

The Tree, the Chapel, and Historic Homes

-Chris Smithson, Southern Pines native, resident, and Councilmember

We've heard a lot of concerns in the last year or so regarding the destruction of homes by a church, a threatened downtown tree, and a threatened chapel. Many have called for the Town to step in and pass some kind of legislation to protect these and other landmarks and old structures. Unfortunately, the most the Town can possibly do to stop the destruction of privately-owned property is to delay its demolition/removal for up to one year. That is all the law allows.

That said, we do need to inventory significant structures and landscape and expand our Historic District. While expanding our Historic District or its regulations cannot stop someone from ultimately demolishing their property, it can help by better regulating what can be put in its place. Perhaps, it might convince the owner to keep a historic property and preserve it if they know they can't just put whatever they want in its place.