

Members of the Durham City Council

101 City Hall Plaza

Durham, NC 27701

Subject: Letter of Support for Landmark Designation – The Chicken Hut

Dear Members of the Durham City Council,

We, the Historic Preservation Commission of Durham North Carolina pledge our wholehearted and unanimous support for the designation of the Chicken Hut as a historic landmark. This is not merely a building, but the soul of a neighborhood. It is a space where laughter, sorrow, celebration, and mourning have all unfolded. We believe places like this must be recognized because architecture is where *life* happens.

In continuous operation for more than 67 years, the Chicken Hut stands as a courageous example of Durham's Black business community. It is both a structure and a symbol, an enduring presence in the city's landscape. We strongly support landmark designation for both the building and its current site.

During the mass civil disobedience actions of 1961, 1963, and 1968 protesting the immoral and abhorrent segregation of Durham's eating establishments, over 1000 Black citizens were arrested and jailed, the Chicken Hut fed them.

With a business model of empowering others at the core of their business model, the Chicken Hut responded when the deceitful "Urban Renewal" efforts displaced some 4000 residents and 500 Black owned businesses: it housed many of them, providing rentable space on the second floor of the building.

More recently, during the Covid-19 global pandemic when many children in our city were left hungry without access to school meals, the Chicken Hut again fed them. over 900 meals.

This building embodies an architectural legacy. It was designed by one of the first graduates of the world-renowned NCSU School of Design and has remained a place of sustenance—physical, emotional, and spiritual— thanks to the enduring commitment of the Tapp family.

The Chicken Hut deserves landmark status as a monument to Black entrepreneurship, cultural resilience, and community care. It is a built example of where Durham has been, and a hopeful vision of what Durham aspires to be.

Sincerely,

The Durham Historic Preservation Commission