



**REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE
DESIGNATION OF THE KURE BEACH DOWNTOWN
PRESERVATION AND HISTORIC DISTRICT**

December 2020

Adopted by the Kure Beach Historic Preservation Commission
December 2, 2020

**TOWN OF KURE BEACH
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

Craig Galbraith, Chair
Kenneth Richardson, Vice-Chair
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**TOWN OF KURE BEACH
BUILDING INSPECTIONS DEPARTMENT**

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*The Town gratefully acknowledges the contributions of the following individuals
in the production of this Report:*

Joseph Donohoe, a graduate intern from the University of North Carolina
Wilmington's Master of Public Administration Program

April Montgomery of SWCA, an architectural and environmental consulting firm

James E. Eldridge, Town Attorney

BACKGROUND

In accordance with the provisions of N.C.G.S. § § 160A-400.1 *et seq.*, and to safeguard and preserve the historical heritage of the Town of Kure Beach (hereinafter “Town” or “Kure Beach”), the Kure Beach Town Council (“Town Council”) may designate historic districts by amending Chapter 15 *Zoning* of the Kure Beach Code (“KBC”) to provide for the same. Town Council commenced this procedure in 2019 by officially establishing the Kure Beach Historic Preservation Commission (“HPC”) and charging it with the task of investigating and preparing a written report (the “Designation Report”) documenting the historical and cultural significance of the buildings, structures, features, and surroundings of the B-1 Business District (hereinafter the “B-1 District”).

The Town is a small beach community with a population of approximately 2,200. The B-1 District, a four-block area bounded on the East by the Atlantic Ocean, on the South by J Avenue, on the North by L Avenue, and on the West by Third Avenue, represents a mix of commercial and residential structures and contains the oldest buildings in the Town. The B-1 District is the Town’s only commercial district (*e.g.*, beach-oriented hotels, shops, and restaurants) and retains an ambiance reflective of a 1950’s/1960’s coastal community. Also located within the B-1 District are several public beach access points, the Town’s boardwalk, and the Town’s beachfront park and pavilion. The Town’s only stop-lighted intersection (Fort Fisher Blvd and K Avenue) and the oldest fishing pier on the Atlantic coast (originally built in 1923) are also sited within the B-1 District. The Town’s Land Use Plan (“LUP”) specifically encourages the maintenance and restoration of these features and sets forth, as one of the Town’s stated land use goals, the need to preserve the “Family Beach” and “Small Town” feel of the Town.

As a municipal corporation, the Town has limited resources and does not have a formal Planning Department. The Town relies instead upon active members of the community serving on the Town’s Planning and Zoning Commission (“PZC”) and the HPC with both commissions being supported by the Town’s Building Inspector. Together, with HPC taking the lead, the B-1 District’s historical and cultural resources were investigated and this Designation Report produced. Additional support in completing these tasks was provided from: Joseph Donohoe, a graduate intern from the University of North Carolina Wilmington’s Master of Public Administration Program; James E. Eldridge, Town Attorney; and various members of the Town’s Staff including the Commissions’ Clerk, Ms. Beth Chase.

The original draft of the Designation Report was submitted to the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (“State HPO”), in March 2020. Due to Covid-19 issues, State HPO staff conducted a “virtual” tour

of the district in April 2020. The State HPO reviewed the original draft of the report and provided several recommended revisions. These recommendations were subsequently considered by the HPC and incorporated into this final draft of the Designation Report. HPC also contracted with an architectural and environmental consulting firm, SWCA, Inc., to develop a statement of integrity and an architectural narrative for the proposed historic district; said statement and narrative having been included in this final draft. The HPC is developing the design standards which will govern applications for the Certificates of Appropriateness (“COA”) required for the erection, alteration, restoration, movement, or demolition of the exterior portion of any building, above-ground utility structure, or outdoor advertising sign within the historic district.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Following a series of duly noticed and assembled public meetings, the HPC, during its February 11, 2020 regular meeting, voted to approve the initial draft of the Designation Report, forward it to Town Council, and recommend that:

1. Town Council approve the Designation Report and instruct staff to forward a copy of the report, as required by N.C.G.S. § 160A-400.4, to the State HPO for analysis and recommendations.
2. Town Council instruct staff, following the prescribed period of time during which the State HPO shall review the report, to commence the procedure for amending KBC Chapter 15 to designate the B-1 District as the Kure Beach Downtown Preservation and Historic District (“Downtown Preservation and Historic District”) as shown on the “Proposed Kure Beach Downtown Preservation and Historic District” map attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.
3. The proposed text amendments designating the Downtown Preservation and Historic District be reviewed and reported on by PZC as required for any text amendments to Chapter 15’s zoning regulations.
4. Following PZC’s review and report, Town Council approve the amendments to Chapter 15 designating the Downtown Preservation and Historic District.

