



DELTA ZETA
NATIONAL HOUSING CORPORATION

City of Charlottesville
City Council
c/o: Kate Richardson
PO Box 911
Charlottesville VA 22902

RECEIVED

FEB 05 2025

NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

RE: Board of Architectural Review Appeal
BAR 25-01-22
Tax Map 9 Parcel 109
Delta Zeta Annex
144 Chancellor Street
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Dear City Council,

On behalf of Delta Zeta National Housing Corporation (DZ-NHC), owner of 144 Chancellor Street, this letter appeals the Board of Architectural Review (BAR) denial of a Certificate of Appropriateness for Demolition of the structure at 144 Chancellor Street, commonly referred to as the Annex. This appeal contests the BAR finding that the proposed demolition does not satisfy the BAR's criteria and guidelines.

The following timeline summarizes key dates:

- 1905 – Building originally constructed
- 1907-1917 – Building in use as a school
- 1920 – Building is vacant
- 1929 – Building serves as a rental dwelling
- 1937 – Renovation, scope unknown
- 1958 – General repair, scope unknown
- 1979 – Building purchased by DZ-NHC
- 1996-1998 – Building briefly serves as a rental dwelling
- 1998 – DZ-NHC determines the building is unsafe, prohibits further occupancy
- December 2010 – DGP architects retained to perform feasibility study for occupancy
- December 2010 – Storm and falling tree damage roof, roofing at end of service life
- January 2011 – Structural condition and build inspections performed
- January 2011 – Asphalt shingle roofing replaced following inspections
- April 2011 – Feasibility study determines structural rehabilitation is not feasible
- July 2012 – Earthquake in Central Virginia further destabilizes structural condition
- June 2013 – Application to BAR for Certificate of Appropriateness for Demolition
- October 2024 – Structural engineering visit and report acknowledging further destabilization
- January 2025 – Application for CoA and BAR members site visit and review hearing
- February 2025 – BAR appeal application to City Council

The following is an analysis of the standards concluding demolition of the structure satisfies the BAR's criteria and guidelines:

- A professional economic and structural feasibility study for rehabilitating the structure was previously performed, and its findings support the proposed demolition.

- The building is in a state of structural failure, unsound for any form of occupancy, with structural rehabilitation determined to be infeasible.
- The building is not associated with a historic person, architect or master craftsman or with a historic event.
- The architectural character of the building is quite common and utilitarian, a vernacular frame cottage and does not represent an infrequent or first or last remaining example within the city of a particular architectural style or feature.
- Distinguishing characteristics, qualities, features and materials have been destroyed or heavily obscured by past removals and renovations.

The BAR ruling that the proposed demolition does not satisfy the BAR's criteria and guidelines focused on contrary aspects as evidenced by BAR members' discussion during the January 22 hearing:

- The current structural failure resulted from the owner failing to maintain the structure over time. Permitting demolition at this time would represent "demolition through neglect."
- The original brief use of the building as a non- public school represents a historically significant period during the early 20th Century.

This appeal contests the BAR positions as follows.

The structural failure of the Delta Zeta Annex resulted from the following factors:

- Insufficient engineering at the time of initial construction.
- Lateral earth forces in excess of the structure's design applied for long periods of time.
- Compound failures of multiple structural systems, resulting in building displacement, triggering further and prolonged failures.
- Lateral earthquake forces (2012) compounding the instability of an already unsound structure.
- 120 years of locomotive and railway traffic vibrations further contributing to the degradation of the underlying inferior foundational elements of the building.

The structural failure of the Delta Zeta Annex did not result from neglect or lack of maintenance on behalf of the owner.


The owner of the historic building should perform reasonable routine maintenance and service to sustain the building in a state of utility. DZ-NHC demonstrated good stewardship of the Annex by replacing the asphalt shingle roof in January of 2011 following storm damage. However, the structural failure issues have been present in the building for years, dating to before DZ-NHC ownership of the Annex in 1979. After a comparative analysis of recent and previous engineering reports, the exact extent of the structural failure, continued degradation of the foundation and movement of the building down the slope is clear. The scope and cost of structural failure of this nature exceeds any reasonable expectation of building maintenance and service.

The BAR ruling asserted the apparent use of the Annex as a school may provide some historical or cultural value. Although the building is located within a designated historic district, there is no association of the Annex with a particular historic person, architect or master craftsman or with a historic event. With vague and tenuous connections to historical references, this appeal assigns a minimal historical and cultural value to the Annex. The lack of extant significant architectural details and design does not support meritorious status.

