Happy Hill Shotgun Houses Project

Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Heritage Development Alternatives

DRAFT Report Prepared By:

MTSU Center for Historic Preservation
History • Education • Architecture

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Happy Hill is among the most historic neighborhoods in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The city’s oldest African American neighborhood it dates as a distinct place to 1872 when it was laid out formally on the former Schumann Plantation. The neighborhood was originally known as Liberia. It was the first planned African-American neighborhood in the city, and “it was once the center of African American life in the city.”1 It remains a very significant but inadequately appreciated historical landscape in Winston-Salem today recently the National Park Service approved a proposed boundary expansion of the Salem Village National Historic Landmark district that would include key historic properties within the Happy Hill neighborhood.

1872 plat of "Liberia," Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts

In October 2016 Cheryl Harry of Old Salem and members of the Happy Hill Neighborhood Association met with the MTSU Center for Historic Preservation to explore the heritage development potential of two shotgun houses on Humphrey Street. The Center was asked to offer recommendations for the future heritage development of the properties and has spent the last six months exploring primary sources to assessment possible new futures for these invaluable African American properties.

1 Happy Hill Prospectus, August 2016.
History of the Humphreys Street Shotguns

The Happy Hill neighborhood developed in the late 19th century as a separate place from the adjacent town of Salem. This was the era of Jim Crow segregation and as this 1891 “birdseye view” drawing of the area shows, Happy Hill was an enclave to itself and created space from which African Americans could define community, raise their families, and build their businesses, churches, and schools.

Once Winston-Salem was established in the early 20th century, Happy Hill literally disappeared from the map. In the age of Jim Crow segregation it was not unusual for city fathers to set corporate lines to eliminate the African American presence in the city, as the map below shows for Winston-Salem after 1913. The city’s boundaries were placed so to keep this historic African American neighborhood out.
716 Humphreys Street

This geographic context shapes the location and history of 716 Humphreys Street. The shotgun home located at 716 Humphreys Street dates to the early 20th century and historical documents reveal that a variety of renters used this home during the 20th century.

City Directories
Early Winston-Salem City Directories do not consistently list residents of the Happy Hill neighborhood by street. Often, these residents are listed as only living in the Happy Hill neighborhood. The 1946 Winston-Salem City Directory began the practice of listing the residents of Happy Hill by street number. The table below lists the residents of 716 Humphreys Street by year according to digital copies of the Hill’s Winston-Salem City Directory.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City Directory by Year</th>
<th>Resident Names</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hill’s Winston-Salem City Directory 1943</td>
<td>No listing for 716</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hill’s Winston-Salem City Directory 1946</td>
<td>Jeremiah and Margaret Patterson2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hill’s Winston-Salem City Directory 1947/48</td>
<td>Jeremiah and Sarah M. Patterson3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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| Hill’s Winston-Salem City Directory 1949/50 | Jeremiah and Sarah M. Patterson³ |
| Hill’s Winston-Salem City Directory 1953 | Mrs. C. M. Robinson⁴ |
| Hill’s Winston-Salem City Directory 1954 | John A. McLean⁶ |
| Hill’s Winston-Salem City Directory 1955 | John A. McLean⁷ |
| Hill’s Winston-Salem City Directory 1956 | John A. McLean⁸ |
| Hill’s Winston-Salem City Directory 1957 | John A. McLean⁹ |
| Hill’s Winston-Salem City Directory 1958 | Ernest H. Foster¹⁰ |
| Hill’s Winston-Salem City Directory 1959 | Ernest H. Foster and Rosa Foster¹¹ |
| Hill’s Winston-Salem City Directory 1960 | Ernest H. Foster¹² |
| Hill’s Winston-Salem City Directory 1961 | Ernest H. Foster¹³ |
| Hill’s Winston-Salem City Directory 1962 | Geneva Davis¹⁴ |
| Hill’s Winston-Salem City Directory 1963 | Percy Bitten¹⁵ |

¹³ Ibid.
United States Census Records
While the margins of the 1930 United States Census lists several of the streets in the Happy Hill neighborhood such as Liberia and Pitts, it does not list Humphreys. Instead, there is a general section titled Happy Hill that may contain the names of those who lived on Humphreys Street. Although there is a column on the 1930 United States Census titled “House number (in cities and towns),” no house numbers are listed for the residents in the general Happy Hill section.16
The 1940 United States Census lists the following residents.
- Annie Rorie (Head of Household, age 38) (RENTER)
- Catherine Lindsey (daughter, age 17)
- John F. Rorie (son, age 13)
- Beatrice Simms (Granddaughter, age 2)

