

PROJECT NAME
Parks Building Evaluation

PROJECT NO.
10635-00

September 23, 2015

DISTRIBUTION
Mr. Bill Schmid
City Manager of Dahlonega

BY
Karen Gravel, AIA

FILE: C:\Users\lkg\Desktop\150918_Dahlonega\parks building report.docx

COPY: **Jack Pyburn**

On September 18, 2015 preservation architect Karen Gravel, AIA, met Mr. Bill Schmid, City Manager of Dahlonega, Mr. Garrett and Jack Bailey, AIA, to review the Parks Building at 40 East Main Street/Memorial Drive, Dahlonega, Georgia. Access was provided by the City of Dahlonega and the owners of the property. The City’s Code Enforcement Officer Tim Martin, Lumpkin County Fire Chief David Wimpy, Fire Marshall David McWhorter and Fire Inspector Jody Holland also present. Access was provided to the partial basement and to the attic area in two locations.

An Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for Demolition was submitted to the City of Dahlonega by Mrs. Roberta Garrett on August 14, 2015. Mr. Bill Schmid requested Lord Aeck Sargent conduct a Condition Assessment of the site and provide a report to the City of Dahlonega for review by the Historic Preservation Commission. The next meeting of the Commission will be September 28, 2015 when this report and the COA will be reviewed.

The City’s Historic Resources Survey of 2001 identifies the property as Resource No. LU-D-14 known variously by the names Rev. Goodman Hughes House and the Payne Building. An estimated date of construction of c.1860 is shown with several unknown major changes and alterations of unknown dates from a residence into a commercial building. The condition of the property was assessed as fair and the building was considered threatened by its condition.

The building is not part of the Dahlonega downtown National Register district created in 1982. Nor is it currently a listed individual property on the National Register. It is part of Dahlonega’s local historic district and subject to COA review by the Historic Preservation Commission by virtue of its B-3 zoning classification.

As described in the City’s Historic Preservation Ordinance (Ordinance 98-3 Amendment 1 of July 2, 2012): *Comments by Lord Aeck Sargent follow in italics.*

“A decision by the Commission approving or denying a Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of buildings, structures, sites, trees judged to be 50 years old or older, or objects shall be guided by:

1. the historic, scenic, or architectural significance of the building, structure, site, tree, or object;

The Parks building is significant because it has contributed to the central business district of Dahlonaga for 160 years.

2. the importance of the building, structure, site, tree, or object to the ambiance of the district;

The Parks building is one of many varied structures along the commercial corridor and downtown of Dahlonaga. Its size, scale and materials contribute to the character of the street and sidewalk of Dahlonaga.

3. the difficulty or impossibility of reproducing such a building, structure, site, tree, or object because of its design, texture, material, detail, or unique location;

The roughhewn logs, heart pine framing, interior butt-jointed, lapped and flush wood panel wall finishes, wood floors, doors, windows, composition of the building and interior finishes represent mid-nineteenth to early twentieth century construction techniques. The wood is not replaceable. The structural techniques are not often used in contemporary construction practices today.

4. whether the building, structure, site, tree, or object is one of the last remaining examples of its kind in the neighborhood or the city;

The Parks building is unique to Dahlonaga, however, a complete comparison and inventory of similar structures was not conducted at this time.

5. whether there are definite plans for use of the property if the proposed demolition is carried out, and what the effect of those plans on the character of the surrounding area would be;

A new building will not contribute to the character of Dahlonaga in the same way that a historic building does. The design presented in the COA should follow the HPC Design Guidelines Section 5.1 and not copy the original design.

6. whether reasonable measures can be taken to save the building, structure, site, tree, or object from collapse;

Reasonable measures could be taken to save this structure. The cost of these measures is not known at this time.

7. whether the building, structure, site, tree, or object is capable of earning reasonable economic return on its value.

The scope of this effort did not include alternatives analysis, structural integrity evaluation by a structural engineer, determination of reasonable economic return or probable costs for rehabilitation to correct identified deficiencies.

Significance

The Parks Building is an example of an antebellum commercial building and mid-nineteenth century construction in Georgia and is significant in that it has contributed to the historic downtown of Dahlonega for the past 160 years.

