



Community Development
Department

STAFF REPORT

Meeting Date:	June 15, 2023
Agenda Title:	COA 23-43 – 2 Court House Square
Requested Action:	Review proposal for the request to remove four specimen trees from the perimeter of the John Barton Payne Building and the adjacent FNB Wealth Building.
Department / Agency Lead:	Community Development
Staff Lead:	Casey Squyres

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The applicant is proposing to remove four specimen trees (three Linden trees and one Bald Cypress) from the perimeter of the John Barton Payne Building and the adjacent FNB Wealth Building due to on-going building maintenance issues at the roofline and foundation, as well as the interference of the Bald Cypress tree with the utility lines along Waterloo Street.

BACKGROUND

The building being impacted is the former Warrenton Library building, which was constructed in 1923 and is in excellent condition. The architectural elements and design of this building are in keeping with the rest of the district's institutional buildings. It retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. This resource falls within the district's period of significance and contributes to the institutional character of the district. Although it does not possess sufficient architectural or historical significance to qualify for individual listing in the National Register, it is a contributing resource to the Warrenton Historic District under Criterion C, for architecture and Criterion A, for education.



*Image from 2019 architectural survey

** The three Linden trees and the Bald Cypress tree in question are visible behind the building.

DESIGN GUIDELINE CONSIDERATIONS

Historic District Guideline	Page No.	Analysis
A. LANDSCAPING		
1. Preserve and maintain specimen trees, allées, historic plantings, and garden designs.	3.6	The applicant is requesting to remove four specimen trees.

Historic District Guideline	Page No.	Analysis
Specimen trees (trees that are particularly impressive or unusual examples of a species due to their size, shape, age, or other traits), healthy mature trees, and historic plantings are important components in the historic district. They should be retained whenever possible. When planting new trees, species that are commonly seen in the surrounding historic district should be selected.	3.7	The applicant has not demonstrated a sufficient reason for the removal of the four specimen trees which are otherwise healthy, mature trees that do not appear to have any direct negative impact to the adjacent buildings. Therefore, the four specimen trees are recommended to be retained and properly maintained.
Be careful not to attract moisture toward historic masonry. Avoid planting too close to a building so as not to damage or retain moisture against architectural features or building foundations. Do not encourage ivy or other organic material to grow on historic buildings	3.7	The applicant has not demonstrated a sufficient reason for the removal of the four specimen trees which are otherwise healthy, mature trees that do not appear to have any direct negative impact to the adjacent buildings. Given the trees close proximity to the adjacent buildings, and upon further inspection, no negative impacts from the trees were observed at the building's roofline or foundation. Any minor maintenance issues observed are considered to be cyclical maintenance issues for all historic buildings.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends denial of the request to remove four specimen trees from the perimeter of the John Barton Payne Building and the adjacent FNB Wealth Building for the following reasons:

- 1) The applicant did not provide sufficient information that confirms the on-going maintenance issues at the foundations and rooflines of the two buildings is directly caused by the specimen trees.
- 2) Information is required to confirm the maintenance issues observed (minor wood deterioration at various spots along the cornices, fascia, soffits, and frieze boards and some visible cracks in the concrete and brick ramps due to settling) during an on-site visit by Staff, the Architectural Review Board, and the Tree Board is directly related to the presence of the four specimen trees and not simply a result of cyclical building maintenance.
- 3) The four specimen trees shall be retained and properly maintained, including regular trimming, to ensure that no damage does occur to any adjacent buildings or utility lines.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Attachment 1 – Photos
2. Attachment 2 – Draft Motion Sheet