5. In conjunction with designating the Downtown Preservation and Historic District, Town Council task HPC with developing design standards governing the erection, alteration, restoration, movement, or demolition of the exterior portion of any building, above-ground utility structure, or outdoor advertising sign within the district.

During its March 2020 meeting, Town Council received and approved these recommendations and subsequently forwarded the initial draft of the Designation Report to the State HPO for analysis and recommendations. The HPC received the State HPO's comments and recommendations within the prescribed period of time and incorporated those recommendations into this final draft of the Designation Report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The HPC, during its December 2, 2020 regular meeting, voted to approve this final draft of the Designation Report, forward it to Town Council, and recommend that:

1. The proposed text amendments designating the Downtown Preservation and Historic District as a Historic Overlay District be reviewed and reported on by PZC as required for any amendments to KBC Chapter 15.
2. Following PZC's review and report, Town Council approve the amendments to Chapter 15 designating the Downtown Preservation and Historic District.

COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN SIGNIFICANCE

The Town's LUP sets forth several land-use goals which are consistent with designating the B-1 District as the Downtown Preservation and Historic District. There are also several zoning regulations which are likewise relevant and applicable to such a designation. These applicable land use goals and regulations include the following:

LUP, Part 2, Section 2. B's Goal Statement at p. 100: "Kure Beach desires to ensure that future development will be consistent with the historic small town nature of the community and that big box residential and high rise development will be avoided...The primary concern of local officials expressed during the process of Land Use Plan creation was that Kure Beach should preserve its small town character."

LUP, Part 1, Section 6. B. (2) at p. 69: “Kure Beach has managed to save much of its historic charm. Much of the municipality developed in a way which became the traditional type development for North Carolina beach communities. The Town of Kure Beach has done a far better job of holding onto its identity than many other beach municipalities. Kure Beach has both residential areas and a defined downtown area . . . Increasing development pressures for more dense and intense commercial and residential development (as seen in adjacent municipalities) to accommodate seasonal and permanent residents has been an issue in Kure Beach since the last land use plan update in 1997.”

LUP, Part 2, Section 2. F. (79) at p. 120: “It is the policy of Kure Beach to maintain the “family” and “small town” feel of the community by encouraging and supporting festivals and events.”

LUP, Part 2, Section 2. F. (83) b. at p. 121: The Town of Kure Beach wishes to keep the small town atmosphere which long-term residents have come to love.”

LUP, Part 2, Section 3 (A) (2) at pp. 125-26: “The [B-1 District] is the traditional downtown area for Kure Beach [and]...is shown on the Future Land Use Map as the four blocks bounded by Third Avenue to the west, L Avenue to the north, and J Avenue to the south. K Avenue and the Kure Beach Pier are at the center of the [B-1 District]. The pier is the traditional centerpiece of the Town’s commercial center, and the Town desires to keep it as a functioning public pier. The [B-1 District] is primarily built-out with a mix of structures built more recently and structures that are thirty to fifty years or more old...the [B-1 District] will continue to be the center of all Town resident and tourism associated business for Kure Beach....[The Town] wishes to conserve the commercial district and not allow residential uses to become the dominant use in the district.”

KBC 15.36.130 Building Not to Exceed Height Limit: Since 2003, the Town has had a 35-foot height limit for all buildings within Town limits.

KBC 15.08.100: The Town has experience in drafting and enforcing overlay districts. The Town enacted its first “overlay district” 2014 regulating mixed use development along K-Avenue. The Downtown Preservation and Historic District will also function as an overlay district.

STATEMENT OF HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

N.C.G.S. § 160A-400.1 sets forth the North Carolina General Assembly’s public policy in authorizing the designation of historic districts:

- (1) To safeguard the heritage of the city or county by preserving any district or landmark therein that embodies important elements of its *culture, history, architectural history, or prehistory*; and
- (2) To promote the use and conservation of such district or landmark for the education, pleasure and enrichment of the residents of the city or county and the State as a whole. (emphasis supplied)

As discussed below, the B-1 District is representative of the Lower Cape Fear region’s historical and cultural significance during the Civil War period and the mid-twentieth century.