History

According to the historic placard on the face of the building and histories provided by the City, the Parks Building was built or purchased in 1855 by Jeremiah Payne, a military tailor, and originally known as the Payne Building. Payne sold the house to T.C.A. Dexter who led the development of the aqueduct that enabled Lumpkin County to be mined. The property was later successively sold to Amory Dexter, B. R. Meaders and then the Reverend Goodman Hughes, who was a shopkeeper and operated a general store from 1879-1899. Hughes sold it to Goodman McGuire. In 1928 it was converted to the Dahlonega Cash Store which sold meat and groceries under R.J. Haney who leased out the commercial space from Buck Cochran and his family. The Dahlonega Cash Store continued under the ownership of Frank Parks, M.H. Garrett, Boyd and Will Housley. Frank was the grandson of Benjamin Parks—one of the first to discover gold in the area. His son Woodrow worked at the store as a young man during this time. After his honorable discharge and return from World War II in 1945, he opened Parks Clothing Store in the same building. Woodrow Parks ran his clothing store until he was 98. He died at the age of 99 on July 2, 2012. The various owners of the property have contributed to the economy of downtown Dahlonega for over 160 years. Mr. Parks was responsible for at least 66 of those years.



Figure 1 Early image of the Parks Building on the right. c. 1880s-1900.

Description

Exterior

The reddish-brown two-story wood frame commercial structure has an L-shaped floor plan with a nearly symmetrical primary façade and entrance facing Main Street/Memorial Drive. The entrance doors are covered by a canopy that spans the sidewalk the entire length of the main façade. There is diagonal street parking directly in front of the building. The sidewalk is comprised of brick placed in a basket weave pattern that is higher than the first floor level of the building. There is a step down of approximately 8-10" into the building at the two front doors. Two large modern storefront windows flank the front doors. The roof of the structure is comprised of two simple intersecting gabled roofs. The second story on Main Street consists of a recessed porch and symmetrical windows. The columns on both levels have chamfered posts. The roof is a metal roof with a standard 5-v profile over rough sawn irregular shaped boards on the main portion and corrugated metal on the rear portion.



Figure 2 Front elevation at Main Street/Memorial Drive

The secondary façade facing Derrick/Meaders Street is longer than the front façade and has a central recessed porch on the first floor on the street side of the building. The roof has a corrugated metal profile. The interior façade at the rear of the building has stacking porches with an exterior stair from the first to the second floor within the footprint of the porches. This stair is the only access from the first floor to the second floor as there are no interior stairs. There was likely access out of the first floor of the building to the back yard through a door that was covered by clothing display cases.



Figure 3 Derrick/Meaders Street

Most of the building is covered with a reddish-brown painted siding. The windows, fascia boards and shutters trim are painted in white on a majority of the windows. There are limited paint layers in all areas. The rear elevation has a vinyl siding covering lower door and possibly a window. The Windows are a mix of 9/6 and 2/2 double hung windows. There are two large plate glass storefront windows that appear to be a relatively later addition.



Figure 5 Rear elevation of porches. Arrow points to the elevation with vinyl siding.



Figure 4 South elevation of end of building



Figure 6 West Elevation

The foundation is made up of randomly coursed rocks that vary in size and the presences of mortar is not consistent. The exterior of the foundation has mortared joints that are painted. The main beams of the house are roughhewn logs. Supplemental bracing is present to augment the structure of the first floor. The floor structure is wood planks. The framing is wood with wood interior finishes at the floor, wall and ceiling level in at all rooms. The interior wood wall finishes vary from a flush application – both horizontal and vertical – to board and batten configuration of materials.

Interior

The first floor of the building has two distinct areas – the front store area and living quarters at the rear. The store area consists a room the size of the front portion of the building. It has clothing display cases along two walls, remnants of a restroom and a storage/cold storage room at the front of the space with a thick insulated refrigerator door. This was likely use to house and store meat between 1928 and 1945. There is one room between the main store room and rear apartment that appears to have been used for storage for the clothing store. The collection of rooms to the rear included a small kitchen and restroom. While connected by one door the spaces had two distinct functions. There is an exterior door from the porch leading to the main room of this living space.

Entry to the second floor is through the one door at the top of the stair that leads to the central vestibule spaces. The second floor has two main rooms on the front side of the building separated by two smaller vestibule spaces in the center. There are doors from each main room onto the front porch and to smaller vestibules at the front of the building. There were symmetrical chimneys in the front portion of the structure. There are two full rooms accessible from the north front room that lead to a rear kitchen/bathroom spaces. Remnants of a sink are in the second room. There is a secondary door off of the kitchen/bathroom space onto the porch.

