

**LANDMARK COMMISSION
MINUTES
May 20, 2025**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Christy Graham
Joel Hartmangruber
JD Dixon
Bill Enlow
Dr. Dawn Ferrell, Maj. Gen. (retired)
Noros Martin
Janel Ponder Smith
John Yates

■ Chairperson
■ Vice-Chair
■ Member
■ Member
■ Member
■ Member
■ Member
■ Member

Terry Floyd, Development Services Director
Monica Aguon, Assistant City Attorney
Robin Marshall, Admin. Assistant
Karen Montgomery-Gagné, Principal Planner/HPO

■ City Staff
■ City Staff
■ City Staff
■ City Staff

ABSENT:

John Dickinson
Whitney Flack

■ Member
■ Council Liaison

GUESTS:

Matt Bitsche - Wichita Falls Brewing Company
Nick Pavle - Eclipse Solar (1500 Buchanan)
Sandra Lawson (2806 Ave E)
Danny Lawson (2806 Ave E)
Dylan Bussey - contractor (2806 Ave E)

■ Applicant
■ Representative
■ Applicant
■ Applicant
■ Representative

I. Call to Order, Introductions and Welcome:

Chairperson Christy Graham called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.
Ms. Graham did introductions of Commission members, and guests attending.

II. Review & Approval of Minutes from March 25, 2025:

Chairperson Graham called for review and approval of the March 25, 2025, Landmark Commission meeting minutes. Ms. Janel Ponder Smith made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, Mr. John Yates seconded the motion. Minutes were unanimously approved. 8-0. Chairperson Graham asked if there was anyone from the public that had comments about the minutes, and there were no comments.

III. Action Item: Design Review Case – 617 7th Street:

Request authorization to install new exterior stairway/ fire escape that will provide upper floor access to abutting building at 701 Indiana Ave. (Depot Square HD)
Applicant: Wichita Falls Brewing Company

Before presenting the case, Ms. Karen Montgomery-Gagné stated that Commissioner Jordan Dixon had recused himself due to the fact he is an employee of SLA Architects and has filed and declared his conflict of interest with the City Clerk's office for this case, since one of the design professionals is with SLA Architects.

Staff received a request from Mr. Matt Bitsche, with Wichita Falls Brewing Company, along with the property owner of 617 7th Street, Los Cuates Enterprises, Mr. Sigala. They have been working in partnership through a lease agreement to utilize this property, 617 7th Street, for activities at the brewery. Staff showed photos of the property and areas around the property, and pointed out the Depot Square Historic District boundary which is immediately to the east of the brewery building. Archive photos were presented for reference to get a sense of where the Depot boundary was in relation to 617 7th Street and 701 Indiana (corner) and impacts to the case. The district boundary goes around the brewery building at the corner but includes 617 7th Street. There are approximately 18-24 inches of 701 Indiana property that extends in the district so it's complicated; to ensure items addressed properly, the owners submitted the design review case for Landmark review. Mr. Noros Martin requested clarification regarding the historical district downtown and the Depot Square District. Ms. Montgomery-Gagné informed the Commission there is no difference – they are considered the same.

In 2023 Landmarks reviewed a request to develop an outdoor beer garden as an extension of the brewery business. Photos of a Landmark Commission approved brick wall that was rebuilt at 615 7th street were presented and current photos were used to show where the proposed exterior staircase/fire escape will be constructed. Staff highlighted where the staircase will cross the property line, and into the Depot Square District; also referencing the SLA Architects drawings of the proposed plan and more detailed views where the staircase/support columns will be located, noting it will extend approximately another five (or more) feet.

The fire/building code requires the business to have a secondary means of egress from the building, when they add public space in the second-floor area. The staircase will have support columns and two landings, and will be constructed of metal/concrete.

What are the sections of the design review guidelines that are applicable for consideration with this case – would this new construction be an appropriate addition to this property? Staff explained this would be an example of mechanical equipment because it services the building. Unlike most mechanical equipment that is usually placed on the rear or the side of a building and not as visible, this one will be very visible because it will be placed in an open patio/beer garden area (even though it technically is being placed on the rear of the building).

