

**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 Statute 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

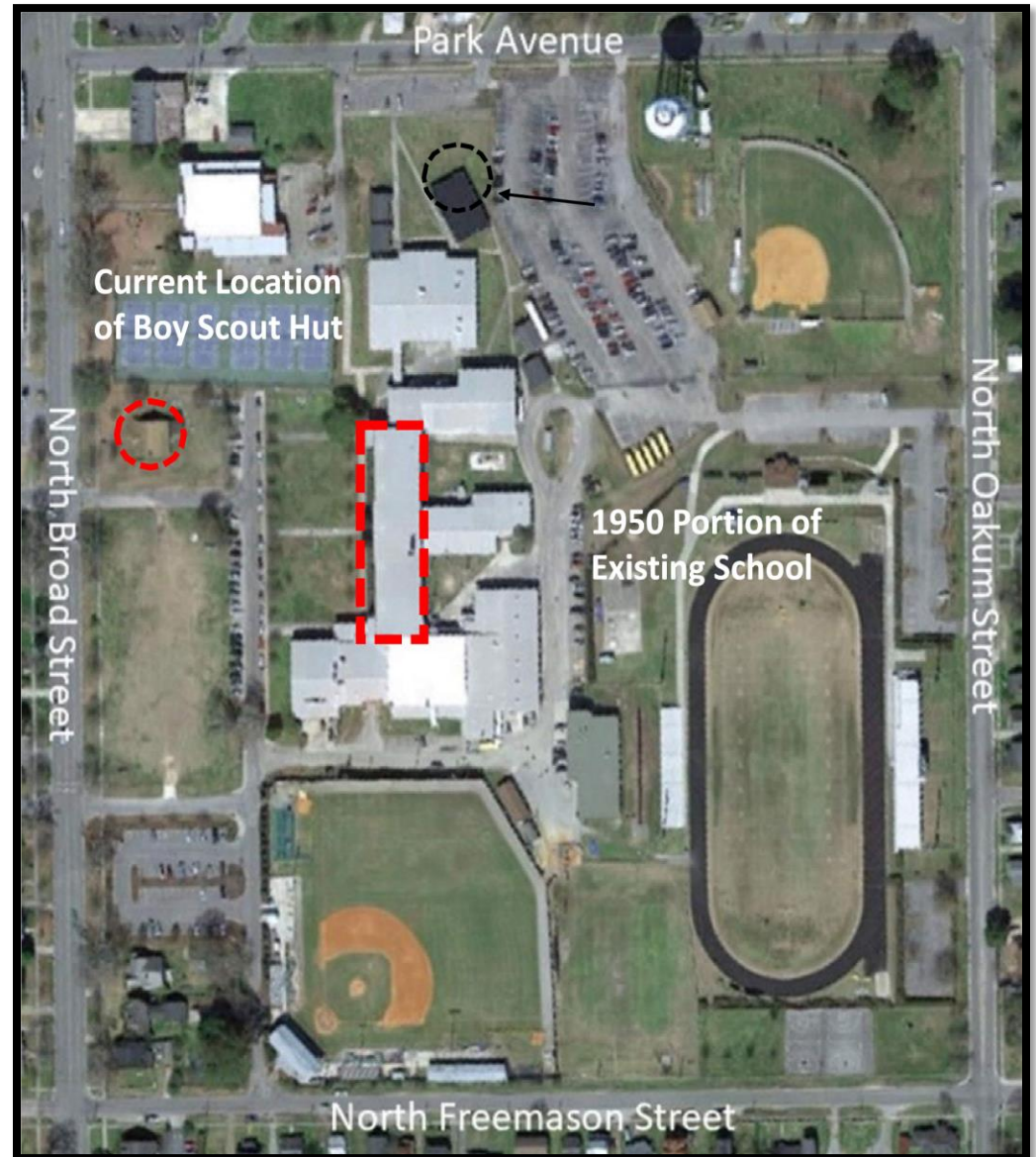
JOHN A. HOLMES HIGH SCHOOL, Edenton, NC

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

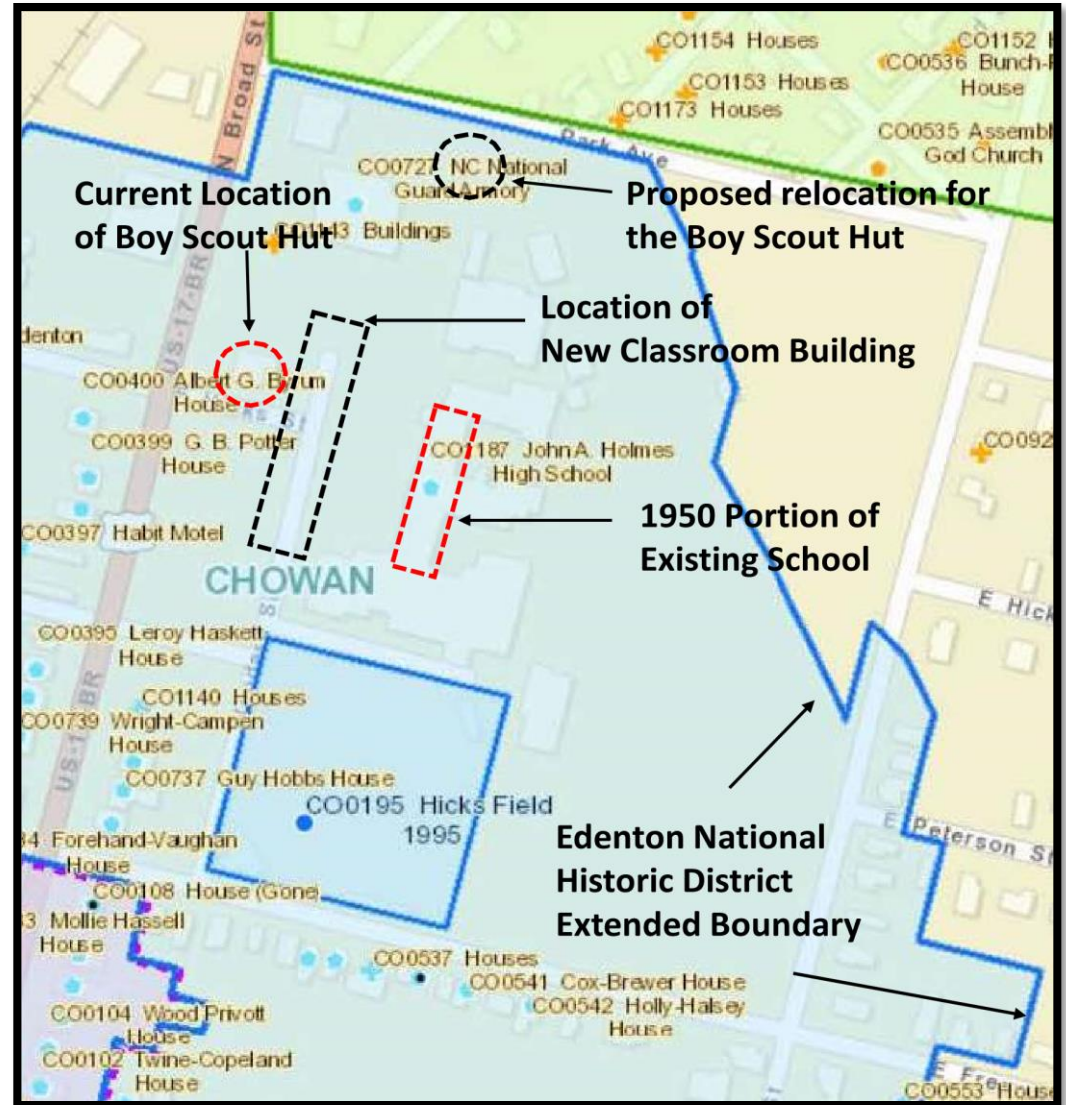
On March 2nd, 2021, the Edenton-Chowan School Board voted
unanimously to build a new administration/ classroom building
to replace functions that are currently housed in the existing
1950 building which is a contributing structure within the
Edenton National Historic District.