Finishes in the building include wall, floor and ceiling boards with various widths, sizes, orientations and species of wood. The relationship to the doors varies through the structure. There appears to be one-two coats of paint in the lesser used portions of the structure. In several places there are remnants of newspaper on the walls and floors. Newspaper on the floor dates to approximately 1960. Newspaper on the walls under wallpaper in the second floor vestibules dates to 1869 and 1870. There is also limited wall paper in the first floor storage room. The doors vary between simple board doors to panel doors. There are a few screen doors. There is no insulation in the walls.



Figure 7 First Floor Commercial Space



Figure 8 Retail storage space behind main commercial space



Figure 9 Rear porch - Not accessible



Figure 10 Second floor room at front of building above the commercial space



The development and sequence of construction of the building is not readily accessible through written history or clear pattern of construction with the exception that one account states that the rear portion of the building was built after the Civil War. Most of the building elements with the exception of the front canopy over the street and vinyl siding on the rear façade appear to be at least as old as 1928 if not much earlier.

There are remnants of an ice cooler to keep perishable items cold at the front of the store. There are also display cases for clothes on the first floor that were likely installed by Woodrow Parks.



Figure 11 Remnants of a kitchen and plumbing at rear of structure



Figure 12 Door to ice chamber above cold storage



Figure 13 Ice storage area above cold storage



Figure 14 Cold storage space with hooks and shelves for meat storage



Figure 15 Clothing display cases

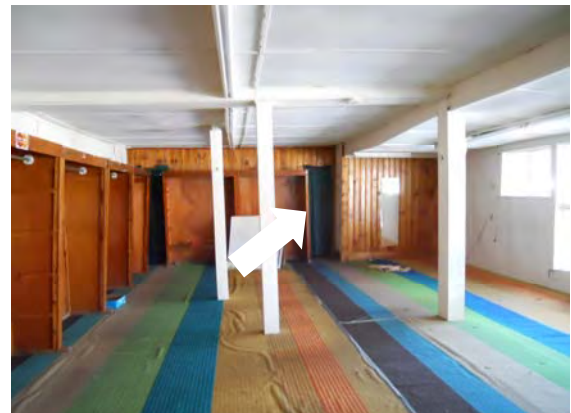


Figure 16 Clothing display cases. The cold storage area is on the right

Character Defining Features

1. Scale/Relationship of building to street – The building is sited on Main Street with the canopy of the structure over the sidewalk. The canopy was built sometime between 1970 and 1982 as suggested in the 1970 UGA Revitalization Study for Dahlonega and is not a significant contributing character defining feature. Photographs taken in 1982 show a metal awning supported with guys from above. The columns at the ground level are relatively new additions. The street and sidewalk have been built up over time that has resulted in a condition where there is a step down at the front door. While no immediate moisture issues were observed, this condition is susceptible to water infiltration through the door and wall if not sloped away from the building and covered properly.



Figure 17 Front canopy and sidewalk

2. Structure

- a. Foundation – The entire foundation is comprised of stack stone and has mortar in the joints in exterior locations. Some of the areas do not have any mortar. There is at least one later brick pier that was added to the basement foundation system.
- b. Beams – The floor beams are a combination of logs and roughhewn logs that are 10-12” deep. A supplemental line of posts and beams were added over time to the framing of the first floor. Many of the posts are not secured to the dirt floor, several beams are rotting and decomposing due to moisture infiltration.
- c. Framing – The framing of the walls is not openly discernable, but the roof is of heart pine aged lumber and thin sliced logs. Original framing is in place.



#16. c1860 Rev. Goodman Hughes House
E. Main St. Dahlonega, Ga. Mar 1982

Figure 18 Polaroid photo showing early canopy



Figure 19 Stack stone foundation

3. Wood siding – The slightly beveled horizontal wood siding has been painted. There do not appear to be more than 2-3 coats of paint on the siding. A portion of the rear elevation is covered with a vinyl siding. The condition under the siding is not known.

4. Windows – There are a variety of 2/2 and 9/6 double hung windows. There are two large plate glass windows at the front of the store that are reported to have been constructed in the 1980s. They are not old in nature or design and likely not a contributing factor to the structure. Some of the double hung windows include shutters. Others are covered with lattice to prevent entry or merely block the windows from light on the exterior.