In conclusion, the case for rehabilitation of any historic structure must find a balance between historical and cultural value, potential utility of the structure in the future and the feasibility of rehabilitation including structural and economic requirements. There is minimal historical and cultural value in the Annex, and the building itself has exceeded the original intended lifespan of its simple, vernacular frame construction. The

extant structural failures, through no fault or neglect of the owner, have overwhelmed the feasibility of rehabilitation. Therefore, this appeal finds the proposed demolition of the structure at 144 Chancellor Street satisfies the BAR's criteria and guidelines and is eligible for the Certificate of Appropriateness for Demolition.

Respectfully yours,



John J. Gottschall, CPA
Executive Vice President

cc: Kevin S. Blair, Contractor
Madison Varney, House Director
Delta Zeta Property Management

DELTA ZETA NATIONAL
HOUSING CORPORATION
202 EAST CHURCH STREET
OXFORD, OH 45056

NATIONAL BANK OF INDIANAPOLIS
INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46204
20-6677740

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1/30/2025

\$125.00

DATE

AMOUNT

One Hundred Twenty Five and 00/100 Dollars

PAY
TO THE
ORDER
OF:

CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE

Department of Neighborhood Development Services
PO Box 911, City Hall
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Cynthia W. Menges

John J. Hall
AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE

⑈ 252709⑈ ⑆074006674⑆

1615160⑈

Jan 31, 2025

Report with Addendum (Original report October 28, 2024)

Tammy Hubbard (PROPERTYMANAGEMENT@DELTAZETA.ORG)

Property Manager

Delta Zeta

202 East Church St

Oxford, OH 45056

RE: 144 Chancellor St.
Initial Structural Condition Assessment
Dunbar Project 2410-72

Dear Tammy,

As requested, we recently visited the 144 Chancellor St to review the condition of the structure with the understanding the building is intended to be repurposed for light storage. Following is a summary of our initial observations and recommendations. Also an addendum has been added at the end of the report to compare site visit photos from a previous site visit we performed in Jan 2010 to our October 2024.

Observations

The existing building is a one-story house built around 1900 with the exterior dimensions of approximately 20ft x 56ft. The structure consists of a wood frame construction being supported by a solid brick retaining wall along the west side and brick piers around the remaining perimeter with interior piers supporting the floor as well.





The interior of the building shows signs of multiple roof leaks with plaster ceilings having come loose and fallen on the ground. It was indicated that the roof has repaired recently with a new asphalt shingles installed.

The ground floor wood flooring and joists appear to be in fair condition. No signs of major rot or other damage. The floor joists consist of actual 2x10's at 16" oc. Typical span for the joists is approximately 9 ft.

The front porch consists of a 10ft x6ft concrete slab on grade supporting the porches roof. At the building it is apparent that the concrete slab on grade has settled approximately 1 to 2" in elevation. This is apparent in the post imprints in the concrete indicating the posts and door sill use to be in close contact with the concrete slab.



Photo 1: Imprints of the post in concrete indicate the slabs original position.



Photo 2: Imprints of the post in concrete indicate the slabs original position.

The foundation along the west side of the building consists of a solid brick masonry retaining wall of multi wythe thickness 4 to 5 ft tall within the crawl space. The earth slopes down to the wall from the road which is approximately 15ft from the building at an elevation of 2'-6" above ground floor. The wall is bowed out approximately 3 to 5". It also appears that the top of the wall has shifted laterally. There are numerous horizontal cracks at mid elevation along the wall. Several of the internal brick piers supporting the ground floor are out of vertical by up to 2". The ground within the crawl space appears to be damper than normal considering we have not had any precipitation in the past few weeks.