For new construction, it's important to reflect the historical building forms, materials, and proportions already present within the district. Staff believe this proposed exterior staircase, the landing, and the columns, will be similar design and materials to what is already present in the Depot District. Ms. Montgomery-Gagné stated that one of the key things, as a Certified Local Government with the Texas Historical Commission, the state wants to know if it is new construction versus a renovation or remodel.

Ms. Dawn Ferrell referenced the middle block which has a separate owner, and asked since the staircase will go into the historical district, which is on the Indiana property, what will happen in the future if that property is developed? What impact does that make? Ms. Montgomery-Gagné informed the Commission there was a private access easement agreement recorded between the owners of the Wichita Falls Brewing Company and Los Cuates. The Landmark Commission can work with the property owners with the construction crossing a shared property line because it's situated in the Central Business District (CBD) and the access easement agreement. If this were to occur in other zoning districts it would trigger a replat of the properties as structures are not to cross property lines.

Matt Bitsche described to the Commission some of the components of the decorative items in the beer garden patio that will be moved to allow for the staircase and stated that the second-floor doors will not be put in at the same time as the staircase. The doors will be put in when the second-floor construction is about to be started to reduce construction activity/debris in the patio area. Mr. Bitsche clarified there is a front exit from second floor already for emergency use.

Chairperson Christy Graham moved to make a motion to *approve the design review case to install a new exterior staircase/fire escape (metals/concrete) to be partially placed on 617 7th St. for upper floor access to the abutting building at 701 Indiana Ave. (outside Depot Square Historic District). Design and construction shall be in accordance with architectural and engineering plans provided to the Landmark Commission pending any minor modifications to comply with building/fire codes. This new construction request was deemed in compliance with Wichita Falls Design Guidelines based on Sec. 4, No. 9 - Mechanical Equipment and Item E - New Construction in Historic Districts as presented.* Mr. Noros Martin seconded the motion. Chairperson Graham asked if there were any public comments, and there were no comments. Chairperson Graham took the motion to vote, and it passed 7-0 with 1 abstained vote.

IV. Action Item: Design Review – 2806 Avenue E.

Request authorization to construct a carport (20x15 x7ft) attached to existing house; steel framework will be wrapped with cedar; single-slope roof laminated shingles and all wood surfaces with gutters to direct run-off away from house. (West Floral Heights HD)
Applicants: Danny & Sandra Lawson

Staff presented the case and informed the Commission Mr. & Mrs. Lawson provided a handout immediately before the meeting requesting an alternate style carport that would be discussed during the meeting. Staff referenced photos of the property, noting that it is the only property in the West Floral Heights Historic District that is a separate lot on the side streets – Ave E. The lot originally had a rear garage apartment constructed and the front house was never constructed. At some point, the property was subdivided and the structure fully converted to a house and is now considered a contributing property. It is located between Grant and Tilden, and it was considered an undetermined architectural style because typically the main

houses were at the front of the primary street and had a defined style. It is a stately two-story structure, but the main property would have been a two or three-story home built in the 1920's. The home, for today's case, has a pyramidal roof with a cupola. There was a small one car garage added, that for today's standards would be considered more of an attached shed as the width does not function for current vehicle sizes.

Ms. Montgomery-Gagné presented additional inventory photos and pointed out where the original two bay garage was converted by prior owners to living space. Staff referenced the proposed, attached carport design in relation to the existing structure and angled driveway. The angle of the driveway complicates designing the carport, and the location of the one car garage addition (and how it sits on the property) is difficult. The owners were proposing the carport be attached just above the awnings, and there is a row of brick details just above the doors. One of the key points in the design guidelines is attaching elements to masonry and not to drill through the bricks but make connection through mortar or grout. Ms. Montgomery-Gagné noted the proposed design of the carport is 20ft x 15ft. The top of the support columns would be no more than 8ft and angle to 7ft for water runoff. It should have the same building limit line as the house, and not extend into the front yard. The applicants are requesting the carport due to continued damage to their vehicles from trees on their neighbor's property. The proposed carport will be steel framework and steel support columns wrapped with cedar. The trim would have some type of wood material or hardy board. A laminated shingle, which would match with the house was proposed and it would comply with minimum standards set by the Zoning Ordinance for a carport. Marant Roofing will be contracted for construction. Staff pointed out key questions to consider when reviewing the carport proposal's appropriateness with the design guidelines - How does it fit within the district? How does it fit on the property? A key item is looking at the height of the proposed construction, which in this case will only be one story. Look at the design - is it compatible with the scale of the two-story building? Would the new construction be appropriate in a historic district? The owners have tried to be very careful in choosing their materials. It will be metal framed but covered with wood materials that you would see throughout the district, and not left as visible metal.

