



Memorandum

Date: March 29, 2016
To: City Council
From: Doug McDonald, AICP, Comprehensive Planning Manager
Subject: Introduction to Heritage Commission Request

This memorandum provides a brief introduction to the history behind the Heritage Commission's attached memorandum regarding Collinwood House.

The Heritage Commission reviews demolition permits for individually designated heritage resources or pre-designated heritage resources, as identified in Plano's Preservation Plan. Although the Preservation Plan was updated in 2011, it does not list the Collinwood House as a designated or pre-designated heritage resource. Therefore, a demolition permit for the structure would not currently require Heritage Commission review and consideration.

On January 26, 2016, the Heritage Commission requested to discuss and consider heritage resource designation or pre-designation of the future Windhaven Park and/or Collinwood House at the next meeting.

On February 23, 2016, the Heritage Commission discussed options pertaining to the designation of the Collinwood House. The application for heritage resource designation requires the property owner's signature and consent. Since the Collinwood House site is owned by the city, the City Council would need to authorize staff to sign and proceed with the application for designation. This request is in conflict with City Council's direction to Parks & Recreation staff to develop the Windhaven Meadows Park as planned, including removal of the Collinwood House. Therefore, it was a consensus among the Commission to appoint a subcommittee and develop a memorandum expressing the Commission's observations and concerns related to the historical, architectural, archaeological, or cultural value of the site and structure and any recommended actions following this reasoning.

Over the next month, a subcommittee, consisting of three commissioners, met and collaborated to develop a memorandum for consideration by the commission.

On March 22, 2016, the Heritage Commission voted unanimously on the memorandum's content and recommendations to City Council, directing staff to move the memo forward to the City Council.

xc: Bruce D. Glasscock, City Manager
Jack Carr, Deputy City Manager
Christina Day, AICP, Director of Planning
Bhavesh Mittal, Heritage Preservation Officer

Date: March 22, 2016
To: City Council
From: Heritage Commission
Subject: Collinwood House

The Heritage Commission appreciates the time and effort the City Council has spent on trying to save the Collinwood House. We write to bring the Council's attention to significant recent analysis of the Collinwood House that sheds new light on its historic significance to our community. In our capacity as a qualified review commission for historic preservation, we request you to consider the findings and recommendations regarding the Collinwood House outlined below. Although the Collinwood House was not designated as a local heritage resource in the 2011 Preservation Plan, we now believe it has the makings of an historic landmark for our community.

We feel strongly that the decision to deconstruct the Collinwood House should be delayed to allow more research into what is likely the oldest surviving structure in Plano. On February 23, 2016, after compelling presentations from professionals, the Heritage Commission voted 7-0 to develop this memorandum as a mechanism for expressing the Commission's observations and concerns related to the historical, architectural, archaeological, and cultural value of the site and/or structure and our recommended actions based on this reasoning. We have the deepest respect for your authority and want you to have the most up-to-date information on this property so that you can make a fully informed decision.

Architectural, Archeological, and Cultural Significance

The historic character of the Collinwood House is not immediately obvious to most observers. The historic hallmarks of the house are currently obscured by a cloak of shingles and some minor remodeling. The house has a very significant amount of historical material that remains below the surface. It is a critical and contributing historical asset that can be used as a vehicle to help convey the story of the greater Plano community from its earliest days of Anglo settlement to the present. An abstract of data supporting the architectural, archeological, and cultural significance of the structure is listed below. See Attachment 1 for a detailed analysis.

Architectural Significance

- New Categorization – New analysis of the Collinwood House suggests that the dwelling is a textbook example of a comparatively large 1½-Story Cross-Gable Carpenter Gothic House, a comparatively uncommon architectural type.
- Half Cellar – The house is further distinguished by the presence of a half cellar, which is unusual in our Blackland Prairie region of Texas. The cellar represents an unusual opportunity to analyze a sealed deposit, which is rarely encountered on an old farm house site in this part of the state. The cellar, the well (which has also not been analyzed), and the house lot have the potential to yield data important to the pre-1884 occupants of the house, whose identities are known from diaries and other primary records.
- Pre-Railroad Architecture - Pre-railroad architecture is rare in Plano. In fact, the only other intact pre-railroad house in Plano is the Forman House built in 1867 (Wooden Spoon), which is across the street from City Hall and is greatly altered. Most of Plano's preserved heritage structures are

constructed later and, although significant, tell the story of the community a generation or two after the pre-railroad structures. The culture and economy changed significantly in our region after the railroad came through. While Plano has deep roots with the railroad that has transitioned today with DART, this is a rare opportunity to preserve a part of Plano's past that existed prior to the railroad.

