

Preservation News

Preservation Success – Griffin-White House Rescued and Will Be Restored *Oct 2019*

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.

Smokehouse Progress—Reconstruction Begins

April 2017

February and March of 2017 were a time of great progress for CCHA's Restore the Smokehouse Project.

Early in 2017, CCHA's Smokehouse Committee—Kenneth Crabtree, Lee Sullivan, and Grimsley Hobbs—re-measured and reassessed material needs for the reconstruction, and appropriate materials were located and ordered. A generous financial contribution from The James Milton Johnson & Laura Blair Johnson Trust helped defray the cost of some of the special materials required for the project

Next, CCHA established a partnership with Central Carolina Community College, which organized a hands-on course around restoring the smokehouse. The course attracted sixteen students who spent six Saturdays working on the project.

Under the supervision of skilled craftspersons—CCCC instructor, Jeff Gannon and CCHA volunteer Ray Carney—the students and volunteers deconstructed the structure, which had been off-site while the new Agriculture and Conference Center was under construction, and moved the parts to the CCCC Pittsboro campus.



There, they crafted new parts needed to restore the structure, ensuring both historical accuracy and that current building codes will be met. Students enrolled in the hands-on course learned a variety of historic construction techniques utilizing both period and modern tools.

Preparation of the site of reconstruction on the Agriculture Center property has also begun. Two local businesses contributed to that effort. Eddie Thomas, of Earl Thomas Grading excavated for the footings at no charge. Chandler Concrete of

Pittsboro donated all of the concrete required for the smokehouse footings, which have now been poured.

Over the next few months the smokehouse will be reassembled on the site of the new Agriculture and Conference Center—very near its original location—where it will serve as an educational and historical feature. [Read more about the history of the smokehouse](#) and CCHA’s involvement.

CCHA is grateful for the community interest in the project and for the financial contributions received from community businesses, organizations, and individuals to date. Donations of any amount will help us return the smokehouse to the property where it stood for more than 150 years. Donations of \$100 or more will be recognized on a plaque to be installed on or near the smokehouse when it is returned to its original location at the Chatham County Agriculture and Conference Center where it will serve as a reminder of our county’s rich agricultural past.



Photos by Jeff Gannon

We Still Need Your Help

- [Print a donation form](#) to contribute to restoring the smokehouse.
- [Donate online](#) and designate your donation for the smokehouse.
- Contact CCHA’s Smokehouse Committee: Kenneth Crabtree, Chair at 919-608-2751
Email: smokehouse@chathamhistory.org

Be a part of the smokehouse project! Make a donation today!



Help Us Restore the Smokehouse

January 2017

A Brief History of the Smokehouse

Enveloped in dense woods, only three blocks from the Chatham County Courthouse, and only yards from highway 64, were the ruins of a once-prosperous farm. The 99-acre parcel, which had been passed down in a single family for nearly 200 years, was purchased by the county in 2012 as the site of Chatham's new Agriculture and Conference Center.

When the parcel was purchased by the county, most of the structures were in ruins. The "big house" had been razed in the 1970s and the summer house was a collapsing shell. Only traces of a barn and smaller house remained. But, surrounded by the massive oaks that once graced the homestead stood a largely intact smokehouse—a witness to much of early Chatham County history.

Because it was located within the footprint of the new building, the Chatham County Historical Association moved the smokehouse to a safe location. When approval was granted by the County Commissioners to return it to the Agriculture and Conference Center site, CCHA began planning for its restoration.

We Have a Plan!

We have approval to relocate the smokehouse in the courtyard of the new Agriculture Center Building, where it will serve as an educational feature and represent the agricultural roots of the very parcel on which the Center is sited.

We have established a partnership with Central Carolina Community College, which has organized a hands-on course around restoring the smokehouse. Skilled craftspersons will oversee the work of students and volunteers who will craft new parts to restore the structure and ensure that current building codes are met. [Learn more about the course and how to register.](#)

We have located materials to replace some of the sills, missing siding, and foundation fieldstones. These materials represent the major cost of completing the restoration project.



Smokehouse in original location



Well-preserved racks and pegs discovered above a lower false ceiling



Sill detail

A generous financial contribution from The James Milton Johnson & Laura Blair Johnson Trust will help defray the cost of some of the special materials required for the project. *But additional funds are needed.*

We Need Your Help

Donations of any amount will help us purchase the materials needed to make the smokehouse whole again. Donations of \$100 or more will be recognized on a plaque to be installed on or near the smokehouse when it is returned to its original location at the Ag Center where it will serve as a reminder of our county's rich agricultural past.

Be a part of the smokehouse project! Make a donation today.

Learn More about the Smokehouse and How You Can Help

[Read the full report](#) on the discovery of the smokehouse and the history of the property where it was found and to which it will be returned.

[Learn about the Historic Restoration course at CCCC](#) and help rebuild the smokehouse.

[Print a donation form](#) to contribute to restoring the smokehouse.

[Donate online](#) and designate your donation for the smokehouse.

Contact CCHA's Smokehouse Committee:
Kenneth Crabtree, Chair at 919-608-2751
Email: smokehouse@chathamhistory.org

Griffin-White House in Pittsboro **– Available to move!**

December 2016

1615 US 64 East
Pittsboro, NC 27312
Chatham County

CCHA would like to see this early Federal/Greek Revival house in Pittsboro saved. Currently on property to be developed as Chatham Park, the house has been turned over to Preservation North Carolina to find a new owner. The house must be moved from its current location. Its stately form and sturdy construction make it an excellent candidate for a move to a new site in this beautiful and growing area. Located just west of Apex and the Triangle and south of Chapel Hill, Pittsboro and Chatham County provide both rural charm and sophistication. Help us save this early piece of Pittsboro's history and give it a lovely new setting on your own land!



Built of sturdy mortise and tenon construction, this 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. While somewhat altered, 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. Within the now-enclosed porch remains flush wood sheathing. 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. The house is in good condition and is an excellent candidate for moving.

[Click here](#) for more information and photographs of the house.
