part of a Historic Property Survey for Boone, completed in 2008, that were made of stone around the time of the construction of the Clay House are noted below. In the late 1920s the Bushnell Cabin was built at what is now 211 Leah Drive in a neighborhood just north of downtown Boone. The stone in this structure is noted as having been from a quarry on nearby Highway 105. This structure was built by Ben L. Smith and does not rival the Clay House in size as this structure is a simple single family home in comparison to the more grand Clay House.¹⁰ Another stone house in Boone that does not rival the Clay House in size or quality would be the Ruby Lanier House, found at what is now 235 Orchard St. This house is a single story cottage/bungalow styled home. This house was built around the 1930s, with no clear architect or mason listed. The brick is not believed to be native.¹¹ Another stone home built around 1930 is the Howard Miller House, found at what is now 150 Delmar St. The survey on this home lists no significant mason. This home is smaller than the Clay House, and the exterior has altered features such as aluminum siding covering original woodwork and stucco, decreasing the historical integrity of the structure.¹² The James E. Holshouser Sr. House, located at what is now 221 Orchard Street, was built in 1934. This is the house that was constructed nearest to the Clay House. This house has stone from a quarry in nearby Shulls Mill, this stone is not cut to provide a flat exterior, instead left rounded to provide a different appearance as seen at the Clay House. While this house may rival the Clay House in its size and quality, the style of this home is Gothic in nature. An Ernest Banner was supposedly the mason for this home.¹³ The W. Ralph Winkler House, built in 1936, is also constructed of stone, though not noted as native stone. This house can be found at 851 Blowing Rock Rd, and has been modified from a residential space to a dentistry office with apartments above it. Alterations include additions to the structure, the enclosure of one open porch, and unknown extensive interior remodels. Midas Wheeler is listed as the mason in charge, not Hickerson.¹⁴ That same year the W.F. Miller House was built, Midas Wheeler is noted as the mason for this home, this home can be found what is now 243 Cherry Drive. While the cut stone is believed to be local to the area and this exterior can be compared to the Clay House, the original footprint of this home was smaller. After additions to this house in the late 20th century, the integrity of this home does not compare to that of the Clay House.¹⁵ In 1937 a stone house was built for Guy Hunt, found at what is now 286 Orchard Street. The rock work on this home is believed to be done by the Lyons brothers. This house does rival the Clay House in size due to additions to this structure over the years, and the floorplan has been altered.¹⁶ In approximately 1938, the Herman W. Wilcox Home was built. This home can be found at what is now 110 Wallace Circle. This stone home has been

¹⁰ “Boone Historic Property Survey” (PDF, Boone, NC, 2008), Pages 17-18 of 144.

¹¹ Ibid. Pages 61-62 of 144.

¹² Ibid. Pages 84-85 of 144.

¹³ Ibid. Pages 59-60 of 144.

¹⁴ Ibid. Page 9 of 144.

¹⁵ Ibid. Page 75-76 of 144.

¹⁶ Ibid. Pages 67-68 of 144.

altered and expanded several times over the years, causing its integrity to decrease significantly less than that of the Clay House.¹⁷

It was not until after the Works Progress Administration that native stone buildings became more popular in Boone, four schools being completed in 1937, and at least six other buildings being built between 1938 and 1939.¹⁸ Stone buildings were considered “not only durable but absolutely fire-proof.”¹⁹ Institutional buildings such as the Post Office, school buildings, and faculty homes, 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. Single family homes constructed of native stone that once stood on Rivers Street, less than a mile east of the Clay House, were constructed for faculty of Appalachian State Teachers College, now Appalachian State University, in 1938.²⁰ All of those homes were moved or destroyed when Rivers Street was widened in the mid 1960s, decreasing and otherwise destroying their architectural integrity.

Local lore has spread the belief that these stone buildings, constructed in the early 1930s to the mid 1940s 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. The portion of the Blue Ridge Parkway nearby to Boone did not begin construction until years later and was not completed until the mid-1980s. Nevertheless, the belief that these stone homes were built using stone from the construction of the scenic route persists.