Archeological Significance

- Local Materials – The dwelling has the potential to provide a rich record of the wood species and elements acquired locally or transported from early saw mills in East Texas. More research is needed to help identify wood acquired locally versus lumber hauled in from East Texas.
- Climate History - Tree-ring data has not been analyzed from the hand-hewn timbers of the Collinwood House. This may be able to yield data significant to the study of history as well as late prehistory. Specifically, annual tree rings for some species can capture local climate data. Tree-ring data from the Collinwood House may have relevance to the drought conditions that have plagued North Texas in recent years, as it was built during a similarly drought-ridden period.

Cultural Significance

- Scarcity of Central/West Plano Resources - There are only two designated heritage resources west of Central Expressway. If designated, the Collinwood House would be the westmost heritage resource in Plano. We have limited opportunities to save what is remaining of the central/west Plano farming history. Providing the growing West Plano community with a tangible connection to Plano's past would foster the growth of a shared sense of community identity between East and West Plano.
- Uncommon Setting - The house is a pre-railroad house sitting on 124 acres of its original headright in an agrarian landscape with native prairie grasses in the middle of suburban neighborhoods and is just a short distance from the future, densely developed center of Plano's international business community at Legacy Business Park.
- International Business – Plano's first international businessman, J. W. Shepard, was married in the house in 1880, providing a link to the city's current international business culture. J.W. Shepard sold mules throughout the United States, Mexico, Honduras, and South America. "By the fall of 1866 Collin County was the leading mule market west of the Mississippi River." He was a prominent civic leader and city councilman.
- Prominent Civic Leaders - The names associated with the Collinwood House and property as identified from primary sources and lineal descendants of owners and occupants include Plano's founding families and business leaders of the late 19th and 20th centuries. Schools, streets, parks, and neighborhoods are named for them. They include:
 - J.W. Shepard (*International business man; married in the house*)
 - W.O. Haggard, Sr. (*Born in the house*)
 - C.S. and Nannie Kate Haggard (*Collinwood house is their only surviving house*)
 - Gladys Harrington (*Founder of the Plano Public Library*)
 - Connor Harrington (*Former Mayor*)
 - Katie Haggard Aldridge Evans
 - Annie Belle Haggard Aldridge
 - James K. Aldridge (*founding member of the Plano National Bank*)
- Women's Studies - The Collinwood House was matrilineally inherited for two generations, providing a glimpse into land ownership by women during a period in which women's property rights were much more constrained than they are today.
- Tenant Farming - The Collinwood House may shed light on tenant farming in Plano.

National, State, and Local Significance

- National Register of Historic Places - The previously conducted Intensive Cultural Resources Survey concludes that the Collinwood House is not eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in its present condition. However, the Heritage Commission and Marcel Quimby, a professional who consulted on the Intensive Cultural Resources Survey, believe the Collinwood House could be eligible for a NRHP listing if the house were to be restored to its period of significance. The Nash House in Grapevine successfully completed such a process.
- Recorded Texas Historical Landmarks - The Plano Heritage Commission believes the Collinwood House could be eligible for state designation if it were restored to its period of significance using private funds.
- Texas Historical Commission – The February 19, 2016 Cultural Resources Survey review conducted by the Texas Historical Commission encourages the city to consider alternatives that retain the house on-site, or allow for its rehabilitation at a new location.
- Preservation Texas's 2016 Most Endangered Places List – In 2016, Preservation Texas listed the Collinwood House as one of its 2016 Most Endangered Places in the state.
- Collin County Historical Commission – In 2015, Collin County recognized the Collinwood Farm as a Collin County Historical Asset.
- Preservation Dallas – On May 11, 2015, Preservation Dallas endorsed the Collinwood House as a heritage resource worth saving.

Addressing the Decision Factors

We as a Commission are particularly sensitive to economic factors which discourage governmental officials from taking on the expenses to restore and maintain an old structure. We address those issues below as well as the concerns about the impact on the timeline and cost of the future Windhaven Meadows Park and the ongoing concerns over the threat of vandalism.

Budgetary Concerns

With the understanding from City Council that no city funds should be used in the restoration, operation, or maintenance of the structure, the Heritage Commission would request additional time for private fundraising and review of applicable state and federal preservation grants to assist in the restoration.

