



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

January 25, 2021

Dear Members of Board of County Commissioners,

In 2020, Durham's Historic Preservation Commission became acquainted with online hearings. Being a quasi-judicial board, maintaining our rules and procedures in an online platform has been a learning lesson for all board members. The unwavering commitment of planning staff to the Commission's duty to provide a fair and just platform for residents to present their applications for Certificates of Appropriateness bears a great deal of the credit for the Commission's ability to smoothly transition to this remote platform. Appreciation for the ability of the Commission to continue in our mission is also due to the office of the Governor and state legislation for permitting quasi-judicial hearings to be held digitally during the state of emergency in which we have found ourselves for the better part of 2020.

During these unprecedented times, the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) has continued to work diligently throughout the year to identify and protect Durham's historic properties. Beyond holding 22 hearings for Major Certificates of Appropriateness, the Commission also adopted revisions to the Historic Properties Local Review Criteria, after review by JCCPC, City Council, and Board of County Commissioners. The revised Criteria offer applicants a clearer understanding of what is expected of them, removing much of the language that caused confusion in previous years. They also expanded the review authority of staff for minor architectural changes such as inconspicuous rooftop solar panels.

With the fast pace at which Durham has been developing over the last decade, preservation and protection of our historic resources continues to play a critical role in maintaining Durham's sense of place. We look forward to continuing our work in this mission.

Thank you for your continued support,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Katie Hamilton".

Katie Hamilton, Chair