

Pictometry



D/DRC Case

1628 Calhoun Street

Landmark District

TMS: 11404-02-09

**DESIGN/DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMISSION
DESIGN REVIEW DISTRICT
HISTORIC AGENDA
EVALUATION SHEET
Case # 3**

ADDRESS: 1628 Calhoun Street

APPLICANT: John & Victoria Dozier, owners

TAX MAP REFERENCE: TMS# 11404-02-09

USE OF PROPERTY: Residential

REVIEW DISTRICT: Landmark District

NATURE OF REQUEST: Request for Certificate of Design Approval for demolition.

FINDINGS/COMMENTS:

This is a two-story, c. 1899 wood-framed residential structure that is a contributing building to the Landmark District. This district has the highest level of protection among the City's fifteen historic districts and therefore projects in this area must meet stringent design review criteria.

The house at 1628 Calhoun Street is currently in a duplex configuration, with the upstairs accessible by a set of enclosed stairs, located on the west side of the porch. It has its original windows, wood shakes located in the decorative front gable, and a two-story front porch. The applicant is requesting demolition in order to create a backyard for his adjacent property on Henderson Street.

The 1500 and 1600 blocks of Calhoun Street have undergone many changes in the last century, moving from a mostly residential area to a primarily commercial hub. This home, located at 1628 Calhoun, is the last remaining original historic building located on the two blocks and facing Calhoun Street.

This property lies directly behind and west of two properties on Henderson Street that have been in the applicant's family for several generations. The applicant currently lives on Henderson Street, around the corner from 1628 Calhoun.

PERTINENT SECTIONS FROM CITY ORDINANCE

Section 17-674(e) of the City Ordinance:

(e)Criteria for review of requests for demolition permits. The following criteria shall be used as a guideline by the DDRC or its staff for review of all requests for demolition permits. The commission may require the applicant to provide certain information dealing with the criteria. The type of information which may be required is detailed in the

commission's rules and regulations; however, only that information which is reasonably available to owners may be required.

(1) The historic or architectural significance of a building, structure or object;

By the Civil War the upper east corner of Columbia's downtown grid was already well established with several antebellum mansions, including the Hampton-Preston home, but during Reconstruction African Americans began purchasing property along Calhoun and Richland Streets and in their neighboring 1900 blocks of Pickens and Henderson Streets, close to the State Asylum. The concentration of African Americans along Calhoun Street, or Lumber Street as it was then called, was in the 1500 and 1600 blocks by 1905. It appears 1628 Calhoun had been constructed several years earlier, perhaps around 1899, in a typical Folk Victorian style.

African Americans also began moving into the 1700 block of Calhoun by the 1910s, which was the last block of dense residential development for the remainder of the street. This created a three-block stretch on the south side of Calhoun Street of African-American tenancy and ownership that lasted well into the 1900s. The north side of the street is part of the Asylum campus.

By the mid-twentieth century this area had fallen into some disrepair and several homes were lost through fires or demolitions as they became vacant and condemned. The home at 1628 Calhoun Street likely gained its asphalt siding during this era as it was a popular alternative to painting and was backed with insulating board. The construction of the Columbia Eye Clinic in the 1980s removed a few surviving homes on Calhoun Street's 1600 block and Pickens Street's 1900 block which were also faced with condemnation. The 1500 block also saw several changes in the 1980s, including the addition of two large antebellum homes which were moved from the asylum campus and are now landmarks.

Today the 1500 and 1600 blocks of Calhoun Street are incredibly different than a century ago. The lone surviving original house is 1628 Calhoun. It gains its historic significance by being among the first generation of African-American homes along this small enclave of Calhoun Street during its turn of the century development, and from being the last surviving example along two entire city blocks of that development. Generally intact with original windows, two-story porch, wood shingles in a decorative front gable and likely original wood siding under its asphalt sheathing, it retains architectural significance as an example of a Folk Victorian house from the late nineteenth century.

(2) A determination of whether the subject property is capable of earning a reasonable economic return on its value without the demolition, with consideration being given to economic impact to the property owner of the subject property;

The applicant purchased the property on July 2, 2013 for \$26,000.00. The property was purchased in its current condition. The cost for demolition of the structure is listed as \$15,000.00 by the applicant on the application for DDRC review.