- Fundraising - During City Council's 30-day fundraising timeframe last year, supporters for keeping the house in the park raised a half million dollars toward renovation expenses. Private fundraising takes time. The Nash House in Grapevine took two years to develop a reasonable plan. With additional time, the Commission believes funds could be raised to allow the restoration to be 100% privately funded.
- Grants/Tax Credits – Many grants and tax credits are available through the Texas Historical Commission, National Park Service, and National Trust for Historic Preservation, which could assist in restoration, operation, and maintenance of the structure. For example, non-profit-owned historic places are now eligible to participate in the state historic preservation tax credit program, with 25% of the rehabilitation costs potentially eligible for sale to a private entity.
- Revenue-Generating Use – If the building was restored for a revenue generating use like an event center, office use, or retail use, its revenues could assist with operating and maintenance costs. The Wells House (Sip & Savor) at 3921 Coit Road in Plano is a good example of a successful private revenue-generating project.

No Significant Impact on the timeline and cost of the Future Windhaven Meadows Park

The Heritage Commission is not requesting a delay on the future park construction. If City Council approves the Commission's request for a delay on the Collinwood House demolition, the only major modification needed is to relocate the pavilion, which is currently proposed on the site of the Collinwood House (see Attachment 2). Currently, construction of the pavilion cannot begin until the house is deconstructed. If the pavilion is relocated to the east, the Collinwood House could remain during park development, and the pavilion construction may actually begin sooner than the current timeline. The Parks Department has provided an estimated cost of \$46,000 for revised parking lot, drainage, grading, and landscape plans to relocate the pavilion. The revised plans would take approximately three months to complete.

Concerns about Potential Vandalism of the Structure

While potential vandalism is a concern for the structure, there are measures which can be implemented to increase security on the site, including the installation of cameras, lighting, and fencing. These measures would deter most vandalism at a low cost, and can be privately funded with additional fundraising. Unfortunately, all public amenities, regardless of their visibility, are subject to vandalism. However, the facility will be secured like other city facilities within our community. Once the house is restored, it could be protected further from potential vandalism by having a housekeeper live onsite. Further research is needed to determine the cost of a housekeeper.

Recommendation for Preservation

The Heritage Commission requests the City Council to reconsider the decision made on May 11, 2015 to move forward with the current Windhaven Meadows Park plan, which included removal of the Collinwood House, with the following actions:

1. Relocate the proposed park pavilion within the current Windhaven Meadows Park plan, in order to allow construction of the park without the immediate deconstruction of the Collinwood House.
2. Delay the deconstruction of the Collinwood House until May 22, 2017 so private parties can pursue fundraising efforts and the Commission can develop a preservation plan for the structure. The plan's intent would be to restore and preserve the Collinwood House as a historic resource for the community and outline a business strategy for the structure to be financially self-sustaining.
3. Council make a final decision in May 2017 after fundraising efforts and further study of the Collinwood House.

Attachments

1. Detailed Analysis of the Architectural, Archeological, and Cultural Significance
2. Windhaven Meadows Park Site Plan with Proposed Pavilion (approximate site) and Existing Collinwood House (approximate site)

ATTACHMENT 1
Detailed Analysis of the Architectural, Archeological, and Cultural Significance

Architectural Significance

New Categorization

First, and perhaps most significantly, the Heritage Commission has been informed that the Collinwood House, despite all the publicity over the past sixteen months, may have been miss-categorized, according to a group of professionals who have decades of experience in the field. It is a classic example of a comparatively uncommon architectural type that is easily recognizable once it is properly categorized. The dwelling is a textbook example of a comparatively large 1½-Story Cross-Gable Carpenter Gothic House with central hall, full ell constructed over a large half cellar, and partial shed extension at the rear of its south main room. This style in the United States grew out of a need for quickly built houses. One could argue that it is a dressed-up I-house since it is only one room deep.

Half Cellar

Secondly, a half cellar is unusual in this part of Texas because Plano is in that part of the Blackland Prairie, which has some of the most highly expansive soil in the state causing cracks in foundations and walls. We have more questions than answers as to why it was built and how it survived until the cellar is properly analyzed. The cellar represents an unusual opportunity to analyze a sealed deposit, which is rarely encountered on an old farm house site in this part of the state. The cellar, the well (which has also not been analyzed), and the house lot have the potential to yield data important to the pre-1884 occupants of the house, whose identities are known from diaries and other primary records.

