

Saving History, Legacies, and Stories
Historic Columbus



Currents

FALL 2020
PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY HISTORIC COLUMBUS



DEAR HCF MEMBERS,

The first thing I need to say is thank you. Through your “likes” on our social media, reading our weekly emails, your generous contributions, and renewing your memberships, YOU have made it possible for Historic Columbus to not only be standing but thriving. Thank you!

This has been a tough road for everyone, and it is requiring us all to be more creative (which is a great thing). Your Historic Columbus Board and Staff have been doing just that through the ways we communicate with you, the types of education programming we are developing, and the strategic planning we are going through to focus our revitalization efforts.



COMMUNICATION

At the beginning of COVID-19 and after my panic resided, we needed a plan to keep Historic Columbus on your radar. From that point forward, we put together weekly emails to keep you all updated through Preservation Spotlights and History Spotlights. We also developed a monthly email to our Directors, Trustees, and Long-time Friends to give them more insight into how HCF is not only dealing with the pandemic financially, but also giving them the inside scoop on projects.

EDUCATION

We also knew that how Historic Columbus typically provided children’s education programs was going to have to change. There would be no tours of the Walker-Peters-Langdon House Museum (WPL); there would be no in-school activities like making butter or bricks; and there would be no Box City Summer Camp. Over the summer, we held a virtual Best Building Contest and provided log cabin kits to 60 children at Truth Spring Academy.

This school year, we will focus on providing the “Our Town” materials, history videos, and heritage activities to the schools through our website. We will also create a new outdoor exhibit at the WPL so children and their families can still visit and learn about our town’s history in a safe way.

We are also working with our cultural arts partners on new collaborative efforts like the Woman Suffrage Historic Marker Dedication at the end of August with The Columbus Museum and the City of Columbus.

PRESERVATION

Over the summer, I have been speaking with each member of the Board to get their opinions on our preservation priorities. I asked them questions like: What do our priorities for the next few years look like? What is important to you? What will be visible and/or speak to our community as relevant? The five areas they delved into and gave me their thoughts on include: the Second Avenue Corridor (The Mill District), High Uptown, Waverly Terrace, Midtown, and the original city (Heritage Park). I have also started reaching out to our Trustees to get their opinions. These are broad areas with a lot of great projects within them. You will be hearing more about Historic Columbus’ strategies in this issue and in the coming months.

Unfortunately, we have had some bad news for Historic Columbus – long-time staff member Callie Hecht resigned her position at the end of August. We are devastated, but excited she now has the opportunity to spend more time with her family (which is the most important thing to us all). We are so grateful to her. In her 11 years, she expanded Box City, created our social media presence, grew our children’s programming, and managed all our events. It will take a team to even touch replacing her.

What you all think matters. It makes this organization better. It makes me better. If you have any questions, thoughts, or concerns, please email or call anytime (706-322-0756 or elizabeth@historiccolumbus.com). Thank you all again for everything you do to make our community a better place.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth B. Walden". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Elizabeth B. Walden
Executive Director

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ON THE COVER...

THE RANKIN HOUSE, HCF HEADQUARTERS

Faith Allen, Fallen Photography

DESIGNATED FUND DONOR OPPORTUNITIES YOU can designate your donation!

The **Patricia Jackson Howard Scholarship** is awarded annually to high school seniors in Muscogee County. The scholarship (up to \$4,000) is to be used for college expenses.

The **Virginia T. Peebles Historic Preservation Grant** was created to facilitate projects to renovate, stabilize or plan for the protection of non-residential historic structures and sites. Grants can range from \$3,000 - \$6,000 depending on funding and applications.

For more information please contact Historic Columbus.

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Replacement for Chase Homes on Second Avenue



HIGH UPTOWN ACTIVITY

High Uptown is a 20-acre locally designated and National Register Historic District comprised of 39 contributing historic structures and 18 non-contributing buildings – ranging from construction dates of 1860 to 1954. The neighborhood is within the original planned city boundaries of Columbus, just north of the central business district. Residents

Adding up the estimated costs of the several new projects under development in and around High Uptown, the total reaches nearly \$90 million. These projects include – the Chase Homes redevelopment, 70 new apartments, Mercer School of Medicine, Highside Market (Ray’s Uptown Body Shop and Regions Bank), the Sputnik Bar, and City Mills,

among others. These are exciting investments not only for High Uptown, but also the greater community.

In recognition of all those investments, Historic Columbus sees the need to stay ahead of the construction and develop a plan for High Uptown. That plan will identify, protect, and highlight the historic properties



New Apartments on Third Avenue

included some of Columbus' most prominent citizens of the day – the Woodruffs, the Illges family, the Bullards, the Rankins, and the Garretts – as well as mill workers and laborers, such as Isaac Maund, who built modest vernacular houses in the area.

If you have driven near the Rankin House lately you have likely noticed a flurry of new construction activity in the area. High Uptown is receiving a lot of attention from house renovations to a new apartment development headlined by local preservationist, Ken Henson Jr.



**John P. Illges House
(1425 3rd Avenue)**



Historic 3rd Avenue Houses within New Apartment Complex



Walter Hurt Cargill House (1415 3rd Avenue)

that may be in the wake of all this new work, as well as noting areas ripe for additional infill development or renovation.

In September, Historic Columbus' Preservation and Executive committees approved hiring Hecht Burdeshaw Architects to assist in a planning effort to accomplish just that. The plan will be complete by the end of October and will guide and focus discussion on how Historic Columbus can positively embrace the new investments while protecting some of the most significant historic properties in our community.

More than a year ago, Historic Columbus purchased three houses on 3rd Avenue to save and stabilize the structures. We were also successful in securing a \$75,000.00 grant from the 1772 Foundation to assist with their rehab work. These houses were promptly sold with Façade Easements to Ken Henson as a part of his greater apartment development efforts, which allowed those funds to return to the Janice P. Biggers Revolving Redevelopment Fund.

Not wanting to let the dust settle, Historic Columbus turned those funds around and purchased a longtime vacant and abandoned property (1415 3rd Avenue) to stabilize and resell. Having closed on September 15th, this property has already garnered interest from potential buyers as a single-family residence.

As projects progress and the plan is completed, Historic Columbus is excited to keep our supporters up to date on the activity of this historic district and all of the other places in our community that mean so much to us.



NEW AND RENEWAL MEMBERSHIPS

May 16, 2020 – September 15, 2020

In order to conserve publication costs, we are only printing new and renewal memberships made between

May 16, 2020 and September 15, 2020.

If you see an error or omission, please contact the office (706) 322-0756.

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(May 16, 2020 – September 15, 2020)

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June 25, 2020

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July 2, 2020

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September 3, 2020

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September 13, 2020

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PRESERVATION AWARDS**

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27TH

5:30PM

HCF FACEBOOK AND YOUTUBE

Unfortunately, we will not be able to be together in person this year. The program will be launched on the Historic Columbus Facebook page and YouTube channel.

Ten incredible preservation projects will be receiving awards and the 37TH Sarah Turner Butler Award recipient will be announced. Please join us online!