Figure 20 Rough-hewn logs are an example of mid-nineteenth century construction.

5. Doors – There are a variety of doors throughout the building. Most were made from boards or are panel doors with and without lites. Each is unique to the particular opening. Door hardware (knobs, locks, hinges) varies widely and is different for each door.



Figure 21 The roof is framed with heart pine rafters and thinly sliced wide boards.

6. Porches – There are three distinct porch areas – the front second floor porch, the side first floor porch and the rear stacked porch with stair. These porches are separate from the canopy over the sidewalk. One includes the stair to the second floor.

7. Interior Finishes – wood planks make up the flooring, walls and ceilings of the rooms. They are of varying sizes and configurations. Some rooms at the rear of the structure do not have any wood finish on the walls and the structural studs are exposed. There are two rooms at the rear of the structure that stack and may have been kitchen's or bathrooms.

Newspapers and finishes should be documented for archival purposes. There are relatively few layers of paint on the interior walls and exterior siding. The colors should be documented for archival purposes.



Figure 22 Interior doors vary in size and construction and were built for each opening.

8. Cold Storage – The cold storage room is representative of the period from 1928-1945 when the building was used to sell meat and groceries.



Condition

In general the structure is stable and intact with isolated areas that need to be treated and repaired. In addition to a visual assessment, a termite inspection was provided that outlined termite and post-beetle damage. The roofs have no active roof leaks. The southwest elevation is partially covered in vegetation that is compromising the integrity of the wall and may be the cause of water infiltration to the basement. A failing beam under the southwest end of the front commercial space is the most serious structural issue. There are drainage issues around the building that can be resolved by redirecting building runoff.



Figure 23 Windows and shutters on the northeast elevation

The interior wood finishes on all of the floors, walls and ceilings are intact. The interior paint finishes are extant but minimal. The roof structure and a majority of the above grade interior framing is in sound condition. The two chimneys on either end of the front portion of the building are capped at the attic level and likely need to be shored or inspected further to make sure they do not fall through the ceiling. There was evidence of at least one more chimney at the middle of the structure. The ice room at the front of the store that was likely used to keep meet cool when the structure was a grocery store is in good condition and intact.



Figure 24 The failing beam under the main floor

The siding is rotten in several distinct locations. The first few rows of boards next to the ground and select areas around windows are severely deteriorated and rotten, however, siding above the ground level and away from the edges of the building is sound. It is not conclusive as to when the building was painted the reddish brown color however, paint appears to be a later addition to the building. The windows are in fair to poor condition. They exist and are mostly complete, however, but several have rotten sills. Most of the glass is in place but the glazing putty is missing. Some have been replaced over time but all are at a minimum 50 years old.

There are notable areas where building components are in poor condition:

1. Structural Beam - The primary structural beam under the front portion of floor is failing. It has significant termite damage and is collapsing. It should be evaluated by a structural engineer and shored to prevent total failure. The floor above this area is damp and care should be taken to not let this condition deteriorate further. There is termite and post beetle damage in a number of the floor joists at this level, as well.
2. Moisture in the crawl space - There is visible water infiltration in the basement area that appears to be coming through the southwestern end of the building. It appears to be coming through the southwest corner of the building.



Figure 25 Moisture in the basement

3. Vegetation - Overgrowth of trees, weeds and vines on the building are compromising the entire southwest end of the structure. They are rooted in the side of the building and should be removed in order to maintain the structure. There is a large magnolia near the back of the structure that is imposing on the building, as well.
4. Pronounced sloping of the floors - It is to be expected that a structure of this age will have sloping floors. All of the floors slope somewhat, however the floor of the porch above the front of the building and the second floor of the rear porch are sloping at an angle that is not within an acceptable tolerance for normal use. The second floor porch at the rear of the building also has extensive rot and damage to the ends of the boards. It was not walkable on the day of inspection due to boards that appear to be rotten and failing.



Figure 26 Vines growing on the building should be removed and the building protected from further damage

5. Perimeter sill beams - The visible ends of some of the perimeter sill beams are soft and exhibit some rot where exposed. Each sill beam was not visible from the underside of the structure, but some rot was seen from the exterior.
6. Limited areas of rot around windows and window sills - Where the window sills have been left unpainted over time, there is rot and damage at the intersection of joints and elements.