In the 2021 Downtown Boone Survey there were several native stone buildings listed, all commercial buildings except for the Clay House. The Cook-Nichols Motor Company building, which eventually burned in the 1950s, and the Duncan Motor Company building were both completed in 1940.²¹ The Boone Bus Depot was also a building that was a product of W.G. Hartzog’s men. The native stone facade, completed in 1947, is now a shell that stands alone along the edge of an Appalachian State University building.²² Native stone is noted around downtown Boone, mostly in retaining walls, sheds, and steps that lead to houses that no longer stand.

¹⁷ Ibid. Pages 69-70 of 144.

¹⁸ “Ellerbe Lauds School Projects” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC) October 26, 1936.

<https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/>

“\$26,000 Alloted to Local College” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC) February 24, 1938.

<https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/>

¹⁹ “Lees McRae Institute Opening at Banner Elk” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC) September 16, 1926.

<https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/>

²⁰ “Faculty Homes are Completed” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC) October 20, 1938.

<https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/>

²¹ Plagg, Dr. Eric W.; Fuller, Paul; Holladay, Nicole; Hamilton, Carson. “Comprehensive Architectural Survey of Downtown Boone, North Carolina.” (PDF, Boone, NC, February 2021.) Pg 59.

²² Plagg, Dr. Eric W.; Fuller, Paul; Holladay, Nicole; Hamilton, Carson. “Comprehensive Architectural Survey of Downtown Boone, North Carolina.” (PDF, Boone, NC, February 2021.) Pg 64.

V. Historical Context

R.L. Clay, for whom the home 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.²³ 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 Clay's 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 1931.²⁴ This original home was a simple wooden farm house that was a common place construction in the early twentieth century in Boone. The home was moved in order to make space for the native stone building, and was rented out for many years. The home was, unfortunately, destroyed by the Town of Boone in a fire exercise in 2015.²⁵

In 1933 Clay, his wife, Annie Stanbury, and daughters would move 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 brickmason, John L. Hickerson (c1889-1938).²⁶

Hickerson was married to Sallie Shearer Hickerson and had no children. Hickerson had lived in Boone since approximately 1921, having originated in Yadkin Valley. Hickerson was a known Black stone mason in Boone who had his own crew of workmen; these men erected "almost all the newer brick structures of the town," by 1938.²⁷ On the Clay House, Hickerson is noted as working with Wiley Gordan "W.G." Hartzog (1885-1976). Hartzog was a former teacher turned contractor, teaching as late as 1917, probably retiring in the early 1920s and contracting as early as 1923.²⁸ In 1921, he was called "one of Watauga's best mechanics," by the *Watauga Democrat*.²⁹ Hickerson may have been on one of the first crews Hartzog undertook, having been in town for about two years by 1923. This would allow him several years to hone his skills and become well known in the region by 1933. Hartzog was also the city's Postmaster

²³ "Brief Illness Proves Fatal to R. Luther Clay," *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC), Mar. 29, 1945.

<https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/>

²⁴ "Friday Afternoon Club with Mrs. R.L. Clay," *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC), May 21, 1931.

<https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/>

²⁵ "Local Affairs" *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC), June 1, 1933. Page 5. <https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/> Plagg, Dr. Eric W.; Fuller, Paul; Holladay, Nicole; Hamilton, Carson. "Comprehensive Architectural Survey of Downtown Boone, North Carolina." (PDF, Boone, NC, February 2021.) Pg 97.

²⁶ "Brief Illness Proves Fatal to R. Luther Clay," *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC), Mar. 29, 1945.

<https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/>

Plagg, Dr. Eric W.; Fuller, Paul; Holladay, Nicole; Hamilton, Carson. "Comprehensive Architectural Survey of Downtown Boone, North Carolina." (PDF, Boone, NC, February 2021.) Pg 50.

²⁷ "John Hickerson Dies on Sunday" *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC), October 13, 1938.

<https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/>

²⁸ "Mr. and Mrs. Hartzog Entertain Former Pupils" *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC) May 8, 1924. Page 3.

<https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn82007642/>

"Local Affairs" *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC) November, 1923. <https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn82007642/>

²⁹ "Furniture Factory For Boone" *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC) January 13, 1921. Page 3.