The 1940 US Census does not list occupations for anyone in the Rorie household, but it indicates that Annie Rorie and Catherine Lindsey are receiving income from sources other than wages and salaries. The census does provide other details about life in the Rorie household. For example, the rent on 716 Humphreys Street was six dollars a month. Additionally, everyone living on Humphreys Street were renters, not homeowners, paying five to six dollars a month in rent. No one in the Rorie household including 13 year old John Rorie attended school in the last year. In fact, John’s highest grade level in school was the fourth grade. Annie and Catherine both attended school through the seventh grade.17

Resident Occupations
Historical accounts indicate that Happy Hill was a working class neighborhood. Of the residents of 716 Humphreys Street only one, Jeremiah Patterson, had an occupation listed in the Winston-Salem, NC City Directory. Jeremiah Patterson’s occupation was “Laborer, City Department of Public Works.”18 Additionally, the death certificate for Annie Rorie, a resident of 716 Humphreys on the 1940 US Census, shows that upon her death in 1948 that her usual occupation was that of a domestic.19

The 1940 US Census corroborates newspaper accounts on neighborhood occupations. Neighbors of Annie Rorie work in various industries. Some of the occupations listed include truck driver at coal yard, tobacco laborer, tobacco stemmer, ditch digger, floor sweeper, beautician, servant girl, and house cleaner at Salem College. One of Annie Rorie’s neighbors, the Reverend George C. Henry, is listed with the occupation of minister and lived at 726 Humphreys Street. The 1917 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for Winston-Salem show that one of the properties on Humphreys Street was a church identified as “Holiness Church Negro.” It is possible that Henry had a connection to this church.

720 Humphreys Street

The Happy Hill Shotgun Prospectus published by Triad Cultural Arts indicates that the original location for the shotgun house at 720 Humphreys Street was Alder Street. House numbers on the exterior door frame show that the house number for this property was 1246. Winston-Salem

2505?pid=40960&backurl=http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?ti%3D0%26indiv%3Dtry%26db%3Dncdeathcerts%26h%3D40960&treeid=&personid=&hintid=&usePUB=true&usePUBJs=true.

City Directories for 1943-1963 do not have listings for 1246 Alder Street. House numbers for Alder Street consistently jump from 1243 to 1251. A 2014 article published in the *Winston-Salem Chronicle* titled “City Wants New Life for Shotgun Houses,” states “The other – at 720 Humphrey St. – used to sit on Alder Street and had been previously relocated before the city placed it near the other house earlier this year” which suggests that the shotgun house at 720 Humphreys Street was in another location before its relocation to Alder Street.23 A review of streets in the Happy Hill neighborhood using Winston-Salem City Directories shows that Free Street does have listings for 1246 Free Street. Other streets checked for a 1246 listing include Alexander, Pitts, Liberia, Mock, Birch, Willow, Mint, Foster, Pine, and Powell. It is possible that the shotgun home at 720 Humphreys once resided at 1246 Free Street. More research is needed to identify where the shotgun home originally was and who its occupants were.

**NEXT STEPS**

Discussions in October revealed two different viewpoints on the shotgun houses. One view was that they should be moved to a new city park under development for the Happy Hill

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Neighborhood. The opposite viewpoint was that this historic neighborhood already had suffered greatly at the hand of urban renewal projects since the 1930s. The neighborhood association believed that the last thing it needed was more empty lots, even if by moving the properties they could be preserved. In crafting options for further consideration, we have taken both viewpoints under consideration.

Option One:

The two shotgun houses remain in their current locations on Humphrey Street and are restored as historic properties available for public interpretation.

Analysis
The first shotgun house was moved from its original location on Alder Street to 720 Humphrey Street c. 1990. Perhaps due to its being a moved building or just due to heavy wear-and-tear, 720 Humphrey Street is in poor condition and is in need of a great deal of restoration and preservation.

It is missing its front porch/stoop and the historic shed roof over the porch/stoop has lost its historic supports and suffered from deterioration, largely due to water damage.

The roof decking is failing, the roof is sagging, and is no longer keeping the interior dry.
The rear third of the building has suffered from severe water damage and a weakened foundation. Whatever option is chosen means that this rear room would need to be removed and either the gable end of the shotgun restored or rebuilt.

