



# 2021 Preservation Award

## PRESENTED FOR RESTORATION OF THE COLONIAL INN

On land originally purchased in 1803 by Henry Shutt, who built a home with a hatter's shop on the site, the long history of hospitality at The Colonial Inn began. On this site in 1838, Isaiah Spencer constructed an inn in an understated late-Federal style. While known locally as Spencer's Tavern, the inn at 153 W. King St. was advertised as the Orange Hotel for 50 years. There were multiple ownership changes over the years, and the inn's name changed to the Occoneechee Hotel (1888-1908), the Corbinton Inn (1908-1924) after then-owner Thomas Corbin, before receiving its current name, The Colonial Inn.

With the purchase of the inn from Spencer by Richison Nichols in 1841, the hotel underwent a series of architectural changes. Nichols was responsible for extending the porch across the front and out to West King Street, incorporating a portion of the public right of way. A two-story, gabled rear wing was also added, centered on the original building. At this same time, documents show the hotel having a parlor and office located at 175 W. King St. in the Parks-Richmond House (now the Inn at Teardrops). A dining room and kitchen were constructed behind the Parks-Richmond House with sleeping rooms provided in the hotel. In 1889, D.C. Parks purchased the Parks-Richmond House and combined the property with that of the hotel.

Parks hired Jules Körner, an eccentric designer from Kernersville, around 1900 to update the buildings. Körner, known as an interior and furniture designer and for his ubiquitous advertisements for Bull Durham Tobacco, changed the window frames and doors on all of the buildings and is also credited with adding the second floor to the piazza, paired porch supports, sawnwork upper balustrade and paired eave brackets on the west gable end.

By 1908, the hotel's property was limited to the original lot at 153 W. King St. with owner Thomas Corbin adding the two-story wing on the west end of the building. The wing remained separate from the main structure, connected only by an open porch along the west elevation of the main building and east elevation of the added wing. A one-story kitchen was added to the original rear wing around the same time.

In 2001, The Colonial Inn ceased to operate, and a long period of deterioration and neglect ensued, including fire damage to the kitchen. This led to a long legal battle between the town and the owner, which resulted in the inn being named a structure of statewide significance, thus allowing the Hillsborough Historic District Commission to deny any certificate of appropriateness requests for demolition.

Finally, in 2018, the property was purchased by Allied DevCorp with the intent to restore the structure as a hotel, restaurant and event space. Working with Town of Hillsborough staff, Board of Commissioners and Historic District Commission, as well as the N.C. State Historic Preservation Office, Allied DevCorp used historic preservation tax credits to undertake the work of rehabilitating the structure. In the process, much of the original construction was uncovered and documented. Whenever possible, renovation and construction sought to preserve original materials and methods. Original windows and doors were restored and reinstalled. To preserve the original structure's architecture, additional sleeping rooms were added in a separate but compatible two-story building in the rear. Work was completed in 2020, with The Colonial Inn once again taking center stage in the Hillsborough Historic District.

In recognition of the rehabilitation and preservation of The Colonial Inn, thus reintegrating it into the social and architectural history of Hillsborough, the Hillsborough Historic Development Commission presents Allied DevCorp with its 2021 preservation award.

The Historic District Commission  
recognizes  
**Allied DevCorp**



The Colonial Inn as it looks today. Credit: Candice Cobb



The inn as it appeared in 1870 (left) and the 1890s.



The inn in the 1960s.

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