<https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn82007642/>

from 1934 until at least 1941.³⁰ This would mean he was a local contractor with stone masons at the time the WPA native-stone Post Office was constructed on King Street in the late 1930s.

The home was maintained 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 articles regarding the Friday Afternoon Club.³¹ 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.³²

In early 1945, Clay fell ill and passed away after complications following an appendix operation at 55 years old.³³ After Clay passed his family remained in Greensboro and the Boone home was sold to local newspaper owner and editor, Robert Campbell “R.C.” Rivers Jr. (1899-1975) and his wife Bonnie Jean Lewis (1910-1991). R.C. Rivers Jr. had come to be the editor and publisher of the *Watauga Democrat* and the owner of Rivers Publishing by this time, having inherited the company from his father in 1933. The deed transferring the property from the Clay family to the River family has proven very difficult to find as most deeds in the area, and at the time, list large tracts with multiple holders, not denoting structures on the properties.

R.C. Rivers Jr. had inherited the *Watauga Democrat* from his father, R.C. Rivers Sr. (1861-1933) upon the elder’s passing in 1933. R.C. Rivers Sr. was born in 1861 in Tennessee. He moved to Boone at some point, marrying Sarah Locke “Sallie” Journey (1861-1924) in 1892, after which they had 3 children, R.C. Jr. being the eldest surviving son. Rivers Sr. purchased the *Watauga Democrat*, the local paper that had flopped after the first fall edition, from Joseph Spainhour and John S. Williams in 1889. Rivers Sr. initially purchased the paper with D.B. Doughtry but bought out his partner by the end of 1889. He continued to print the paper and run this business until his death in 1933.³⁴

Having lived in the apartment above the brick print shop located at what is today 747 W King Street since its construction in 1937, R.C. Rivers Jr. and wife Bonnie Jean Rivers, and their children, could relocate down the street and still be close to the business.³⁵ That building has since been changed dramatically since its time as a printer to better fit the restaurant that now occupies the lower level. The Rivers family had a daughter, Lucinda Jane Rivers (1935-2017)

³⁰ “Doughton Asks that Hartzog be Postmaster” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC) May 24, 1934.

<https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/>

“Christmas Seals Now Being Used” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC) November 27, 1941.

<https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/>

³¹ “Alice Stransbury Taylor Circle Holds Meeting,” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC), July 4, 1935 Page 5.

<https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/>

³² “Brief Illness Proves Fatal to R. Luther Clay,” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC), Mar. 29, 1945.

<https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/>

³³ “Brief Illness Proves Fatal to R. Luther Clay,” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC), Mar. 29, 1945.

<https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/>

³⁴ “History of The Watauga Democrat” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC), Jan 3, 2012, Updated August 11, 2014.

<https://www.wataugademocrat.com/aboutus/history-of-the-watauga-democrat/article>

³⁵ “Hands Across the State,” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC), Jul. 21, 1938. <https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/>

before moving into the stone home. There were two children born to Bonnie Jean and R.C. Jr between 1939 and 1940 that were unnamed and would not survive infancy.³⁶ They would go on to have one more surviving child in 1943, Rachel Ann Rivers (1943-1999). She was born at the Hagaman Clinic that was once on King Street in downtown Boone. The Riverses kept horses in the acreage to the west of their home, an area that once covered at least 13 acres. Rachel Rivers was known as an able equestrian from a very young age. She wrote her first piece for the *Watauga Democrat* at 11 years old.³⁷

Circa mid 1940s, a separate two-car garage with upstairs storage space was added south-east of the home and made to resemble the stone work of the home.³⁸ This garage may have been built along with the house, as the stone work is identical but there is no recorded mention of its construction at or after the construction of the house. The Rivers family kept a housekeeper from Beaver Dam, a white woman named Mabel Moody Mixon (1926-2013), in their employ for 18 years while living in the stone home.³⁹ This was probably between 1945 and 1965. With two children in the house and a husband with a full time job as well as a job herself on staff at the *Watauga Democrat*, this time range is when Mrs. Rivers may have most benefited from having an extra hand around the house.

Rivers Publishing Company purchased the *Blowing Rocket* in 1956, a paper publishing seasonal reporting from Blowing Rock since 1936. The *Rocket* began being printed weekly under Rivers Jr. Rachel Rivers would go out of state to gain a college degree in journalism, working for the *Watauga Democrat* upon her return.