The 716 Humphrey Street house is still in its original location from its time of construction and does not suffer from some of the structural issues found with the moved shotgun house.

Its metal hipped roof—although needing repair and possible replacement—is in fair condition and has kept the building from suffering significant water damage. The concrete block foundation—which supports the original pier foundation—has kept the foundation from sagging and the interior floors are in fair condition.

The original beaded board walls and ceiling are in fair condition and some interior window frames remain intact.
The rear room has suffered the most, from water damage due to the installation of indoor plumbing in the house c. 1960, but this section remains in fair condition and could be restored, not removed. The building would meet the architectural integrity standards of a National Register-listed property.

Public Interpretation
The recently approved Addendum to the Old Salem Historic District does not list either shotgun house as a contributing building but the addendum discusses at length the origins the origins and importance of Happy Hill, the first African-American neighborhood in Winston-Salem. At one time, Happy Hill was abundant with shotgun houses, but starting in the 1950s, many were demolished to make way for a public housing project, Highway 52 (which also destroyed part of the ca. 1880s Happy Hill Cemetery), and other developments. The addendum specifically mentions the two shotgun houses on Humphrey House as some of the last remaining housing in Happy Hill that pre-dates the 1920s. The fact that 716 Humphreys Street is a rare survivor of urban renewal underscores the significance of its original location.

The two properties on Humphreys Street could serve as anchors for a Historic Driving Tour of the Happy Hill Neighborhood. Beginning at the planned neighborhood park, the route would take visitors into Happy Hill to learn about the history of the neighborhood through key properties, such as the shotgun houses representing domestic architecture, the historic Happy Hill Cemetery, and the Rising Ebenezer Baptist Church. The neighborhood association members would determine what properties best represents their history and could be shared with potential visitors. We recommend, however, that close attention be given the Happy Hill Cemetery. In its collections, Old Salem has a copy of the cemetery’s original bylaws. Even a brief review of the cemetery tombstones records that local African American leaders are buried there.


At the Humphreys Street shotguns, interpretative panels could be placed on or near the exteriors of the buildings. The interior of 716 Humphreys Street would be normally closed to the public, but once restored it could be opened for special events, ensuring the continued preservation of the buildings. Our recommendation is that 720 Humphreys Street be repaired but “mothballed” and not open for interior tours since the cost of restoring the building to its original condition may be prohibitive.

**Option Two:**

Option Two recommends relocating one house, specifically the 720 Humphrey Street house, to the neighborhood park for restoration as a heritage center while maintaining the shotgun at 716 Humphrey Street at its original location and establishing a heritage tourism driving tour that would connect the two shotguns, the historic Happy Hill cemetery, and the historic Rising Ebenezer Baptist Church.

The Happy Hill Prospectus produced by Triad emphasizes the vision of transforming one of the Humphreys Street shotgun houses into an exhibit space that would be relocated at the Happy Hill Park. This restored building would then house a small permanent exhibit about the Happy Hill neighborhood and could present a video production that would include oral history interviews and other media to tell the Happy Hill story to a 21st century audience.

720 Humphreys Street is the best candidate for relocation because it already needs substantial rebuilding, and it has been moved already. 716 Humphreys Street has never been removed and could be restored at its original location as a historic site for the neighborhood driving tour.

Because the shotgun house at 720 Humphreys Street has a mere three rooms and Happy Hill has an extensive, layered history, it is important to identify the major interpretative themes in order to clearly present this history to visitors, particularly those unfamiliar with the community. We recommend a thematic approach—faith, business, lodges and sororities, sports, etc.—rather than a chronological approach. It will be difficult to cover the neighborhood’s deep chronology—from the slavery era at Salem to the 20th century—in the available space. Thematic approaches could lead to more rotating, yearly exhibits and the possibility of even a small temporary exhibit space. Flexibility of programming should prove attractive to residents and would encourage
repeat visitation. Members of the neighborhood association are best placed to identify interpretive themes that could be shared at the heritage center.

There are multiple ways that historic properties have been moved in the past. It is a technical process that requires organizations with the knowledge and skill of historic building materials and preservation. After the property has been assessed by an architectural firm, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office should be contacted so it can review the plans before any action is taken. The NC State Historic Preservation Office should also have a list of companies that have been previously used to move historic structures. The National Trust for Historic Preservation produced an information sheet detailing the need-to-know information for Moving Historic Buildings, and it has been attached to this document (Appendix B).

