Designing Community Institutions to Complement Neighborhoods

Community institutions (such as churches, schools, and fire stations) are an important part of the character and vitality of neighborhoods in Forsyth County. Many of these institutional uses are surrounded by single-family neighborhoods. As these institutions grow, there is the potential to have a negative effect on adjacent single-family homes because these uses typically have larger building footprints and bulkier mass. Planning staff recently prepared a visual report showing design techniques that can help institutions complement existing neighborhood character. This report follows previous reports on multi-family and commercial development design techniques.

The design techniques presented in the Institutional Use Design Compatibility Techniques visual report can help institutions grow appropriately within their neighborhoods by using design to respond to fundamental neighborhood patterns. The continuation of existing patterns—yards and street trees, street frontage patterns, and building form and orientation—can accommodate a diversity of architectural styles, while providing an underlying sense of cohesion and “place” that helps define the character of neighborhoods. Design techniques are presented in this report for corner sites, mid-block sites, large development sites, and building additions.

The full report can be found online at www.cityofws.org/planning under the Developers Toolbox heading. Please contact Marco Andrade at marcoa@cityofws.org for additional information or to schedule a presentation for your organization or group.
On May 7, 2017, the Historic Resources Commission held an unveiling ceremony for a historic marker recognizing the Samuel and Sarah Stauber Farm. In 1850, Samuel Stauber owned 458 acres of land that he farmed with his wife, Sarah, and six children. The Stauber farm was one of the largest farms in the state. Stauber, a Moravian from nearby Bethania, purchased the adjacent property in 1851, increasing his farm acreage. By September of 1852, the Stauber family built the two-story Greek Revival-style house on the newly acquired land.

The Stauber farm is one of the finest remaining examples of a prosperous mid-19th century farmstead and retains a high degree of integrity of setting. The historic farm setting includes a heavy-timber frame barn, a circa 1900 pack house, a mid-to-late 19th century smokehouse, a circa 1852 slave dwelling, and a circa 19th century corncrib. The farm complex reflects the pattern of Forsyth County’s rural agrarian development during the mid-to-late 19th century.

Dedication of the Samuel and Sarah Stauber Farm historic marker was well attended and remarks were made by Don Martin, Vice-Chair of the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners, County Manager Dudley Watts, and City Council Member John Larson. Gwynne Taylor, a historic preservation consultant, gave special remarks. Charles Taft, farmer and owner of the Stauber Farm, and Eula Gray Long, a former resident of the Stauber Farm, gave additional remarks.

The Historic Resources Commission also held an unveiling ceremony on May 20, 2017 for a marker for the Brothers’ Spring and the African School. The marker unveiling was well attended and remarks were made by Mayor Allen Joines, Mayor Pro Tempore and Council Member Vivian H. Burke, and Council Member John Larson made remarks. Michael Hartley, Director of Archaeology at Old Salem Museums & Gardens, the Rt. Rev. Dr. D. Wayne Burkette, Bishop of the Moravian Church, Barbara Morris, a member of St. Philips Moravian Church, Cheryl Harry, Director of African American Programming at Old Salem Museums & Gardens, and neighborhood residents also gave remarks.

The Brothers’ Spring provided clean water, an important campsite, and a recreational park in the 18th and 19th centuries. In 1867, freedmen of the area and the Salem African Church, known as St. Philips Moravian Church today, established the first school for their children in the county. The school was located near the spring on the land provided by the Salem Moravian Congregation. The African-American community raised funds for the building, known as the Freedmen’s School, the Colored School and the African School. The one-story frame, bell-towered school was used until a new school opened in Winston circa 1890.