It was communicated to staff by the applicant during a site visit that the applicant had received one bid for renovation of \$180,000. Staff did not receive that bid to review and it is therefore not included in this evaluation. However, staff assumes this bid is for a complete renovation, including but not limited to expenditures that are not necessary to make the building habitable, such as upgraded kitchen appliances, countertop materials, etc. This assumption is based on the figures from other renovation budgets staff has seen.

The Bailey Bill is a tax abatement program offered by the City and County for rehabilitation of historic buildings. Once a property is qualified for the Bailey Bill and the expenditure threshold is met, the taxable value of the property is frozen at the pre-rehabilitation rate for 20 years, which is transferrable with the property. The property at 1628 Calhoun is currently valued by Richland County's assessor's office at \$26,000, while the building is valued at \$13,500, making the expenditure to qualify for the Bailey Bill approximately \$2,700.00.

Due to the location of 1628 Calhoun Street, directly across the street from the proposed Columbia Common redevelopment (State Mental Health campus at Bull Street), it is reasonable to assume that nearby property values will increase. The property is currently zoned C-1, which lends itself to a flexibility of uses. Although the home does not have off-street parking, consultation with the City's Zoning Department confirmed that it could be used as limited commercial, a live-work property, or residences. A property located nearby, 1930 Henderson Street, also a duplex and similar in square footage, sold on March 16, 2015 for \$62,500.00. A similar two-story home in good condition located nearby at 1912 Henderson is currently assessed at \$116,800.

Within the past year a building on the south side of the same city block as 1628 Calhoun, at 1625 Richland Street, obtained the Bailey Bill for renovations on a house purchased for \$80,000. The permit obtained for the work was for \$80,000, and included renovations to the interior and exterior, a new roof, new plumbing, new HVAC, etc., for a total investment of \$160,000.

Given the above information, it appears that the property is capable of earning a reasonable economic return due to its low purchase price, comparable sales and values of nearby buildings, the potential for the Bailey Bill tax incentive, and the slated redevelopment of the Columbia Common.

(3) The importance of the building, structure or object to the ambience of a district;

This building is important to the ambience of the district in its current condition and location. While it once stood among many homes it now serves as a bookend to the remnant of the residential development facing Calhoun Street, which is still largely extant in the 1700 block, a block that was incorporated by African Americans into their community by 1920. Several of these buildings display similar forms, heights, massing, materials, lot sizes, and setbacks as that displayed by 1628 Calhoun, making it an integral part of the ambience distinctive in the district.

Although the building has been covered in asphalt siding, it is likely that its removal would reveal wood siding, as staff has seen some wood siding in an area where the asphalt is missing. The removal of similar asphalt siding was recently done in Lower Waverly at 928 Pine Street and in Arsenal Hill at 1711 Wayne Street, revealing intact wood siding.

(4) Whether the building, structure or object is one of the last remaining examples of its kind in the neighborhood, the city or the region;

This is the last remaining original historic home left on two entire blocks of Calhoun Street. The Folk Victorian structure with a double front porch is also one of the last remaining examples of the house type in the district. It is likely not one of the last remaining in the city or region.

(5) Whether there are definite plans for reuse of the property if the proposed demolition is carried out, and what the effect of those plans on the character of the surrounding area would be;

The applicant's plan is to have the lot cleared to serve as a back yard for his adjacent property at 1931 Henderson Street.

To the west of the house at 1628 Calhoun Street there is a tall wood privacy fence and a large expanse of asphalt parking lot, followed by a modern commercial building, creating an interruption in the historic streetscape. Although this block has been eroded, the character of the surrounding area that continues to the east and south is made up of one and two story wood-framed homes from around the turn of the century. These are densely situated on modest lots with consistent setbacks, massing, similar roof shapes, and exterior features such as porches, wood siding, and wood windows.

Removal of the only remaining home on the 1600 block of Calhoun Street would dramatically, negatively affect the character of this block by removing the last remaining home displaying the setback, form, height, massing and density of an urban community established at the turn of the century. It would eliminate the lone survivor of the once thriving African-American community along the 1500 and 1600 blocks of Calhoun Street.