The Happy Hill Prospectus mentions the possibility of a coffee shop and a retail/convenience shop in a second building at the Happy Hill Park. This building could be of new construction, but of similar materials, size, and scale as the 720 Humphreys Street shotgun. The reconstructed shotgun house would also need to comply with the appropriate building codes. North Carolina has specific requirements for this type of business, and a link has been provided to the NC Food and Drug Administration website and the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina (Appendix A).

Another alternative would be to construct the second building as a reconstruction of the original Happy Hill school, which was the community’s focal point in the post-Civil War era. A photograph has been discovered of the school, which would allow for an accurate reconstruction but also a larger space for visitor and staff needs.

From all known historic account, the school was very much the center of the community in its founding decades.

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26 “Moving Historic Structures,” from the National Trust Resource Center Information Sheet # 6, National Trust For Historic Preservation, 2006.
Appendix A: Related Links


Moving Cape Hatteras, National Park Service - https://www.nps.gov/caha/learn/historyculture/movingthelighthouse.htm
Appendix B: “Moving Historic Buildings,” National Trust for Historic Preservation

NATIONAL TRUST
for HISTORIC PRESERVATION®

Help From the National Trust Resource Center
Information Sheet #6
MOVING HISTORIC BUILDINGS

The following is a list from the National Trust of resources, products, and programs for people interested in moving historic buildings.

Page 1 Background information on moving a historic structure
    Details and planning for a move
Page 3 Pope-Leighey House – National Trust Historic Site
Page 3 Resources and contacts
Page 5 Join the National Trust

Although it is a delicate and complicated process, Americans have been moving entire buildings since the 18th century. At that time, buildings were moved primarily because it was often cheaper than constructing an entirely new building. Today, Americans are more likely to move a house in an effort to save it from destruction. In fact, when it comes to houses that have historical significance, preservationists agree that moving them should be considered only as a last resort alternative to demolition.

The Case Against Moving an Historic Structure
The historical value of a historic house is more than simply the sum of its structural parts. Of almost equal importance is the building’s relation to the surrounding landscape, its “sense of place” within the larger community. Even in the most carefully planned and executed relocations, some of the building’s historic integrity is inevitably compromised. If a building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, moving it from the original site may result in the property’s de-listing from the National Register. A relocated house may also be disqualified from tax breaks given to historical structures that have been rehabilitated for commercial purposes.

Making the Right Move
When all other alternatives have been tried and have proven unsuccessful, moving a historic structure may well be the only means of saving it from destruction. The following information includes important tips to keep in mind when planning to move a house or other historic structure.

Contact your State Historic Preservation Office
Protecting the Irreplaceable

(202) 588-6000  FAX (202) 588-6059
www.nationaltrust.org  E-mail: feedback@nationaltrust.org
1785 Massachusetts Avenue, NW  Washington, DC 20036-2117
• If the house is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and you want to retain the listing at the new site, you need to discuss this with your State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) prior to planning the move. Your SHPO is a state government official. The name and address of every SHPO is available on the National Trust's website at http://www.nationaltrust.org/help/statewide_org.asp.

• When you contact your SHPO, you will be asked to submit evidence to support your reasons for moving the building, the effect of the move on the property’s historical value, and information about the proposed location. Frequently, houses on the National Register that are moved without prior approval from your State Historic Preservation Officer may be removed from the National Register. The owner must then seek re-nomination.

Choosing a site
• Choose a new site that is compatible with the style of the house and as near - both in location and appearance - to the original site.
• Contact neighborhood organizations and neighbors in the vicinity of the proposed new site to make sure there are no conflicting interests surrounding the proposed move.
• Try to avoid new sites that would require the house to be transported over railroads, interstate highways, overpasses, hills, bridges, narrow streets, or under telephone and electrical wires.

Planning the move
• Before hiring a moving company, get estimates from more than one firm. Also, ask to see references and photographs of previous projects to verify that the mover has experience working with historic structures.
• Insurance is a must. Make sure that the house-moving firm is covered against public liability, workers' compensation, and any damage to the house that may occur during the move.
• Do not plan a move without first securing all necessary building permits (for the original site as well as for the new site). You will also need moving permits from state and local highway departments. Also, arrange for police escorts and, if necessary, for the temporary removal of road obstructions such as signs and lights.
• Contact utility, cable television, and telephone companies in order to raise, lower, or temporarily remove overhead wires along the transportation route. Be aware that this can add significantly to the cost of moving a house.