Rachel Rivers married Paul Armfield Coffey in 1965.⁴⁰ Both worked for the paper before their marriage, Rachel Rivers having been a photographer, writer, and editor, while Coffey was a journalist and photographer. After their marriage Rivers-Coffey and Coffey continued to work at the *Watauga Democrat* and provide news to their community. Rivers Publishing Company purchased the *Avery Journal* and began printing it in 1972, expanding the empire outside of Watauga County. R.C. Rivers Jr. passed away from colon cancer, having lived with the disease for two years, in 1975.⁴¹ Upon his death the *Watauga Democrat* and Rivers Publishing Company was inherited by Rivers-Coffey and her husband.

The house and land itself was under the ownership of Bonnie Jean Lewis Rivers after the death of her husband, Rivers Jr. She held the property, and is assumed to have lived there, until her death in 1991.⁴² Upon the death of her mother, Rachel Rivers-Coffey acquired the land and would hold it for only a few years until she sold it to the Town of Boone in October 1998. During this time Rivers-Coffey and her husband ran the paper until 1994 when they sold it to the

³⁶ Book of Vital Records 26 page 190-191 and Book of Vital Records 27 page 222.

³⁷ Brad Hodges. "Former newspaper publisher dies after falling from horse: Rachel Rivers-Coffey was long-time county civic leader," *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC), August 25, 1999.

³⁸Palmer Blair, "Aerial View of Boone from the East, 1950," *Digital Watauga*, accessed January 15, 2023, <https://digitalwatauga.org/items/show/6032>.

³⁹ Brad Hodges. "The Page Turns," *Watauga Democrat*, (Boone, NC) August 27, 1999.

⁴⁰ Book of Vital Records 1965, pg 889.

⁴¹"Publisher R.C. River Jr. Dies; End brought to Unique Career" *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC) April 24, 1975.

⁴² Book of Records 272 Pages 585-597. Will executed December 23, 1993.

owners of the *Bristol Herald-Courier*, who then sold it to Art and Fran Powers a few years later. At this point the group of publications was titled the Watauga Newspapers Group. Jones Media then bought all the papers in 2002. This group still runs the *Watauga Democrat*, *Avery Journal*, *Blowing Rocket*, and other local publications such as the *Mountain Times*.⁴³

As a condition of selling the home to the Town of Boone, Rivers-Coffey and Coffey included restrictions to the property and its future use by the Town of Boone. Jim Butler, who resided in the home, was allowed a life-estate as well. He passed in 2011, leaving the home empty as it sits today. The restrictions placed on the property are as follows; “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... 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. [And] 6. Historical purposes.”⁴⁴

Six parcels historically associated with the home surround the current parcel it stands on. 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 building.⁴⁵ 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. The second parcel (2900-69-9070-000) is located to the north, west, and south of the house and contains what was once the horse pasture for Rachel Rivers-Coffey’s horses; this parcel is approximately 8 acres and is also owned by the Town of Boone. This parcel, or the one slightly to the north-west, (2900-79-0308-000) contains “Baby” a sugar maple that is on the North Carolina Register of Big Trees. There is a wrought iron fence surrounding the giant tree and a large plaque on the southwest fence that states the title of North Carolina Champion Big Tree is held by the maple. On this same parcel the reconstructed Daniel Boone Monument (WT0567) stands in the northeast corner. This monument was reconstructed for a second time at this location in the early 2000s. Three additional adjacent parcels to the northwest, along Poplar Grove Road, owned by the Town of Boone were donated by Paul Armfield Coffey with deed restrictions similar to those attached to the home. One parcel (2900-69-4353-000) donated by Paul Armfield Coffey is accessible via West Grandview Heights and no longer adjoining to the largest parcel (the .79 acre plot is privately owned) it’s still adjacent to parcel 2900-69-6458-000. The house was surveyed in 1988, 2005, and 2021 as part of National Register Nominations regarding Downtown Boone.

⁴³“History of The Watauga Democrat” *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC), Jan 3, 2012, Updated August 11, 2014. <https://www.wataugademocrat.com/aboutus/history-of-the-watauga-democrat/article>

⁴⁴ Record Book 280 Page 292, October 29, 1998.