This house is situated on a very small lot, due to its urban location within the city. With current zoning regulations requiring setbacks, off-street parking and design review for new construction, if the home were to be demolished, the use for the lot is essentially limited to a vacant parcel.

(6) The existing structural condition, history of maintenance and use of the property, whether it endangers public safety, and whether the city is requiring its demolition.

The owner has not provided a home inspection report or documentation regarding a history of maintenance. Since taking possession of the home, the owner has not conducted any maintenance to the building per the City of Columbia's permit information. The home does not appear to endanger public safety. The City of Columbia is not requiring its demolition.

Two staff members were able to access the building on March 19, 2015 and noted the condition at that time. A third staff member visited the property at a later date. The overall impression of staff was that the house was sound and they noted no weak areas while walking in the original section of the home. However, an addition on the rear of the home was built low to the ground and has suffered a great deal of deferred maintenance, water infiltration, and disrepair. This addition could potentially have structural issues to the foundation and walls; more investigation could confirm this possibility. As the addition is not original to the house, is on the rear, and is not consistent with the architecture of the historic building, its removal or reconstruction is a possibility.

The home is currently filled with the last resident's belongings, who lived here as recently as 2010. A good amount of the walls, floors and ceilings were visible. Beadboard ceilings and walls, interior plaster, mantels, interior doors and windows were generally in good condition in the original portion of the house. Normal wear and age show in some parts. Plaster walls are often unforgiving and easily express structural stress, but there were no obvious gaps opening up between walls, floors or ceilings, and no large gaps between the beadboard walls and ceilings.

The applicant has provided a letter from a structural engineer who conducted a "visual observation only" with "no invasive or destructive testing." This brief letter is attached. While staff agrees with the engineer's assessment of the rear addition's deficient condition, staff disagrees with the opinion that the floors were "sagging and shaky" in the main part of the house. Also, while the stairs may lean slightly, staff disagrees with the engineer's conclusion that its lean is due to wood decay or "collapsing structure." In fact, the stairs do not show that they have dropped along the wall; there is no paint line indicating movement. Without opening walls or substantiating these hypotheses behind why the house appears as it does, it is difficult for a visual observer to draw a conclusion of structural failure for this property. It is staff's experience that old houses were not always built square, or that they shifted years ago, and yet they remain sound.

Staff agrees with the engineer's observation of a slight bulge in the southeast (left rear) corner of the original house, but disagrees with his assumption that "this means that the floor structure has released its connection to the wall." This bulge has existed since at least 2011 and may be due to a number of reasons, including swelling of the wood siding underneath due to water leakage from the vent pipe hole in the eave above. As there is no gap opening in the asphalt siding at the slight bulge, it is possible the deformity predates the application of the asphalt siding.

The letter report from the engineer, absent any testing or material removal to accurately determine structural soundness, appears insufficient to draw the conclusion that there is widespread structural failure.

The applicant has also provided a termite letter that shows some isolated areas of moisture and termite damage. As with any property that does not have the termite damage repaired, the property is listed as “unsuitable for termite coverage.” Many termite companies require the damage to be repaired before they will issue bonds.

(7) Whether the building or structure is able to be relocated, and whether a site for relocation is available; and

The applicant has not provided any information regarding this item.

(8) Whether the building or structure is under orders from the city to be demolished due to severe structural deficiencies, and this criterion shall have added significance in comparison to the criteria mentioned in subsections (1) through (7) of this subsection.

The City of Columbia is not requiring the building to be demolished. The property has been cited four separate times since 2010 for deferred maintenance, including lawn care and paint.

A letter was sent to the applicant from a City Inspector in January 2015, giving formal notice that the property was in violation of the International Property Maintenance Code. The applicant was given 30 days to comply, which prompted the application for demolition.

Staff Recommendations

Staff finds that the building retains historic and architectural integrity, contributes to the ambience of the district, generally appears to be structurally sound in the original section, is not under orders from the City to be demolished, and that the proposed plans for a vacant lot would have a negative effect on the character of the surrounding area as per section 17-674(e) of the City Ordinance; therefore staff recommends the request for demolition be denied.