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

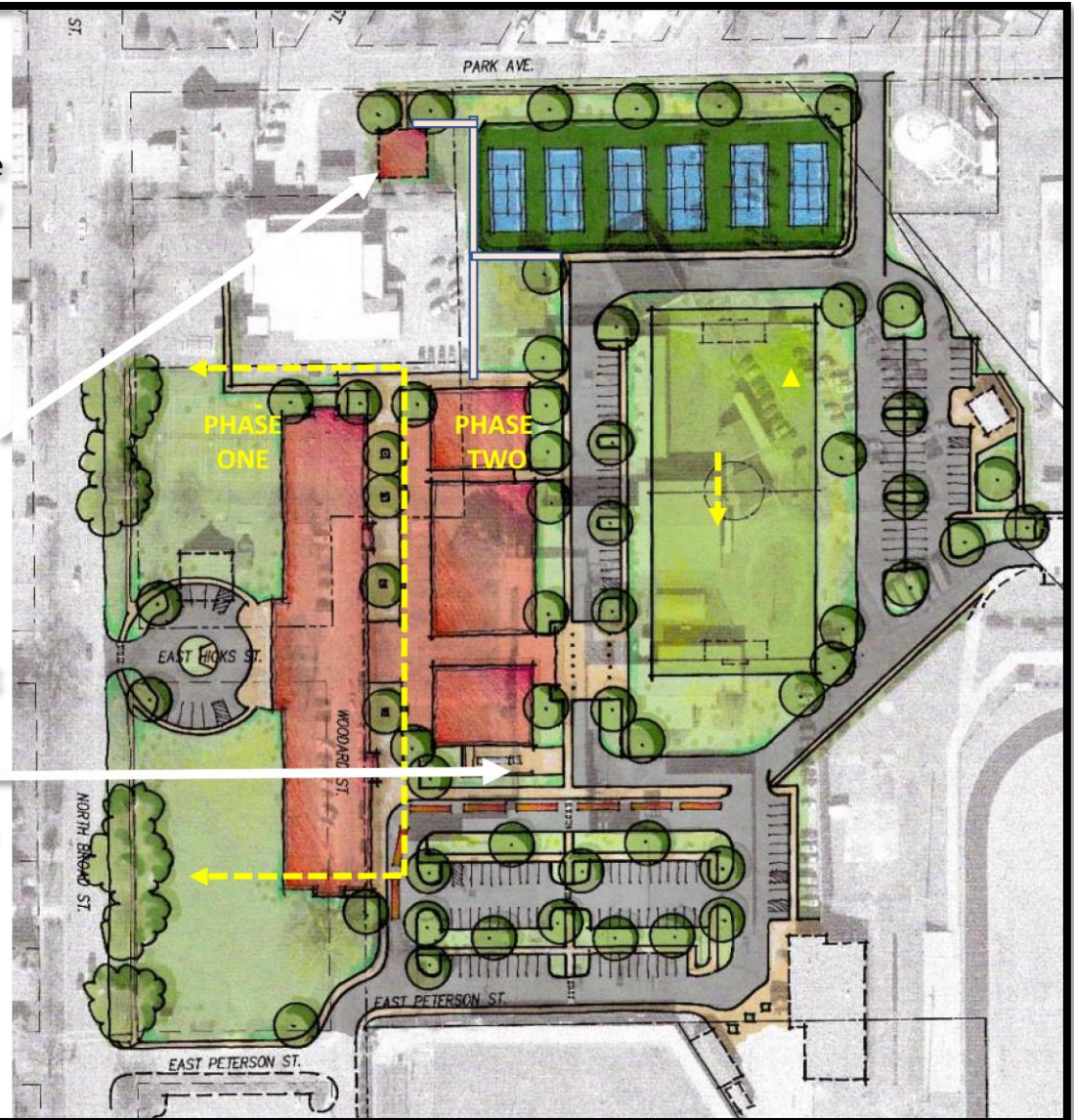
This is a phased project with Phase One being construction of the new administration/classroom building and relocation of the Boy Scout Hut and Phase Two being the demolition of the 1950 building.