Figure 27 Rotten wood at the joint between the sill and the siding

7. The entire area covered with siding on the south (rear) side of the building is of unknown condition. By removing a clothing display case we were able to see a door that is covered by the siding on the outside. The door has not been used in many years.
8. There are no operational plumbing, electrical or mechanical systems. There are remnants of bathrooms and sinks. There was electricity to the building as evident by hanging bulb fixtures and four electrical meters on the side of the building. One window air conditioning unit is still located on the side wall of the building.
9. Security of the structure. Vagrants have been living in the building due to the lack of secure doors and windows.
10. Guano. There is extensive pigeon feces in the attic space and in the structure that should be cleaned out.

Short Term Treatment

To preserve the building for the long term there are several actions that must be taken immediately:

1. Remove vegetation from the building and secure the exterior envelope. The vegetation will continue to damage the building if left unchecked.
2. Determine if reasonable measures can be taken to save the structural beam under the first floor from collapsing. Engage a preservation architect and structural engineer to recommend immediate shoring for the floor for the safety of everyone entering the building. Make sure all other areas of possible concern are shored (i.e. sloping floors, second floor porch, chimneys).
3. Secure the building so that vagrants and animals do not enter the structure. Clean out the dirt, debris and hazardous guano. Document and archive all existing finishes and newspapers.

Long Term Treatment

Finding a compatible use for an historic structure is important in extending its life. If the building is capable of earning reasonable economic value relative to its rehabilitation cost, the building is naturally conducive to small scale commercial and residential uses. Options include but are not limited to:

- Retail store that does not include heavy equipment
- Office space
- Small Museum
- Hospitality – light food service like a coffee shop that perhaps reuses or incorporates the meat cooler into the design on the front portion of the building.
- Limited living quarters – To make the living areas livable, it would require building restrooms, kitchens, adding HVAC, plumbing and electrical. The building has not been insulated and should likely remain

Other Considerations

1. Historic tax credits – the building is eligible for placement on the National Register of Historic Places based on its age and contribution to the history of Dahlonega. It is not currently on the National Register of Historic Places in the Dahlonega Commercial Historic District (83000235) nor is it a stand-alone listing, however it is included in the B-3 Historic Business District zone for Dahlonega. To pursue tax credits a private for-profit

entity would need to submit the three part application to the State Historic Preservation Officer and National Park Service. The Part 1- Evaluation of Significance and Part 2 – Description of Rehabilitation are completed and approved prior to construction. The Part 3 – Request for Certification of Completed Work is completed after the process is complete. To pursue the federal credits the building would need to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Applying for and being reviewed for the Part 1 application takes approximately 60-90 days. The Part 2 application can be submitted simultaneously or subsequently with the Part 1 application. Listing on the National Register of Historic Places in Georgia takes 6 – 9 months.

<http://www.nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives.htm>

<http://georgiashpo.org/incentives/tax>

2. Addressing Americans with Disabilities Act – The elevation change from the sidewalk to the first floor of the structure at the front door is significant and yields the front door inaccessible. Alternative means of egress in historic buildings may be provided at other locations around a building. Providing accessibility from the side or rear of the structure would be an acceptable approach when evaluating future uses, however it should be noted that there are level changes between rooms on the first floor. Reconfiguration or addition to a secondary façade at the back of the building for an accessible entrance is a reasonable approach to addressing ADA requirements.
3. Modern Code Requirements for Fire and Egress – Depending on the use chosen there may be requirements for fire protection and egress. There are multiple ways to access the building on the first floor so egress should be achievable on that level. The second floor only has one stair so occupancy would be limited on that floor in its current configuration.
4. Dahlonega Historic District Design Guidelines – Because it is located in the B3 Historic Business District, any further treatment of this structure or site shall follow the existing design guidelines enforced by the City of Dahlonega. The guidelines follow the Secretary of Interior Standards for Preservation, Restoration and Rehabilitation as well as outlining appropriate addition and replacement design guidelines.

http://dahlonega-ga.gov/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=116:historic-preservation-commission&catid=111:city-boards&Itemid=95

Conclusion

The Parks Building has contributed to the history and building fabric of downtown Dahlonega for 160 years. It is intact with meaningful historic elements and with strategic improvements it has the potential to be rehabilitated for reuse.