Current views of 1600 block of Calhoun Street





Left: Image from 2013

Below: Image from 2015, showing the building has not been altered in two years

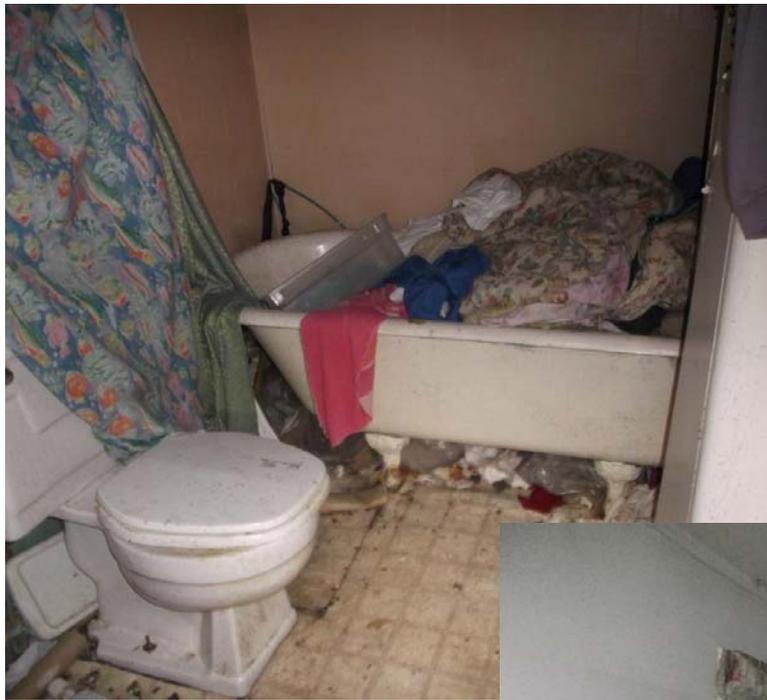
All of the following are staff photos

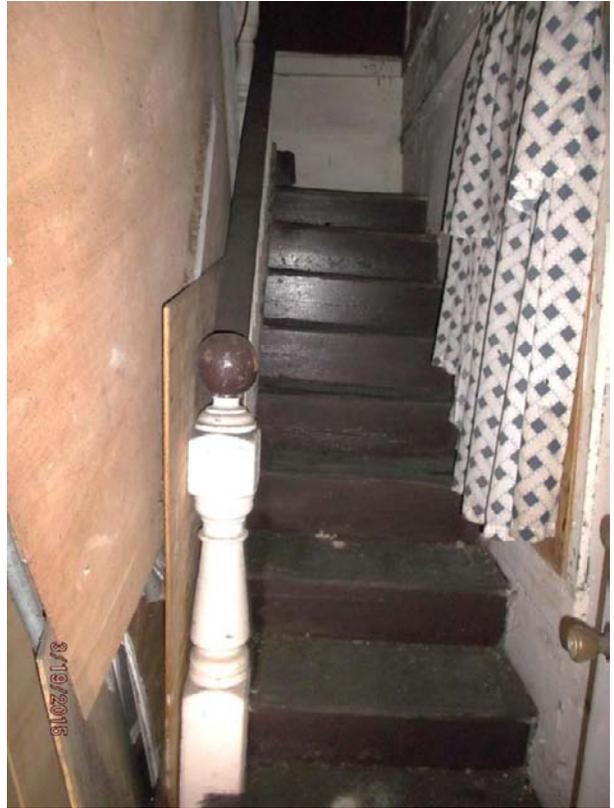




2011 City photo with arrow showing slight bulge in southeast corner, though there is no gap opening in the asphalt siding. Foreground shows overgrown yard that initiated a property maintenance code violation for a previous owner.