Kure Beach, Circa, late 1940s

The Downtown Preservation and Historic District lies within the original limits of the Town as established on April 1, 1947. The district is historically, architecturally, archaeologically, and culturally significant, possessing a mix of commercial, residential, and community landmark resources representative of coastal life on the Lower Cape Fear from the early to mid-twentieth century. Within the project area are key cultural resources including the Kure Beach Fishing Pier, regularly designated as the first public fishing pier in North Carolina, and possibly on the Atlantic Ocean. Additionally, the project area is located just north of Fort Fisher, a recognized State Historic Site and registered National Historic Landmark. Some of the fighting during the two Battles of Fort Fisher took place in and around the projected district. The vacant lots as well as ocean-front property within the area are archaeologically sensitive due to the potential to yield cultural resources, including civil war artifacts.

Summary Statement. The unique history of Kure Beach as a military installation, a seasonal coastal community and an industrial town converge in a distinctive and existent mix of residential, commercial and recreational buildings comprising the proposed Downtown Preservation and Historic District. Situated on four blocks and stemming from the intersection of Avenue K and Fort Fisher Boulevard, the district is an intact example of an early to mid-twentieth century beach town in southeastern North Carolina. The district retains the scale, character, and a significant number of original structures dating back to, or before, the incorporation of Kure Beach in 1947.

Early history of the area now known as Kure Beach is tied to the establishment of Fort Fisher, the Civil War fort and State Historic Site at the south end of a peninsula flanked by the Cape Fear River on the west, the Atlantic Ocean on the east and approximately 2 miles south of the proposed Downtown Preservation and Historic District. The current boundary of the State Historic Site does not encompass the total footprint of Civil War activity in the area and while the projected district does not include any Civil War-era structures, it retains the potential to yield information related to Civil War activity through archaeology on vacant lots or redevelopment of existing structures.

The late nineteenth century marks the beginning of the project area's development as a seasonal coastal community. On March 5, 1891, businessmen William Clapton, James Bradley, and W.E. Mayo obtained a charter from the State of North Carolina to form the Fort Fisher Land and Development Company. Around the same time, Hans Kure of Wilmington began acquiring land along the ocean front, two miles south of the small coastal community of Carolina Beach. *Circa* 1904, Hans Kure constructed 2 piers along the Cape Fear River from which small steamers made daily trips to Wilmington, 20 miles upriver, transporting beachgoers and supplies for development. From the piers on the riverbank, Kure and his son constructed a rail line for a small gauge

locomotive running east from the river to what would eventually become the intersection of Fort Fisher Blvd and K Avenue at the center of the district. This small locomotive along with the 5 flat railcars made up what became known as the Fort Fisher Railroad Company. The rail line no longer exists but the width of K Avenue with angled parking in the median between 4th Avenue and the Kure Beach Pier illustrates where the rail line was located within the district^[1].

L.C. Kure continued his investment in the coastal community of Kure Beach with the construction of its first ocean pier in 1923 near the site of the current Kure Beach pier. In 1924, Kure replaced the original structure with a new and longer pier and while the pier has been repaired or replaced a numerous times since then, it has remained the core of commercial and recreational activity in the community. The existing pier looks much like it did in photos from the 1950s and the former pier house from that era remains in a new location across the street at the southwest corner of Atlantic Avenue and K Avenue, where it is now used as a restaurant.

The beginning of Kure Beach as a community with full time residents came in 1934 with the establishment of a 90-acre bromine extraction facility by the Dow Chemical Company and the Ethyl Corporation^[2]. The bromine facility bordered Kure Beach to the north and west and created jobs in the community. These employees were likely the earliest full-time residents of Kure Beach and influenced the design of the early frame homes which were frequently 1-story, front gable, frame structures with front porches on narrow lots. Examples of these homes can be seen at 209 K avenue, the Pier View Cottages, and on the east face of the 100 block on North 3rd Avenue. The scale, design and material choices are not unlike what is seen in contemporary worker housing communities being built in Wilmington during the same era.

During the early 1940's, civilians and military personnel engaged in building and manning the military training center at Fort Fisher, just south of the Downtown Preservation and Historic District. It was also during this period that Wilmington experienced substantial population growth. The North Carolina Ship Building Company was created as a part of the U.S. Government's Emergency Ship Building Program and was located in Wilmington. The population growth resulted in a housing shortage in Wilmington and increased the demand for housing in Kure Beach.

Following World War II, the military training center at Fort Fisher wound up its operations and sold off barracks to civilians as beach cottages. Two of these barracks remain in the district as commercial structures at 108 K Avenue. In 1946 the bromine facility closed and relocated to Texas. Neither event, however, slowed the growth of Kure Beach which experienced the post war economic boom that was prevalent throughout the

country. This growth increased the pressure for continued maintenance of infrastructure and resulted in the incorporation of Kure Beach on April 1, 1947.