⁴⁵ “Local Affairs” *Watauga Democrat*. (Boone, NC.) June 1, 1933. Page 5. <https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/>

VI. Assessment

The Clay/Rivers House is associated with both Robert Campbell (R.C.) Rivers Jr. and Rachel Rivers-Coffey. These two individuals were part of the Rivers Publishing Company that published the only newspaper in Boone, the *Watauga Democrat*. Between these individuals, they ran the paper for 61 years between 1933-1994 not including the time that they worked under others for the *Watauga Democrat* before and after that time period. Rivers Jr. was responsible for the growth of the paper outside of Boone city limits, acquiring both the *Blowing Rocket* and the *Avery Journal*. He took the *Watauga Democrat* from an eight page weekly publication to one that averaged forty pages twice a week. He was a member of the Board of Directors of Northwestern Bank of Boone, Vice President of the Watauga Savings and Loan association until 1974, a member of the Board of Directors of the North Carolina Press Association, and director of the Journalism Foundation at UNC Chapel Hill. He served as a delegate to the National Democratic Conventions of 1944, 1952, 1956, and 1960, known as one of the Dirty Dozen who stood for the nomination of later president Jack Kennedy. His comments on the assassination of Kennedy were published in the *Watauga Democrat* and entered into the Congressional Record by Senator Sam Ervin.⁴⁶

Rachel Rivers-Coffey is responsible for the preservation of the Town of Boone Cemetery and consolidating the historically Black and white sections of the cemetery. Rivers-Coffey helped found the Watauga Humane Society in 1969 along with future mayor Velma Burnley. She was a member of the Watauga County Hospital Board and its Foundation Board, Rivers-Coffey was on the board of Historic Boone and the Watauga County Foundation. She was a member of the Save Cape Hatteras Lighthouse Committee. Rivers-Coffey helped propel the Doc and Merle Watson Mountain Folk Art Museum in Cove Creek, which opened in early 1999. She was involved with launching the first Firefly Festival in Boone through a contest in the Southern Farmers Almanac. Rivers-Coffey was president of the North Carolina Press Association in 1994 and 1995. She published two books, *The City Man* and *A Horse Like Mr. Ragman*. Rivers-Coffey and her family had agreed to sponsor a professorship in creative writing at nearby Appalachian State University in the months before her untimely death. She is also responsible for the continued existence and preservation of the Clay/Rivers House, having donated the home to the Town of Boone in 1998.⁴⁷

Rivers Jr. raised his family in the home while managing and expanding the *Watauga Democrat* and Rivers Publishing Company, Rivers-Coffey was born into the home, was raised here, and held the property in high regard, ensuring its preservation after her ownership. She worked at, inherited, and continued to publish the *Watauga Democrat* until she sold the

⁴⁶ "Publisher R.C. River Jr. Dies; End brought to Unique Career" *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC) April 24, 1975.

⁴⁷ Brad Hodges. "Former newspaper publisher dies after falling from horse: Rachel Rivers-Coffey was long-time county civic leader," *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC), August 25, 1999.

Brad Hodges. "The Page Turns," *Watauga Democrat*, (Boone, NC) August 27, 1999.

publication. The *Watauga Democrat* is the oldest business in Watauga County under continuous operation.⁴⁸

The house itself remains intact and largely unchanged since its construction in c.1933. The integrity of the mason work and the structure itself are exemplary when compared to other stone structures from the period of significance in downtown Boone. Even the interior floor plan appears to be unchanged from the original design. The quality of construction and maintenance on the building thus far has led to its remaining high integrity 90 years after its construction.

VII. Supporting documentation

- A. Digital photographs in [drive](#) along with floor plan.
- B. A site plan: Found in the above drive.

⁴⁸ Brad Hodges. "Former newspaper publisher dies after falling from horse: Rachel Rivers-Coffey was long-time county civic leader," *Watauga Democrat* (Boone, NC), August 25, 1999.

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R.L. Clay House (1933) Design Standards



Palmer Blair, "Mr. Reece's House in the Snow (1/2)," *Digital Watauga*, accessed April 21, 2023, <http://digitalwatauga.org/items/show/6574>.

