



2015 Questionnaire for Durham City Candidates

1. What is your favorite historic property, landmark, or site in Durham, and why?

As a resident of the West End neighborhood, my favorite landmark is the Pauli Murray house. I love how the Durham community has lifted up the history and legacy of Pauli Murray, who was such an influential leader in the civil rights movement, but whose legacy has been overlooked in many of the national conversations around civil rights. I'm hopeful that the Pauli Murray house will soon be able to fulfil its intended use as a museum and home for social justice-oriented programming for youth.

2. Do you think that preservation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings should be a central tenet of downtown development? If so, how? If not, why?

Yes, preservation and adaptive reuse have been, and should continue to be, a central tenet of downtown development. Unlike many other major cities, downtown Durham does not have unique natural features, a state capitol, or a large corporate presence to spur economic development, so our beautiful historic structures are our key asset. Durham's historic buildings contribute to a totally unique and visually interesting downtown and are an important way to establish a sense of place for a community and connect us to a shared history. Renovating historic buildings is also a more environmentally responsible way to develop and grow. Developers can show that they support these values in our community by preserving historic properties. I support the use of the local historic landmark status, historic tax credits, and locally developed design guidelines to help ensure there are the financial resources and local planning tools to make historic preservation is economically feasible and contextually appropriate in our community. In addition to downtown, I also believe it is important to promote preservation of other historic commercial corridors such as Old Five Points, the Angier-Driver corridor, West Chapel Hill St, and Ninth Street.

3. What role do you think the HPC should play in guiding future growth? Do you think local historic districts provide value? Do you support additional local historic districts?

When they have a clear set of criteria to evaluate proposals, I believe that the HPC is effective in guiding development in designated historic areas in ways that contribute to the livability and character of our

neighborhoods. The HPC can also provide city and county leaders with advice and expertise when dealing with issues related to preservation. Yes, I believe that local historic districts provide value, and that this is demonstrated in many neighborhoods in central Durham. Yes, I would support the creation of new local historic districts, however, I would want the people who live in the proposed district to be central to the process and have final say in whether the district was created, as they will be the people primarily be impacted by it.

4. Do you support the Local Landmark program? Do you view it as an incentive for development? Do you view it as a public policy tool to protect landmark properties?

I do support the local landmark program, but I am not sure that in and of itself, it is always an adequate incentive for preservation. One example that illustrates this point is the case of the Liberty Warehouse, which was designated a historic landmark in 2010 and then un-designated in 2013 in order for it to be torn down for redevelopment. However, since it provides a significant financial incentive in the form of a permanent 50% tax abatement and some additional leverage for local preservationists, I do think local landmark status can be an important tool to protect endangered properties. While historic preservation brings clear economic benefits, it is largely a community *value*. As such, we need sustained community advocacy and elected leaders who share that value, in addition to incentives such as the local landmark program.

5. What role do you think preservation should play in the revitalization of historic neighborhoods?

Preservation helps link us to our collective history and protects our city for future generations. I believe that preservation, and the continued promotion of tools such as historic tax credits and local design criteria, should play a key role in the revitalization of historic neighborhoods. While Durham, like most cities, does not have a stellar record of historic preservation, my understanding is that over the past several years the number of vacant and boarded up houses has gone down, renovations have increased, and there is a tremendous value being created in our historic neighborhoods. As tastes and preferences for urban living and historic homes grow, my hope is that the preservation community will begin to work within a broader equity framework and find ways to help connect preservation tools to long-time residents so they are able to renovate their homes, benefit from the increased value created, and stay in their historic communities. I am excited for the opportunity to be a part of this effort.

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