North Carolina Historical Commission
March 25, 2021

Demolition of the John A. Holmes High School
&
Relocation of The Boy Scout Hut
By
Edenton-Chowan School Board

On March 2, 2021, the Edenton-Chowan School Board voted unanimously to build a new administration/classroom building to replace functions currently housed in the existing 1950 John A. Holmes High School, a contributing structure within the Edenton National Register Historic District Boundary Increase (2007). The project includes relocation of the individually listed Boy Scout Hut. The new building and Boy Scout Hut’s relocation are funded with a North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Needs-Based Grant for $15,000,000 with a match of $5,000,000 from Chowan County. The grant program provides funding for new construction only. While still in the Master Planning and Schematic Stage, the demolition and relocation of the historic buildings constitutes an adverse effect upon a property listed in the National Register of Historic Places. North Carolina General Statue 121-12(a) requires the North Carolina Historical Commission to review and comment on the undertaking. Comments and recommendations by the Commission are advisory, requiring only a response by the School Board as to what they intend to do, having received those recommendations.

Attached for review are photos of the Boy Scout Hut plus plans/schematics of the several options for the new buildings, provided by the architectural consultants to the School Board. They include the results of a public engagement process to address local concerns over:

- the potential loss of the Town Green, which pre-dates the school and other improvements on the site, and is the location of several community celebrations/festivals,
- keeping the Boy Scout Hut on site so that it continues to be part of the associated public space; and
- schematic designs options for the new school/administration building that incorporate elements derived from local landmarks. The plans drew over 900 responses from the public.

Based on the materials provided, the proposed actions by Edenton-Chowan School Board adversely affect the Edenton National Register Historic District. However, its proposal to:

- relocate and rehabilitate the Boy Scout Hut on the campus for continued public use,
- maintain the Town Green space, and
- incorporate design elements of the current school on the new front elevation the building and reference local building forms on the rear
appear to offer a high degree of mitigation.

As one additional mitigation measure, staff recommends that the School Board thoroughly document the high school and Boy Scout Hut prior to the demolition and move of the historic
buildings and file them with the State Historic Preservation Office so there is a permanent record of their existence.

Attachments:
- Photos of Boy Scout Hut
- Introductory board to Project and Phasing
- 3 Optional design boards
- Final design option

John A. Holmes High School – front facade
Boy Scout Hut - exterior
John A. Holmes High School to right

Boy Scout Hut - interior
JOHN A. HOLMES HIGH SCHOOL,
Edenton, NC

Submission to the State Historic Preservation Office for demolition of 1950 Administration/Classroom Building and relocation of the Boy Scout Hut.

On March 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 2021, the Edenton-Chowan School Board voted unanimously to build a new administration/classroom building to replace functions that are currently housed in the existing 1950 building which is a contributing structure within the Edenton National Historic District.

This project includes relocation of the Boy Scout Hut, which is also a contributing structure, to another location, on-site where it will remain within the Edenton National District.

The new building and Boy Scout Hut relocation are being funded with a North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Needs-Based Grant for $15,000,000 with a match of $5,000,000 from Chowan County. This grant program provides funding for new construction only.
Location of structures within the Edenton National Historic District Extended Boundary.
**PROJECT PHASING**
This is a phased project with Phase One being construction of the new administration/classroom building and relocation of the Boy Scout Hut and Phase Two being the demolition of the 1950 building.

- **Boy Scout Hut Relocation**
- **Existing Boy Scout Hut**
- **New Phase One Administration/Classroom Building**
- **Existing 1950 Building**
  - demolition in Phase Two
Mitigation plan for adverse effects:

The Boy Scout Hut
The Boy Scout Hut is being relocated due to conflicting with the location of the new building, however, the structure will remain on-site and within the Edenton National Historic District so that it can continue to function in the same capacity as a community use building.

Additionally, parking has been reduced in front of the new school to accentuate the “town commons” which existed in this location prior to the site being a school. The open space in front of the new building is sized to support the current community events that take place in this area along North Broad Street.

Mitigation plan for building:
Mitigation plan for adverse effects: The Building

Three design options were presented to the School Board and the Community which all told a story of how the character and history of Edenton could be maintained in the new design and the architecture. With over 900 people responding
The Board of Education is excited to move forward with the replacement of the existing John A. Holmes High School. After an enthusiastic response to online surveys, clear preferences emerged for Story 1 (41% of respondents), which draws from Edenton's historic civic architecture; and Story 3 (49% of respondents), which is more contemporary with elements of Edenton’s historic mill architecture. The design team and the Board of Education recommend a synthesis of both Story 3 and Story 1. This approach acknowledges the strong support that the community voiced for Story 1 as well as recommendations from the State Historic Preservation Office that the new building should recall historic elements from the existing John A. Holmes High School. The proposed concept combines elements of both stories into a single design that is rooted in the Edenton/Chowan community’s rich history while looking towards the future. The Broad Street façade will feature the traditional proportions, symmetry, entry columns, classical ornamentation, and brick detailing that reflect Edenton’s history and charm. Modern wings will bookend the monumental entry with references to timeless industrial mill spaces. The architectural language of the rear façade will be an inverse of the front, primarily defined by contemporary elements with nods to the Edenton’s historic architectural details.

Illustrated below is the new front lawn during a community event. The white tents illustrated are 15’x15’. The new front lawn could comfortably accommodate (72) 15’x15’ tents.

A LOOK AHEAD

The proposed conceptual approach creates two distinct entrances to the school: a community-facing Broad Street entrance that reflects the history of Edenton, and a student-facing entrance at the rear with a more contemporary expression which lends itself to the 21st century learning environments throughout the school. If the construction occurs in phases, the more traditional Broad Street façade would likely be completed first, and the more contemporary student-facing façade would be designed and constructed to complement the Phase I design.