Town of Boone Historic Preservation Commission

Design Standards in Accordance with Appendix D

1. Architectural Components and Details

1.1 The roof of the R.L. Clay House was "...until recently was composed of asbestos shingles designed to resemble slate, but...were removed in 2015 and replaced with more traditional asphalt shingles." (Plagg 98). These asbestos shingles are not thought to be original to the house. Per Appendix D Section 1, Article 1.2, property owners should avoid replacing historical materials with substitutes should future repairs occur. Property owners may consider researching the build of the original house and, should future repairs take place, use materials as close to the original roof's build as possible.

1.2 Two parcels (99)

2. Foundations

2.1 A long, stone retaining wall runs parallel to the house along the south elevation of the wall. Property owners should remain in accordance with Appendix D Section 2 Article 2.1 when repairing the stone wall and should consider the use of a historically trained stone mason.

3. Masonry

3.1 Much of the R.L. Clay house's foundation and outer structure is constructed of native stone...

4. Siding and Trim

4.1 Many areas of the R.L. Clay house include wood weatherboard as a building material, including the north (front) facade's porch entrance ceiling, the east interior porch, and the second-floor north elevation dormers. Wood weatherboard subjected to outdoor conditions may be subject to decay. Should this happen, property owners should remain in accordance with Appendix D Section 1 Article 1.3 by repairing the wood weatherboard only with the same material. Property owners should also maintain Appendix D Section 4 Article 4.4 by avoiding painting over the wood weatherboard at any cost, as it ruins the historic appearance of the house.

5. Windows, Doors, and Awnings

5.1 The north (front) facade's porch interior includes two rectangular window openings on either side of the porch. These windows contribute significantly to the historic character of the building. When making repairs or updates to this section of the building, property owners should remain in accordance with Appendix D Section 5.

5.2 The north (front) facade's porch entrance includes a twelve-light, wooden door, which is covered by an aluminum screen door. Property owners should remain in accordance with Appendix D Section 5 when repairing the door. If the aluminum screen door is found to not be original to the house, it should be considered removed when it's next in need of repair.

5.3 East of the porch on the first floor is a double set of six-over-six, double-hung sash, wooden windows, with a wooden surround, aluminum storm windows, and stone sills. These windows contribute significantly to the historic character of the building. When making repairs or updates to this section of the building, property owners should remain in accordance with Appendix D Section 5. When repairing the stone sills, they should remain in accordance with Appendix D Section 2 Article 2.1.

5.4 On the first floor in the southeast corner is a small single one-over-one, horizontal light, wooden window, and aluminum storm window over it. These windows contribute significantly to the historic character of the building. When making repairs or updates to this section of the building, property owners should remain in accordance with Appendix D Section 5. When repairing the stone sills, they should remain in accordance with Appendix D Section 2 Article 2.1. Property Owners should consider keeping the aluminum storm windows to protect the integrity of the original windows.

5.5 The second floor of the east elevation features a medium-sized, double set of windows. These windows contribute significantly to the historic character of the building. When making repairs or updates to this section of the building, property owners should remain in accordance with Appendix D Section 5.

5.6 The north elevation of the two-car garage, separate from the R.L. Clay house, features two symmetrically spaced, garage bay doors of vertical wood slats (Plagg 101). When repairing the garage bay doors, property owners should reference Appendix D Article 5.

6. Roofs

6.1 The roof of the R.L. Clay House was "...until recently was composed of asbestos shingles designed to resemble slate, but...were removed in 2015 and replaced with more traditional asphalt shingles." (Plagg 98). These asbestos shingles are not thought to be original to the house. Per Appendix D Section 6, Article 6.1, property owners should avoid replacing historical materials with substitutes should future repairs occur. Property owners may consider researching the build of the original house and, should future repairs take place, use materials as close to the original roof's build as possible. Property owners should also remain in accordance with Appendix D Section 6, Article 6.2, 6.5, 6.6, and 6.8.