Documentation
Make a thorough photographic documentation of the house while it is still in its original location (and intact) prior to the move. Measured drawings are extremely important to have if the house is historically significant. Also, carefully keep a record of any disassembly that is done as part of the move.

Choosing a Moving Company
The International Association of Structural Movers (IASM), www.iasm.org, is a good place to start looking for a contractor to move a historic building. The IASM is an organization in which members are actively involved with moving houses, bridges, ships, and other structures, or who manufacture products used in moving these structures. You could also contact, www.buildingMovers.com. This site offers the names of moving companies, tips on moving a building, and news on current building relocation projects. Your State Historic Preservation Officer may also be able to recommend a moving company. Since a SHPO should be contacted prior to moving a site registered on the National Register of Historic Places,
they will know which companies have been used in the past to move historic structures into or out of their state.

**Pope-Leighey House**

The National Trust has experience in relocating one of its own historic sites. The Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Pope-Leighey House in Arlington, Virginia, was threatened with demolition at its original site when plans were made to build Highway 66 in 1962. As a result of this threat, in 1965 the building was moved to the Trust’s Woodlawn Plantation in Mount Vernon. The house was dismantled and rebuilt in the move although its new location proved to be hazardous to the structure and resulted in a second move, this time thirty feet away from a deteriorating slope. The reconstruction was completed in 1996. For more information about the Pope-Leighey House and its move, call (703) 780-4000.

**Resources**

- *Moving Historic Buildings*, by John Obed Curtis, is a publication of Heritage Preservation Services, a division of the National Park Service. It discusses the limited circumstances under which a historic masonry or frame building should be moved; and it establishes a methodology for planning, research, and recording prior to the move; and addresses the siting, foundation construction, building reassembly, and restoration work after a successful move. For more information, please go to the publications section of Heritage Preservation Services’ website using this link: [http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/tpscat.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/tpscat.htm).

- *The New Old House Starter Kit* is full of helpful hints about restoring and rehabilitating old houses. It includes information about researching a house, guidelines on hiring professionals, a bibliography, and guides to architectural and landscape styles. To place an order, call the Trust’s Preservation Books office at (202) 588-6296 or order on-line at [www.preservationbooks.org](http://www.preservationbooks.org).

- *The Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* is an excellent resource for all work done on old buildings. These guidelines are used to determine whether the historic character of a building is preserved in the process of rehabilitation. The guidelines recommend responsible methods and approaches and list treatments that should be avoided. These guidelines along with other Secretary of Interior Standards and Guidelines can be found here, [www.cr.nps.gov/hps/TPS/tax/rhh/](http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/TPS/tax/rhh/).

- *A Comprehensive Guide for Listing a Building in the National Register of Historic Places* by Gail Greenberg takes readers through the process of successfully nominating an historic building to the National Register. The book includes a discussion of eligibility criteria, suggestions for research procedures, an explanation of and information needed to complete each item on the application, and a sample completed application. This book may be ordered from Lucid Press, 10 Liberty Ship Way, Sausalito, CA 94965; call 1-800-222-0737 or visit [http://www.lucidpress.com/](http://www.lucidpress.com/). There is a discount for local historical organizations.

- National Trust Insurance Services (NTIS), administered by the firm of Maury, Donnelly & Farr, specializes in insuring historic properties, both commercially and personally owned. NTIS can help
owners of historic buildings and homes evaluate their insurance needs and obtain the coverage necessary. For more information, please call 1-866-269-0944 or e-mail info@nationaltrust-insurance.org; or visit their website at http://www.nationaltrust-insurance.org/

The National Trust for Historic Preservation provides this list of resources solely for informational and educational purposes. This is not intended as a specific recommendation or endorsement of any particular organization or entity.

Updated by the Resource Center, 11/06
N/response/moving historic homes.doc

This is one of several information sheets on preservation related topics available from the National Trust’s Resource Center. For a complete list of information sheets available, please call (202) 588-6164 or send an email to feedback@nationaltrust.org. Topics include information on historic homes, historic buildings, sacred sites and burial grounds, and financial assistance for preservation.