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

STORY ONE

Edenton has been called one of the most beautiful cities in America. This design focuses on historical, traditional elements that reflect the town and its charm while giving it the monumental presence it deserves in its suburbs and the community. Local examples of this style include the existing Swan Apartments, John A. Holmes High School, and the Historic Courthouse. Features of the exterior include traditional proportions, symmetry, columns at the entry, classical ornamentation, and brick detailing. Inside, the building will create modern, efficient spaces for 21st-century learning. The design should reflect the highest ideals and values for Edenton's students' future success for generations to come. The 1723 Town Common is central to this plan and will remain a thriving gathering place for a variety of events, traditions, and celebrations.



STORY TWO

The existing John A. Holmes High School is, understandably, a cherished part of Edenton's history, which has served generations of the community's students. This design focuses on the character, proportions, and style of the existing facade while providing a more distinguished and monumental entrance along Broad Street, and opening the rest of the building to more expansive, light-filled learning environments suitable for 21st-century learning. The street-facing brick facade frames the front courtyard and ties into the town's historic architecture, which the interior looks toward the future and will serve the generations to come. The historic Town Common will continue to serve the Edenton community in the same prominent location as a thriving and vital part of civic life.



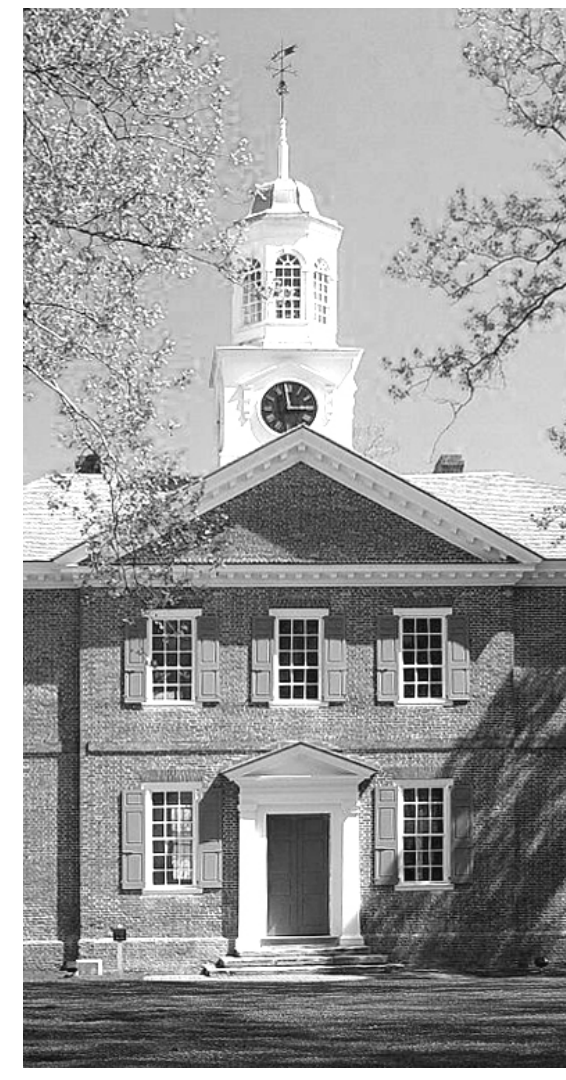
STORY THREE

Edenton has a long industrial history with the Edenton Cotton Mill and its surrounding village homes. The industrial mill style reflects Edenton's traditions while lending itself well to modern uses. This design borrows from traditional materials and proportions while creating an inspiring, future-focused, and light-filled learning environment for all students. The design is warm, welcoming, and familiar but with contemporary elements that support 21st-century learning. Large windows, collaboration areas, and flexible spaces encourage maximum adaptability for the building to evolve over time. Inspired by the efficiency of a machine, the continuous growth of a garden, and the forward motion of a ship, this design focuses on helping students chart a course for the future. The existing historic Town Common will remain in place as an integral part of community life.

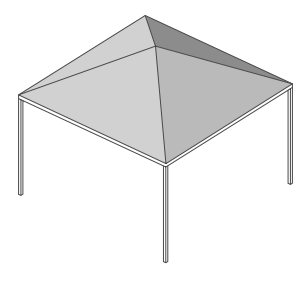


THE NEW JOHN A HOLMES HIGH SCHOOL

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 facade 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.