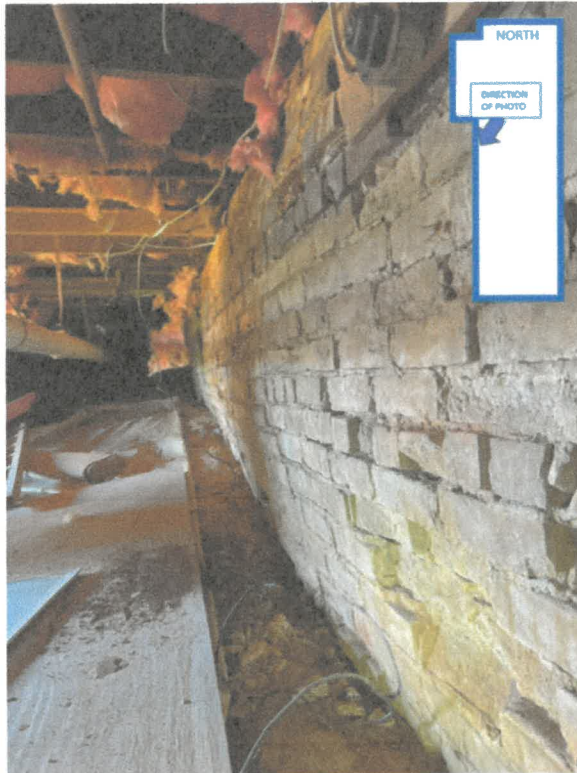


Photo 3: West side retaining wall with significant bow.

Along the perimeter of the building, the brick piers appear to be leaning towards downslope (easterly direction) as well. This reinforces the sense that the building has shifted laterally down slope potentially a couple of inches.



Photo 4/5: Perimeter piers with gaps between CMU infill and piers being larger at top.



Photo 6: Perimeter piers with gaps between CMU infill and piers being larger at top.



There is CMU infill along the south, north and east side in between the perimeter brick piers. These walls do not appear to be connected to the piers or the ground floor as evidence that these walls can move laterally simply by pushing them and that there are noticeable gaps in the piers and the CMU infill. Note these gaps tend to be wider at the top of the wall further indicating the piers have shifted down slope.

Recommendations

We have several structural concerns with the existing building.

- The west side brick retaining wall appears to be failing.
- The CMU walls do not appear to be connected at the top and are unstable in the out of plane direction of the wall.
- The slope of the ground is permitting water to build up and infiltrate the west side of the building.

Lateral earth pressure along the west side is displacing the building and causing cracking and failure of the brick retaining wall. This is compounded by water runoff pressing against the wall as well. The presence of horizontal cracks along the mortar as well as the bow in the wall indicates the brick wall is failing in flexure. This bow may be the result of why the slab on grade at the porch has dropped 1 to 2" relative to the ground floor. Indications that all of the brick piers have shifted at the top towards the east (downslope) also indicates that the entire building has shifted downslope as well.

If a repair project were to be undertaken, we would generally recommend the following as structural repairs:

- Excavate and remove the existing backfill along the west side of the building.
- Repair or replace the existing brick retaining wall. This would consist of 35ft of wall.
- Install a foundation subdrain that outlets to daylight or suitable drain. Install a waterproofing system against the below grade walls. Replace backfill along the west wall with an open graded stone such as VDOT No. 57.
- Connect the perimeter CMU infill to the brick masonry piers. This could be accomplished with a 2x ledger board and adhesive anchors.
- Connect the building perimeter sill plate to the CMU infill walls.
- Generally performed repairs to the damaged and cracked masonry. This work would involve extensive repointing.

The above repair work would be extensive with the repair costs making up a significant fraction of a complete replacement of the building.

In consideration of the floor joists, we consider the joists to be capable of supporting light storage provided the supporting masonry walls and piers are repaired.



The above is a general summary of observations and recommendations. If requested, we can provide specific repair details. We appreciate the opportunity to assist. Please contact me if you have any comments or questions, or if we can assist further.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. P. Krumpen", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Robert P. Krumpen, PE

2025-01-31 Addendum

In addition to the site visit performed in October 2024, Dunbar (then known as DMWPV) had previously performed a similar site visit in Jan 2010. We compared photos to see if they could confirm that the structure is degrading as mentioned in our 2024 and 2010 reports. The photo comparisons reinforce our concerns that the western retaining wall along the entrance of the building is at risk of collapse which has the potential to cause significant damage to the building. Also, it appears in the photo comparisons that the building has shifted east, this movement needs to be address by connecting the CMU infill walls to the building superstructure as mentioned in the 2024 report.

Jan 2010



October 2024



Front porch slab on grade has settled. We believe this is due to the movement of the retaining wall at this location.



Jan 2010



October 2024



West side retaining wall, the later photo appears to show the wall has curved out more.

Jan 2010



October 2024



Corner masonry pier on the south eastern corner of the building. The later photo shows a gap of approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ " that does not appear in the 2010 photo. This supports our observations that the building may be shifting east.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. P. Krumpen'.

Robert P. Krumpen, PE