Mrs. Lawson came forward to speak to the Commission. She stated that she doesn't like the design of the proposed carport they submitted for Landmark consideration - she doesn't want it attached to the house and it will be too costly being covered with wood material. Mrs. Lawson wants something basic with clean, neat-looking lines. She noted the challenge of getting in and out of the proposed carport due to the angled driveway. They have tried to make it work in the way that staff explained the design guideline standards but are frustrated and just want a carport, and she stated that they can't afford to do what is required and feel stuck in a position where they can't protect their property. Mrs. Lawson said she has seen other carports in the area similar to what she would like to have, so she doesn't understand why they can't build what they want.

There was discussion about other carports in the area, and what the Lawson's had

proposed to the Commission in their application which Mrs. Lawson is now stating they do not want. With regards to the carport being attached to the house brick, she provided what she thought was required, and Ms. Montgomery-Gagné stated staff did not stipulate the carport had to be attached to the house but it must blend with the architectural style of the house and block while using materials common within the district.

Ms. Janel Ponder Smith, West Floral Heights Historic District landmark liaison, offered to assist Mr. & Mrs. Lawson with the design of the carport, since what they proposed in their applicant is not something they intend to pursue constructing. Ms. Ponder Smith is also chair of the West Floral Heights Historic District Volunteer Design Review Committee and resides a block from the applicants, and stated she would be happy to help coordinate a meeting and work with them. Mrs. Lawson wanted the new design proposal presented at the meeting considered and didn't want to meet with more committees. The commissioners and staff explained to Mrs. Lawson they need to see a drawing or design of the proposed carport from the contractor with all materials listed and dimensions. The Commission cannot vote on anything until they review the drawings, materials, and know the proposed dimensions to determine if it meets the design guidelines. They recommended the Lawson's and their contractor work with Ms. Ponder Smith and staff, get together to come up with a proposal that will work for everyone and still fit the design standards.

Mr. Noros Martin made a motion to *deny this particular design review case at 2806 Avenue E based on the applicants requesting a new design at the meeting void of any design drawings, materials and new dimensions/placement details*. Dr. Ferrell seconded the motion. Chairperson Graham clarified to the applicants they can return to the Landmark Commission with another design for a carport, but the carport proposed in today's case was denied. Chairperson Graham called for a vote on the motion and it passed 8-0.

V Action Item: Design Review -1500 Buchanan

Request authorization to install 12 solar panels on detached garage roof (south/west slopes) with underground conduit connection to battery storage in garage. (West Floral Heights Historic District)

For the record: *Commission member Janel Ponder Smith, owner/applicant, has filed and declared a conflict of interest for this case with the City Clerk's office.*

Ms. Montgomery-Gagné stated this case is in the same area of the district, but to the east at Avenue E and Buchanan, the house in question is a contributing property to the district, and the style of home is French Eclectic. Staff presented inventory photos and pointed out pictures taken from the alley of Avenue E, and more photos taken at the corner of Buchanan and Avenue E, all showing the rear detached garage and roof slopes. The applicant has tried to be very cognizant of having solar panels proposed on roof slopes that cannot be seen from the primary street of Buchanan. Ms. Montgomery-Gagné stated there would be two panels placed on the west roof slope, which she named roof slope two. The panels on roof slope two will have limited

visibility from Avenue E. On the south roof slope there will be 10 solar panels proposed for placement and only visible from the back yard and alley with possible limited visibility from Avenue E. during the wintertime when trees are without foliage.

Mr. Nick Pavle, Eclipse Solar, provided some analysis to the commissioners, which showed a mapped area for the panels and where they are proposing to trench to connect everything for the battery storage. Images depicting the monitoring automatic shutdown module along with the specifications for the battery storage system were presented. Staff explained this case came before the commission because it's new construction and it's addressed under mechanical equipment standards in the design guidelines. It is recommended solar panels be on the back of a roof, the ground, or roof of an outbuilding. In this case, solar panels will be placed in the recommended location on an outbuilding by the alley/side street.