7. Entrances, Porches, and Balconies

7.1 The north (front) facade features an irregular, front-gabled porch entrance that is reached by stone steps with stone cheek walls. If this gable is found to be aboriginal to the house, property owners should abide by Appendix D Section 6 Article 6.3 by removing the gable. Property owners should also abide by Appendix D Section 7 Articles 7.1-7.2, 7.4, 7.7, and 7.10 when repairing or considering additions to the porch.

7.2 The first floor of the north elevation opens to a square interior porch anchored to the house by a stone column. Property owners should also abide by Appendix D Section 7 Articles 7.1-7.2, 7.4, 7.7, and 7.10 when repairing or considering additions to the porch. When repairing the column, property owners should reference Appendix D Section 1.

7.3 At the north of the house is a cut stone pathway with an iron railing running along its length (Plagg 101). When the cut stone is in need of repair, property owners should reference Appendix D Section 7, Article 7.7.

7.5 The south elevation of the two-car garage features wooden steps which rise to the upper level of the garage, which can be accessed via a wooden door with a deep wooden surround (Plagg 101). When the wooden steps are in need of repair, property owners should reference Appendix D Section 7, Article 7.7. When the wooden door or its surround is damaged, property owners should reference Appendix D Section 5.

8. *Paint and Paint Color*

8.1 Dormers projecting from the second floor of the north elevation feature shingles on the gable fronts. These shingles are made of material that "...may be of asbestos that has since been painted." (Plagg 100) Assuming these shingles, too, are not original to the house, and in accordance with Appendix D Section 1, Article 1.2, property owners should avoid the replacement of historical materials with substitutes when future repairs take place. If the shingles are to be repainted, they should continue to be repainted in the same color as they currently are.

9. *Utilities and Energy Retrofit*

10. *Accessibility, Health, and Safety Considerations*

Property owners should abide by Appendix D Section 10 when considering additions for accessibility, health, and safety. New exterior fire escapes are not permitted. When necessary, they should be located to the back of the building to prevent taking away from the historic character of the building. Fire exits, stairs, landings, and ramps should be constructed in the back of the house or inconspicuous side locations. Fire exits, stairs, landings, and ramps should be constructed so that they do not damage or obscure historic aspects of the house. Existing fire escapes that are aboriginal to the house should be moved from the front to a more inconspicuous area when possible.

11. Additional Standards on Artificial Materials

12. Additions to Existing Buildings in the District

13. New Construction of Residential Buildings within the District

14. Minimum Spacing and Height Requirements for Residential Structures

For details on the minimum spacing and height requirements for residential structures in the District, please consult the Town of Boone UDO.



Town of Boone Planning and Inspections Department

Memorandum

To: Historic Preservation Commission

From: Jessica Mitchell

Date: 4/21/2023

Subject: Update on Doc and Merle Watson Mural Regarding Informational Plaque

The Doc and Merle Watson Mural was presented to the HPC on February 7, 2023, where the HPC had recommendations following the HPC's advisory review of the public art installation.

One of the HPC's recommendations was to revise the informational plaque text by contacting Dr. Gary Boye at Appalachian State University. The following language was shared with Planning Staff, who subsequently shared it with HPC members for discussion at the May 2, 2023, HPC Advisory meeting.

The updated text has been shared with Staff members involved with the project and the artists, who will share the information with the NC Department of Cultural and Natural Resources.

Updated Information Plaque Text

"Arthel Lane "Doc" Watson was a musician, singer and songwriter well known for playing the guitar, banjo and harmonica despite losing his eyesight early in life. He played in amateur music competitions and local radio shows during the early 1940s, earning the nickname "Doc" while playing on the radio in Lenoir. Doc married Rosa Lee Carlton in 1947, continuing to play part-time with local dance bands and on the streets in Boone, Blowing Rock, Johnson City, and other nearby towns throughout the 1950s. The couple had a son, Eddy Merle, and a daughter, Nancy Ellen. In 1960, Doc met musician and folklorist Ralph Rinzier, who immediately saw a chance to showcase traditional mountain music with Watson as the star. Doc would be a full-time professional musician for the rest of his life. Learning guitar from his mother while Doc was on tour, Merle Watson grew to become a musical talent in his own right, and would eventually join his father on tour for more than 20 years until his death in 1985. After the death of his son, Doc continued to share his music with the world and earned seven Grammy Awards, as well as the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award."