Pre-Railroad Architecture

Pre-railroad architecture is rare in Plano. In fact, the only other intact pre-railroad house in Plano is the Forman House built in 1867 (Wooden Spoon), which is across the street from City Hall and is greatly altered. Most of Plano's preserved heritage structures are constructed later and, although significant, tell the story of the community a generation or two after the pre-railroad structures. The culture and economy changed significantly in our region after the railroad came through. While Plano has deep roots with the railroad that transition today with DART, this is an opportunity to preserve a rare part of Plano's past that existed prior to the railroad.

Archeological Significance

Firstly, previous architectural studies have suggested that the entire dwelling as contained under its current roof may have been built in one primary construction phase. This interpretation is also corroborated from an assessment of sills, plates and joists evident under the first floor and visible from the cellar. Consequently, the dwelling has the potential to provide a rich record of the wood species and wood elements acquired locally or transported from early saw mills in East Texas. Oral traditions of early local settlers frequently mention wood being brought from Jefferson, Texas, which was the fourth largest city in Texas in the 1860s. The species of trees in East Texas are frequently distinguishable from those locally available in Collin and Dallas counties in the mid-1800s. The various architectural elements and wood species used to construct the house's plates, walls, floors, rafters and other structural parts will help identify wood acquired locally versus lumber hauled in from East Texas.

Secondly, previous architectural studies have also indicated that the Collinwood House includes hand hewn timbers potentially containing tree ring data significant to the study of history as well as late prehistory. Tree-ring data has not been analyzed from the hand-hewn timbers. It may be able to yield data significant to the study of history as well as late prehistory. Specifically, annual tree rings for some species can capture local climate data. Major droughts and late spring frost episodes would have affected early settlers and their crops. Many of the years between 1854 and 1864 were particularly harsh, and the period is one of the top drought sequences in North Texas. It contributed directly to the demise in 1860 of the French utopian community of La Reunion (for which Reunion Tower is named). The Collinwood House may contain data significant to theories about local settlement and climate which would be of great use to historians, economists, and archaeologists. We have local diaries which can add to the richness of this analysis. Some are newly discovered in the past few weeks and are unpublished.

ATTACHMENT 1 - CONTINUED

Cultural Significance

Women's studies: The Collinwood House was matrilineally inherited for two generations and provided a source of income and position in marriage as well as being a safety net for its two female owners. This cultural model is a common one for landowners who have daughters throughout the world. In fact, the owner in the third generation actually traded the property during the Depression for a car dealership when the farms provided very little income. Her husband ran it for the rest of his life.

Tenant Farming: The Heritage Farmstead published a book in 1997 about tenant farming in Collin County from 1890 – 1920. Because of the wealth of the local landowners, it was a more usual business model in Plano than in other communities.

International Business: Plano's first international businessman **J. W. Shepard** was married in the house in 1880. *Plano, Texas: the Early Years* which was produced by the Friends of the Plano Public Library in 1985 tells all about the Shepard Ranch (name of a prominent housing development today on the site of his ranch), Livery stable, mule and horse breeding businesses. "By the fall of 1866 Collin County was the leading mule market west of the Mississippi River. General Sheridan had purchasing agents here to supply mules for Northern armies." By 1910 Collin County was "tied for second place in the mule industry in the entire state and had the largest amount of land in cultivation (89.3%) of any county in the state. No part of Collin was any more prominent than Plano so it was only natural that Plano was the center for raising and shipping fine mules." J.W. Shepard was selling mules not only throughout the United States but was also shipping them to Mexico, Honduras, and South America. He was a prominent civic leader and city councilman.