How does it fit within the district and on this property? One key element under the mechanical standards is that energy efficiency should not override the importance of the historic designation, character, and architecture. This case would trigger a building and electrical permit and inspections. Based on looking at the proposal and the guidelines, staff believe it would adhere to the standards and also best practices around the state on location, because there should be no visibility from Buchanan, extremely limited visibility from Grant, and limited visibility along the alley. Our design standards are to protect the historic nature of the homes in the district, and having solar panels visible from the primary street (Buchanan) impacts those historic features. Mr. Pavle came forward to offer additional information, stating battery storage will be completely powered by phone, and the solar panels are being installed to keep the batteries charged. The applicant will be on a free weekend plan, and at night when she has free energy from the power company, her batteries will be supercharged with free energy. During the day her entire house will be powered by battery. He added that his company uses LFP technology, which makes the batteries safer. He noted that everything will be located on the detached garage. The batteries will be inside that building. Nothing will go on the actual home, and the disconnects will go out back. All he will have to do is tap into the disconnects. It keeps everything clean, no piping, no big conduit runs.

Mr. Joel Hartmangruber made a motion to *approve the design review case authorizing the owners of 1500 Buchanan to install 12-solar panels on the rear, detached garage roof (south slope - 10 panels; west slope 2 panels) that will connect to the battery storage unit to be placed in the garage. Placement of panels and battery storage equipment were designed to reduce visibility from Ave E and Grant St with no visibility anticipated from Buchanan. The construction request was deemed in compliance with Wichita Falls Design Guidelines based on Sec. 4, No. 9 - Mechanical Equipment and Item E - New Construction in Historic Districts.* Mr. Bill Enlow seconded the motion. Chairperson Graham asked if there were any public comments, and there were no comments. Chairperson Graham took the motion to vote, and it was approved with a vote of 7-0 with 1 member abstained from voting.

VI. Other Business:

Monthly Reports: Chairperson Graham had no updates for the Depot Square HD monthly report.

Ms. Janel Ponder Smith stated there were no West Floral Heights Historic area updates, but did say they are still working hard at making residents more familiar with the historic preservation area program and trying to inform residents within the district what that means to them as homeowners.

National Preservation Month Activity Report:

Ms. Montgomery-Gagné was pleased to report both the City of Wichita Falls and Wichita County recognized National Preservation Month with proclamations. On May 7/8th about 15 people came to the Museum of North Texas History to participate in the annual historic marker demonstration day. It was a collaboration between various preservation partner agencies, Becky Trammel (Wichita County Historical Commission Marker Coordinator), WF Alliance for Arts & Culture (Ann Arnold-Ogden), Karen (Landmark Commission), MSU History Dept. (Dr. Mary Draper) and Wichita County Heritage Society (Teresa and Delores) as an opportunity to showcase the importance of history and preserving the marker stories. Volunteers attended a training (lunch & learn) and then worked in the field restoring a trio of subject markers in front of the Wichita Co. Courthouse along 7th St and the J.S. Bridwell marker at the Ag. Center. Staff explained anyone on the Commission or their friends/co-workers interested in refinishing a THC subject marker should let them know as there is a list of markers in need of refurbishment and owner permission has already been obtained. The city has a THC marker refurbishment supply box that can be reserved for volunteers.

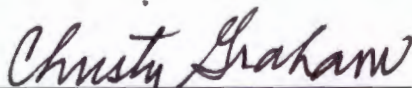
Resources/Training:

Staff highlighted resources available to Commission members, NAPC - National Alliance of Preservation Commissions allow access to free webinars as part of the City's organizational membership and it's an excellent source of information.

Administrative Case Updates: Ms. Montgomery-Gagné stated with recent storms staff are seeing a lot of cases for replacement roofs in Morningside (cases are information only) and in West Floral Heights. Unless the roof design (slope/pitch), soffit/fascia elements and/or materials are being altered, roof replacement 'like with like' can be administratively authorized which helps reduce downtime for the owner.

VII. Adjourn:

Chairperson Graham adjourned the meeting at 1:25 pm and stated the next scheduled meeting would be June 24, 2025, at 12:00 pm.



Christy Graham, Chairperson



Date