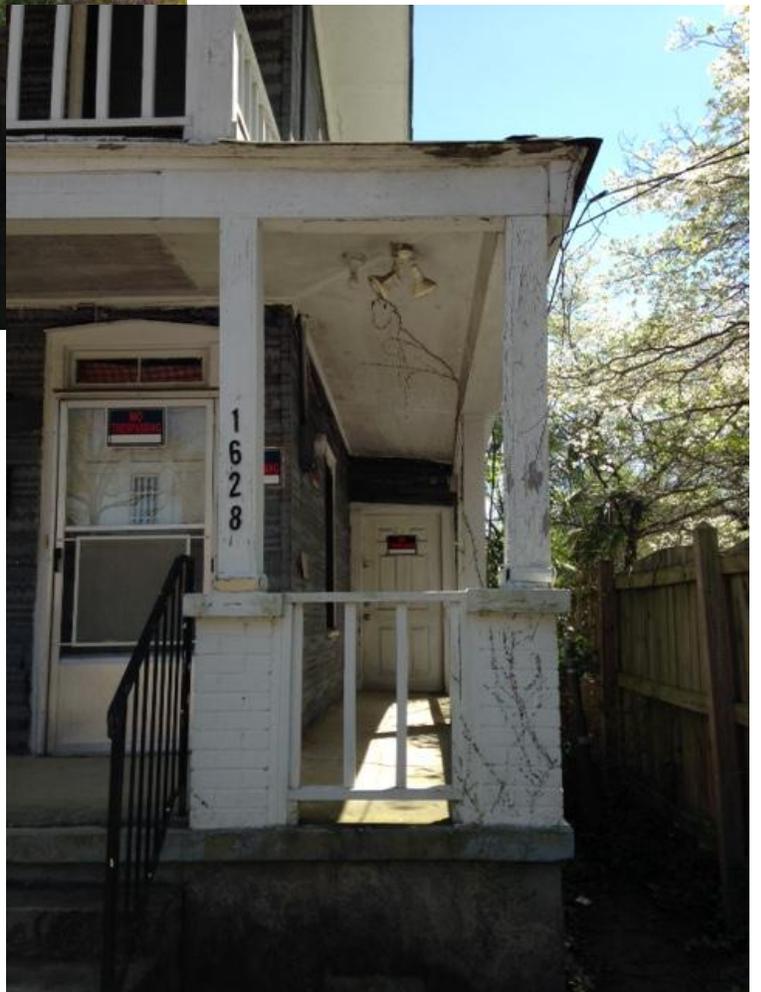










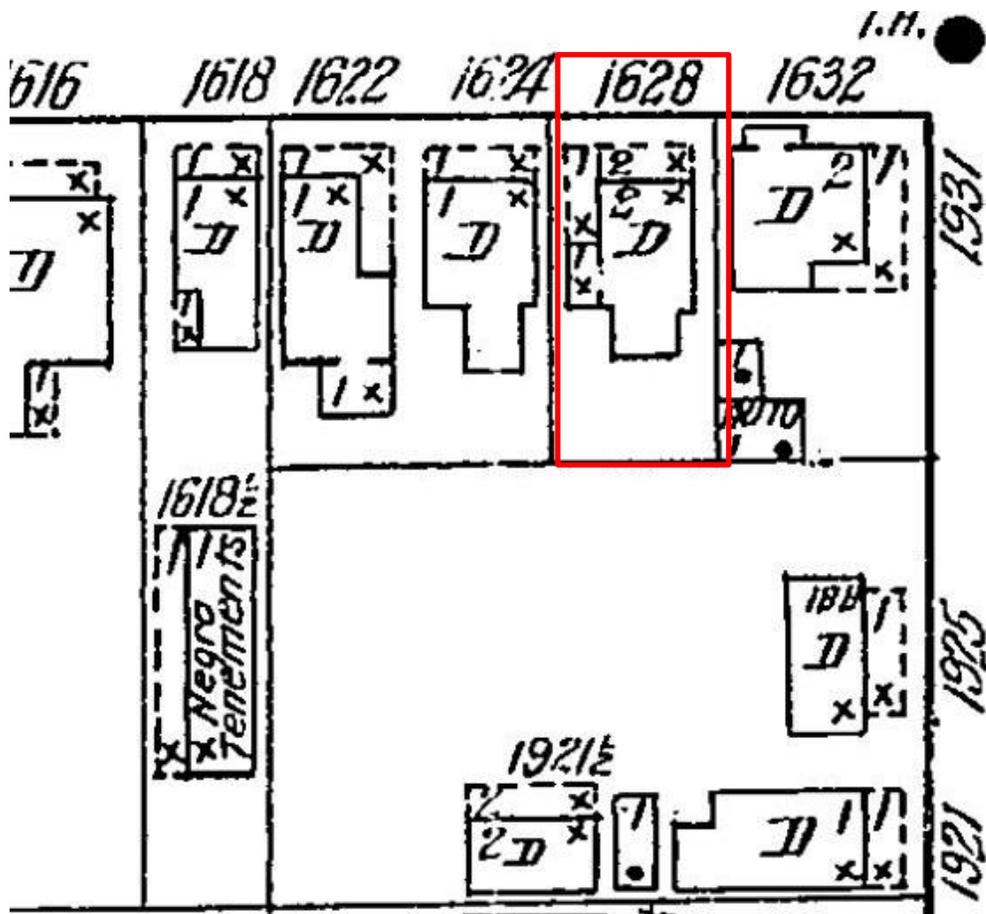
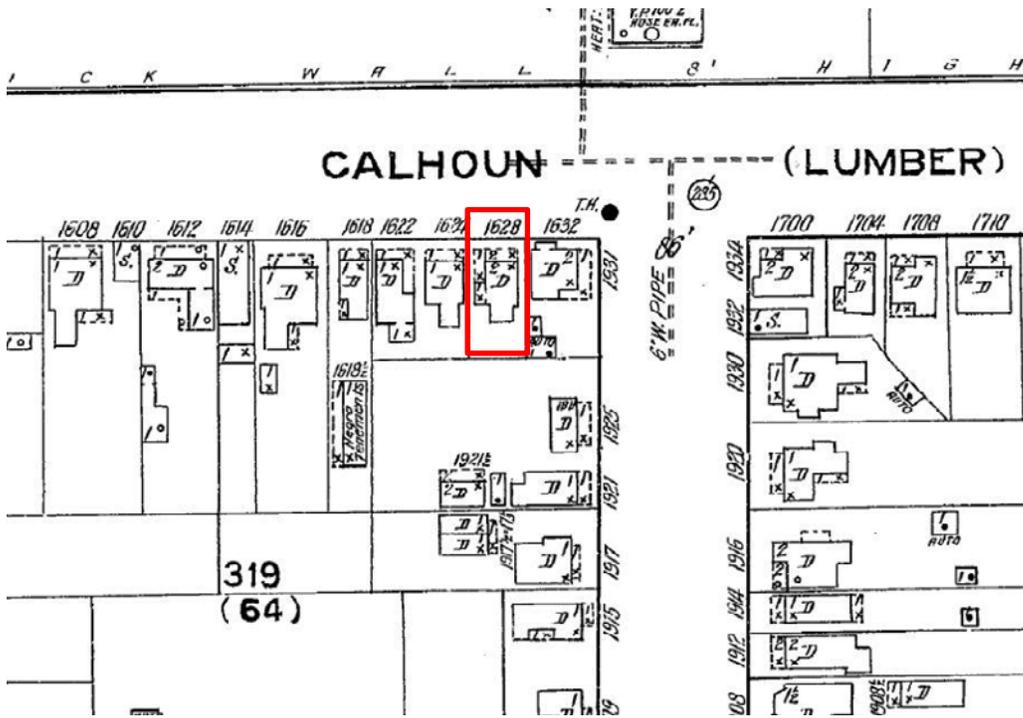




A modern view shows 1628 Calhoun Street (labeled "A"). It sits alone facing Calhoun but is integral to the district that continues to the east and south as seen in the many historic buildings shown along Henderson and Richland Streets. *(Google image)*



The removal of asphalt siding at 928 Pine Street revealed largely intact original wood siding underneath.



1918 Sanborn Map (both) shows the dense development along the 1600 block of Calhoun Street

Columbia/Lexington
(803) 772-3637
Greenville Area
(864) 248-4002

MidSouth
Termite & Pest Control, Inc.
P.O. Box 23504 Columbia, SC 29224
www.midsouthpest.com

Elgin/Lugoff
(803) 438-9809

DATE 4/7/15

PHONE (773) 615-3773

NAME Victoria Dozier

MAIL 1628 Calhoun St.

