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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESERVATION DURHAM REACHES AGREEMENT WITH DEVELOPER OVER LIBERTY WAREHOUSE

Will not oppose removal of Local Landmark Status at Monday Council Meeting

Preservation Durham has reached an agreement with Greenfire Development and East-West Partners over the redevelopment of the 2-acre Liberty Warehouse site, located in Durham's Central Park District. The building, listed as a Local Landmark in 2010, is the last remaining tobacco auction warehouse in Durham County.

Greenfire, a local developer who has owned the building since 2006, listed the building on the National Register of Historic Places and was granted Local Landmark status in 2010; they now wish to remove Landmark status in favor of a pending development. This de-listing request will be heard by the City Council on Monday. Durham's Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) denied the request to remove Local Landmark status at their February meeting. If removed by Council at Monday's meeting, this will be the first Local Landmark to be de-designated without support of the HPC.

"We have always recognized that Liberty Warehouse would be a difficult building to rehabilitate," said Preservation Durham's Executive Director, Wendy Hillis. "Our concern has been that any redevelopment project intelligently assess the historic importance of the site and ensure that any new construction is appropriate within the industrial context of the neighborhood."

Preservation Durham's negotiations with the developer over these points resulted in a letter agreement that was sent to Council on Friday. In the letter, Greenfire and East-West Partners agree to the following preservation initiatives:

- Integration of the existing Southern brick wall of Liberty Warehouse into the redevelopment plans.
- Incorporation of the Northeastern brick façade and LIBERTY sign in to the redevelopment plans.
- Reuse of existing old wood materials from the warehouse within the redevelopment and the recycling of those that are not reused onsite.
- Memorialization and documentation of the Liberty Warehouse building and the tobacco auction business in Durham, either through an outdoor public exhibit or in a dedicated museum space.
- Use architectural forms and materials that contextually relate to the surrounding area.
- A continued dialogue with Preservation Durham around the development of Liberty Warehouse that will include regular communication and meetings as the project proceeds towards construction.

Should a scenario arise where East West Partners is not involved in the redevelopment of Liberty Warehouse, the current owner, Greenfire Development, is committed to meeting the criteria outlined in this letter.

“The lifting of Local Landmark status from the Liberty Warehouse is not our first choice. However, after judging the political landscape of the last few days, it became clear that direct negotiation with the owner and developer was the only viable course to the most important objective: retention of as much of the Liberty as possible,” noted Hillis in an email to Preservation Durham’s membership earlier today.

Founded in 1974 in response to proposed demolition of the Carolina Theater, Preservation Durham protects Durham’s historic assets through Action, Advocacy, and Education. For more information visit www.preservationdurham.org

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If you would like more information about this topic, or to schedule an interview with Preservation Durham’s Executive Director, Wendy Hillis, please call (919) 682-3036 or email Wendy@PreservationDurham.org.