

Preservation Success – Griffin-White House Rescued and Will Be Restored

The Griffin-White house, located on Chatham Park Property on Hwy 64 east of Pittsboro, has been purchased by Chatham native Rae Bland. The house is now being deconstructed and will be moved to Bland's property off Hank's Chapel Rd., where it will be restored.



The house is familiar to many, visible from Highway 64, but alterations over the years disguised its historical value. Chatham Park developers at one time offered the structure to the fire department for practice burning, but CCHA asked to look at the house more closely and determined that it had restoration potential.

The structure appears to have been built in the 1830s, and retains several interesting features. The property has been traced back to Hasten Poe, and was later owned by the Hatch, Griffin, and White families. Built of sturdy mortise and tenon construction, the early Federal/Greek Revival house is an unusual combination of the tall narrow Quaker plan houses popular in Pittsboro in the 1830s and 1840s and Georgian plan I-houses with shed rooms along the rear elevation. The house retains the tall two-story form, brick end chimneys, and several features reminiscent of the fine early 19th century houses built in and around Pittsboro. Underneath the artificial siding is intact clapboards with boxed cornice. The interior features an intact hall and parlor plan, paneled wainscot with chair rail in the main parlor, wood wall sheathing and board and batten door in the chamber, enclosed winder stair with hand planed wood sheathing, a couple of very nice 2-panel doors, cornerblock detailing in door surrounds, and heartpine flooring. The house underwent some changes in the 1920s (a couple of Craftsman brick mantels testify to that) and was moved slightly in the 1950s and placed on a sturdy brick foundation over a basement.

Once the age and potential of the house was noted, Chatham Park, Preservation North Carolina, and the Chatham County Historical Association worked together to find a purchaser for the structure. We are pleased that Rae Bland has stepped in to save this feature of Chatham County's history and hope that he will share the progress as restoration proceeds.