Prominent Civic Leaders

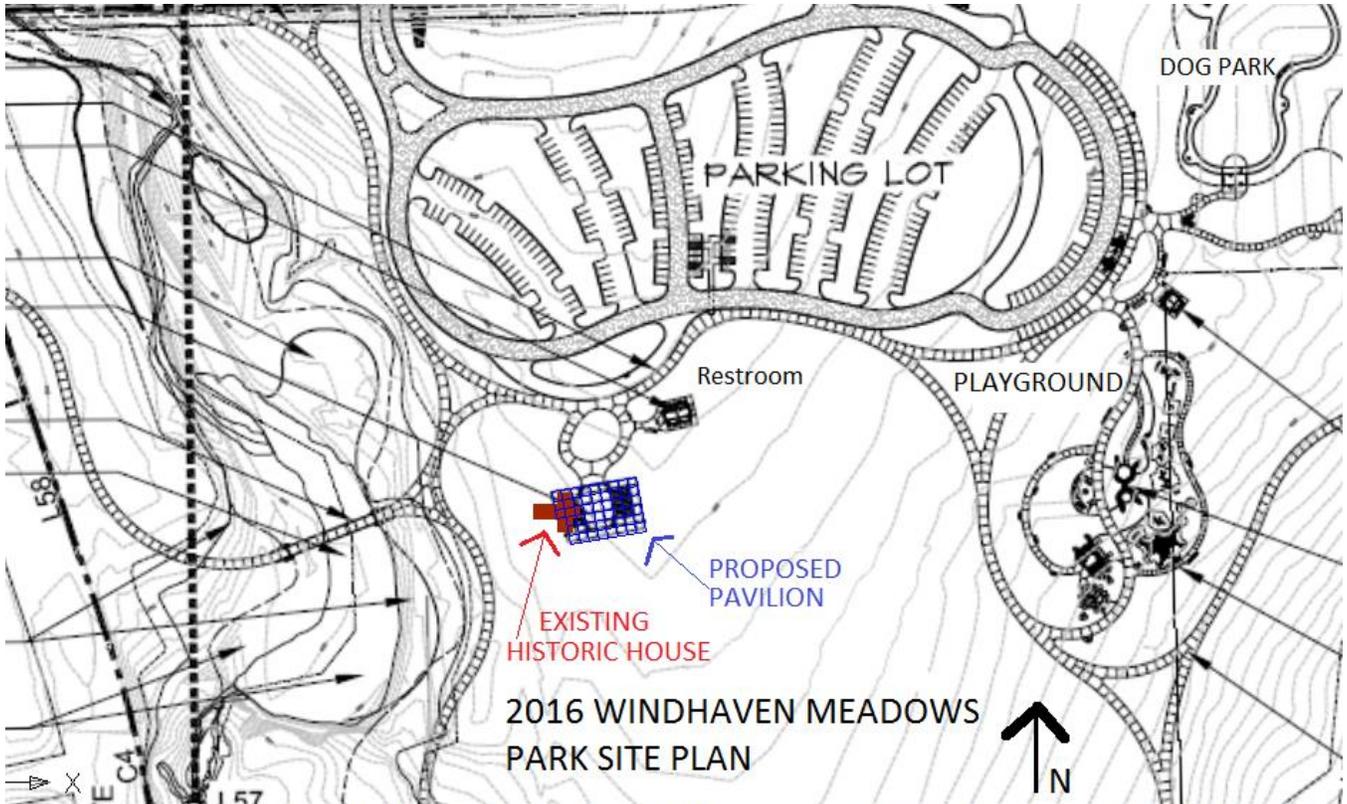
W. O. Haggard, Sr., the father of Haggard Library namesake **W.O. Haggard, Jr.**, was born in the house in 1880

The property and house were inherited by Annie Belle Haggard Aldridge from her parents C.S. and Nannie Kate Lunsford Haggard. Annie Belle was the wife of business and church leader **J.S. Aldridge** who was son of early settler **James K. Aldridge**. **ALDRIDGE ELEMENTARY** is named for James K's son W. P. Aldridge who was president of the Plano School Board for many years. J.S. Aldridge was a founding member of the First Guaranty State Bank of Plano and later served as its president. First Guaranty State was later taken over by the Plano National Bank where he was vice president. Years later one of its former sites was the headquarters for the Plano Parks Department. Their daughter **Katie Haggard Aldridge Evans** founded a kindergarten in her home the late 1940s, which was eventually taken over by Happy Time Kindergarten, and educated some of the current community leaders who include federal judge **Richard Schell** and **Brian McCall**, who is a former state representative and current chancellor of the University of Texas State University System.

Nannie Elizabeth Haggard Bishop lived in the Collinwood House as a teenager. She was the mother of Plano Public Library system founder **Gladys Harrington**, for whom **THE GLADYS HARRINGTON LIBRARY** is named, and the grandmother of Plano mayor **Connor Harrington** who was the first Republican candidate for Congress since Reconstruction in 1962. President George H. W. Bush came to Plano to campaign for Connor Harrington when he was a Congressman in Houston. **THE CONNOR HARRINGTON REPUBLICAN WOMEN'S CLUB** is named for him. Nannie Elizabeth Haggard Bishop's own house after being widowed still stands near Downtown as does Connor Harrington's.

ATTACHMENT 2

Windhaven Meadows Park Site Plan with Proposed Pavilion (approximate site) and Existing Collinwood House (approximate site)



There's plenty of room available to move the Proposed Pavilion to the Eastand Avoid the Footprint of the Existing Historic House.....