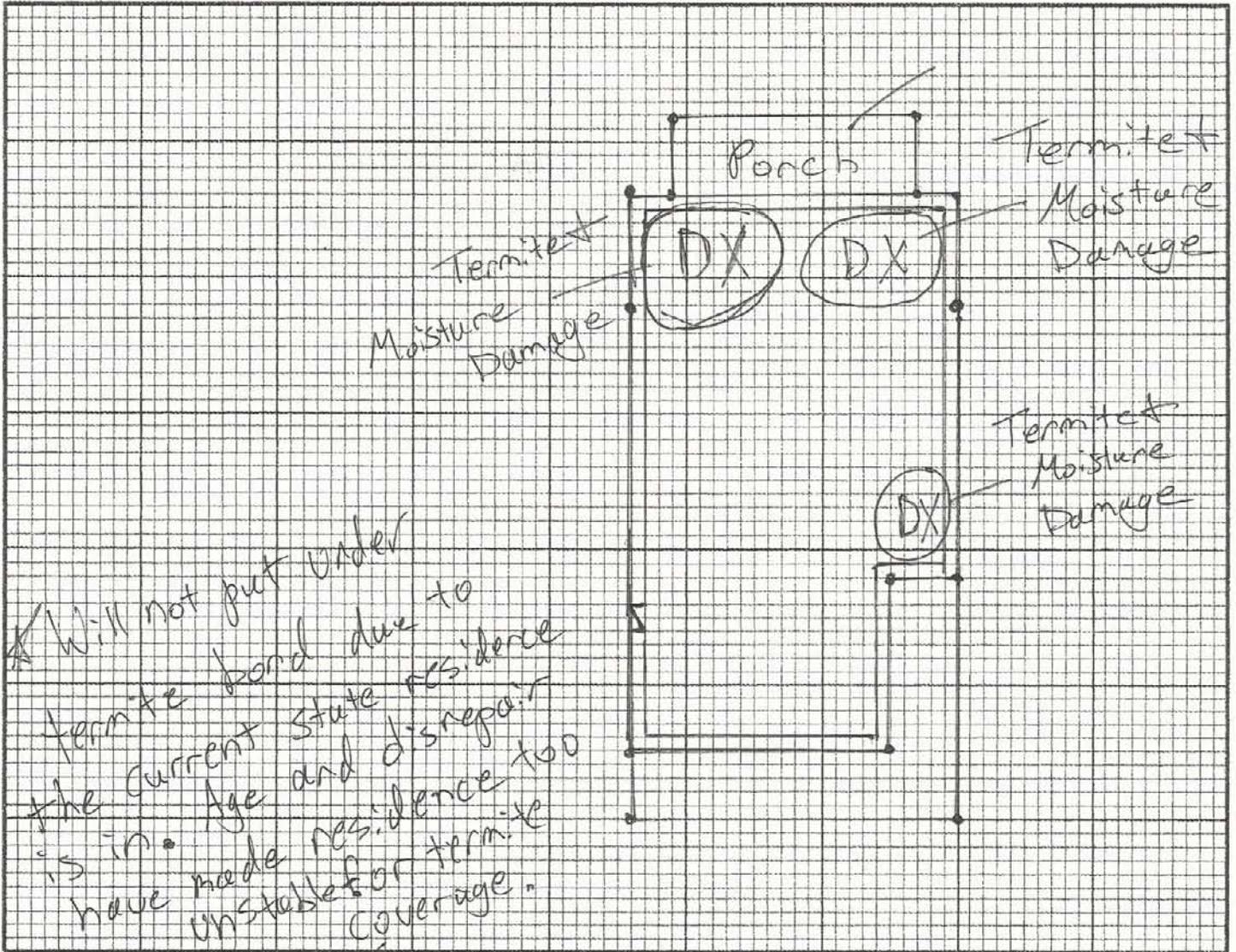
PROPERTY ADD. 1628 Calhoun St., Columbia, SC

