

## Anya Grahn

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, October 12, 2020 3:40 PM  
**To:** Anya Grahn  
**Subject:** RE: Chapel Hill Historic District Design Guidelines Update to the Historic District Commission (HDC) - 10.13.2020

**External email:** Don't click links or attachments from unknown senders. To check or report forward to [reportspam@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:reportspam@townofchapelhill.org)

Hi Anya,

I have been very busy of late, but I would like to give you some feedback on the topics below. If in the future you have a document you want me to comment on, please feel free to send it. I don't have much time for attending meetings. See comments below.

Benjamin

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**From:** Anya Grahn <[agrahn@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:agrahn@townofchapelhill.org)>  
**Sent:** Monday, October 5, 2020 9:30 AM  
**Subject:** Chapel Hill Historic District Design Guidelines Update to the Historic District Commission (HDC) - 10.13.2020

Thank you all for your continued interest in this project to revise Chapel Hill's Historic District Design Guidelines. Staff will be providing an update on this project to the Historic District Commission (HDC) starting at 6:30pm on October 13, 2020. The public is welcome to attend this virtual meeting, and directions for registering are available on the [calendar page](#). We will be asking the HDC to provide feedback on:

- Sustainability

Since environmental conservation is essential to the future of Chapel Hill and North Carolina more broadly, special consideration will be made for modifications to houses in the historic district that promote sustainability and which minimize their impact on the neighborhoods. Examples of this might include the addition of solar panels in areas where they are only minimally visible from the street.

- Replacement Materials

To the greatest extent possible replacement materials should match the original materials. The match should not be limited to the appearance of the original materials as there may be additional qualities that may become apparent over time. For example, a traditional Chapel Hill stone wall should be created out of field stone. While it is possible to build a stone wall with a thin veneer of rock over cinderblock, The veneer stone will rarely match the appeared of field stone. Second, all materials degrade over time. The historic character of Chapel Hill in part arises out of this degradation process. When a stone veneer and cinderblock wall degrades, the stone veneer buckles and exposes the underlying cinderblock. This degradation is inconsistent with the historic character

of Chapel Hill. Examples of the normal degradation of historic stone walls would include those in on the south side of franklin St adjacent to Raleigh road.

While efforts should be made to use building materials that are similar to those that would have been used originally, there are also times when either the original materials are no longer manufactured, were there use would degrade the environment, or where alternative materials are either greatly superior or consistent with conservations. It is the role of the HDC to consider these issues when making decisions. For example, asphalt shingles are no longer manufactured, whereas fiberglass composite shingles are manufactured, they have greater durability, and they have a similar appearance. Another example would be some forms of synthetic slate which may be more durable than natural slate and which have an almost indistinguishable appearance from the ground. In addition, synthetic slate may have an Insulative R factor of up to 5. While natural slate is preferred, a homeowner who chooses a synthetic slate that is of natural appearance and which has been shown to maintain its authentic appearance over time may be allowed to use this alternative building material. Examples of synthetic slate rooves that have proven successful include (house on south side of Gimghoul) which was installed at about the same time as the natural slate roof at directly across the street (Brinner House).

- Approval Authority (What activities require HDC review and authority? What activities can be approved by staff?)

In general, I recommend that the administrative staff take more responsibility for independently approving projects that have historically been approved by he HDC particularly where those that at the discretion of staff, clearly fall withing the guidelines. These approvals should be at reduced cost relative to a full review.

Applicants should only be required to fill out those portions of an application that are germane to a decision. For example, if an applicant is requesting a modification to the surface of an entrance walkway, the height of the house relative to adjacent structures in not relevant to the decision making process and should not need to be reported.

More information is also available on the project webpage:

<https://www.townofchapelhill.org/government/departments-services/planning/special-protection-areas-and-districts/historic-district-design-guidelines-rewrite-project>.

Thank you for your consideration,

**Anya Grahn, Senior Planner**

Long-Range Planning Division | Planning Department  
405 Martin Luther King Jr Blvd. | Chapel Hill NC 27514

Town of Chapel Hill | [www.townofchapelhill.org](http://www.townofchapelhill.org)  
t: 919-969-5059 | [agrahn@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:agrahn@townofchapelhill.org)

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