Columbia, SC

DIRECTIONS _____

CONT. # _____

INSPECTION GRAPH



TYPE OF CONSTRUCTION: CONVENTIONAL BASEMENT SLAB AND CONVENTIONAL
SLAB = FLOATING SUPPORTED MONOLITHIC

ACTIVITY KEY:
 SUBTERRANEAN TERMITES = X POWDER POST BEETLES = PPB WET OR MOIST SOIL = W
 WOOD BORERS = WB FUNGUS = F EXISTING DAMAGE = D
 WOOD GROUND CONTACT = WG REPAIRS RECOMMENDED = ⊗ PROBABLE HIDDEN DAMAGE = HD

Inspector's Statement of Visible Activity See graph.
By Kyle Lewis Date 4/7/15

As owner or representative of the above property, I understand that hidden damage may exist in concealed or inaccessible areas. Therefore, Midsouth Termite & Pest Control cannot guarantee that visible damage revealed on the above graph represents the sum total of the damage as of the date of the initial control treatment. I understand that Midsouth Termite & Pest Control shall not be responsible for repairs of any damage existing in areas inaccessible to the inspector as of the date of this agreement.

By _____ Date _____
Owner or Representative

1 May 2015

Ms. Victoria Dozier
1931 Henderson Street
Columbia, SC 29201

Re: 1628 Calhoun Street

Dear Victoria:

On 8 April 2015 I visited 1628 Calhoun Street, Columbia, SC for the purpose of providing a structural engineer's assessment of the residential structure located at this address. My assessment is based on visual observation only and no invasive or destructive testing was performed.

The original building is a two-story wood-framed residential structure constructed circa 1919 and contains roughly 1500-ft² of interior space. Currently set up as a duplex with upstairs & downstairs being separate living units, it was not clear whether this arrangement was original to the structure.



While looking from the front right (see photo) it appears that the structure may be salvageable; however, closer investigation clearly reveals otherwise. Upon entering the lower level, the front room seems to be somewhat structurally sound, but that is where it ends. The next room back has a sagging and shaky floor structure (this is approximately mid depth of the house), and the back room has a floor structure that I would class as partially failed due to the amount of drop in some areas, especially the back right.

Anyone viewing the upstairs should tread lightly. The staircase slopes noticeably to the right apparently due to collapsing structure possibly due to excessive wood decay below. Again, the

front room seems somewhat sound, but bouncy, as does the middle area. However, the back portion has dropped roughly a foot and it was difficult to tell exactly why/how it was still in place. Again, the back right region is in the worst condition, although the entire back portion is questionable, at best.

From the outside one can see that the left exterior wall is no longer planer and appears to be bulging slightly toward the back half. This could be the result of the second floor structure rotating as the edge drops, thus pushing out on the wall as it wedges downward. This means that the floor structure has released its connection to the wall.



A view of the rear provides a clearer idea of the level of structural distress and deterioration in this building. The portions closest to the chimney appear to have maintained their elevation, but the dropping of the structure to each side is clearly evident. Extensive deterioration of the roof can be seen at the back right corner (upper left in adjacent photo), as well as along the back fascia. This has allowed water to enter the wall cavity which would have resulted in rot, thus contributing to the dropping of the floor structure as the wall deteriorated to a point where it could no longer support the load.



Overall, there is obvious structural failure in portions of this residence; obvious severe wood rot in portions; floors that have severely deflected; floors that have partially collapsed; exterior walls that are failing; and, based on my observations, possible failure of some of the interior foundation support (or the structure resting immediately thereupon) toward the back section.

It is my professional opinion that the level of deterioration of this structure is such that repair is not feasible. It would in effect be predominately remove & replace the majority of the existing structure, along with reinforcing a considerable portion of what little would be left of the original. It must be noted that before anyone attempts to remove any items from the back portion of this structure (upstairs or downstairs) that temporary shoring should be put in place to help support the second floor so that it does not collapse.

We appreciate the opportunity to be of service to you on this project. If there are any questions, or if anything further is needed, please do not hesitate to call on us.

Sincerely,



Jesse S. Burke, PE
President