The Town sustained its growth as a coastal community over the next decade as illustrated on the 1955 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, where more than six blocks of dwellings, service stations, commercial establishments, and community buildings can be seen on Atlantic, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Avenues between Avenues L and J.

Important historical events and transition periods in Kure Beach are more fully discussed below.

Battles of Fort Fisher. There is little documentation about development in the project area prior to the twentieth century. Research, however, indicates that the proposed district was included in the fortification process of Fort Fisher during the Civil War. Confederate forces constructed Battery Anderson along the ocean front about two miles north of the Fort in what would later become Kure Beach. During the first Battle of Fort Fisher in late December 1864, the main Federal force landed a mile north of Battery Anderson. Prior to the Federal march to capture the battery, the Federal Navy bombarded Battery Anderson until the occupying Confederate surrendered.¹ Proceeding south to Fort Fisher, the Federal force marched through what would later become Kure Beach, including the project area.

The first attack on Fort Fisher failed, and the Second Battle of Fort Fisher occurred in January 1865. Again, Federal troops landed in what is now Kure Beach. Having constructed trenches facing north to protect the rear, the main body of Federal troops marched south to attack the northern wall of the confederate-held Fort Fisher. This attack was successful with substantial casualties on both sides and Fort Fisher surrendered on January 13, 1865. The Federal army then moved north, through what is now Carolina Beach and Wilmington, and captured the Port of Wilmington on February 22, 1865.

The first map below shows the close relationship between the project area, and the first battle of Fort Fisher, while the second map shows the breastworks of the Federal forces near the project area during the second battle. Artifacts from the two Battles of Fort Fisher are sometimes found along the beach and it is possible that artifacts from this time remain within the project area as well as offshore.

¹ Gragg, Rod. *Confederate Goliath: The Battle of Fort Fisher*. Louisiana State University Press. Baton Rouge, LA. 2nd ed. 2006. p.82.

Although there are no Civil War era trenches or structures in the project area, there is a close relationship between Kure Beach and the Battles of Fort Fisher; particularly since the North Carolina Historic Site commemorating the battles is adjacent to the Town and includes various educational events and reenactments of the battle. In 2017, Fort Fisher was the 3rd most visited attraction in North Carolina with 871,676 visitors.

Maj Gen. Alfred Terry USA 6-348



F^t FISHER. shewing Union Attack - JAN^y 15th 1865.
 Union forces 4000 From Survey made after Surrender by US Engineers. Rebel forces 2,200

Seasonal Tourist Development. As noted above, the late nineteenth century marks the beginning of the project area's development as a seasonal coastal community and this development was supported by Hans Kure's construction of the two piers along the river from which steamers made daily trips to and from Wilmington transporting beachgoers and supplies for development. From the piers, the Fort Fisher Railroad Company train hauled the material which would form the nucleus of the downtown development.²



Kure Beach Train, source: CarolinaBeach.net

Kure, having experience with coastal development, sold his land holdings in Carolina Beach and purchased the ocean front land tract that extended from Hanby Beach to the gates of Fort Fisher. By 1913, Kure had acquired nearly all the land south of Carolina Beach. That same year, Kure formed the Kure Land and Development Company and began constructing seasonal cottages at Fort Fisher Sea Beach, what was later incorporated as Kure Beach. Hans Kure died in December of 1914 which stalled development in the area until 1915 when the Kure Land and Development Co went before the New Hanover County Board of Commissioners to seek infrastructure improvements including a two and a quarter mile continuation of the road from Carolina Beach. By the summer 1916, the road was nearly complete and connected Kure Beach to Wilmington via a highway which became the foundation of Fort Fisher Boulevard that runs directly through downtown Kure Beach and the project area.

² Hall, Lewis P. *Land of the Golden River: Historical Events and Stories of Southeastern North Carolina and the Lower Cape Fear. Volume One: Old Times on the Sea Coast 1526-1970: Kure Beach.* Print. 1974

In 1923, Lawrence Kure, the son of Hans Kure, constructed the first public fishing pier in North Carolina near the location as the current Kure Beach Fishing Pier. This pier, built from local untreated pine, lasted only a year and collapsed from worms and other marine life burrowing into the unprotected wood. The following year, using the Fort Fisher Rail Line to transport materials, Kure constructed another pier utilizing a combination of steel and concrete to construct the pilings. Kure also constructed a pier house that sold drinks, bait, and tackle. For a fee of 35 cents a day, or 10 dollars annually, fisherman could use the pier to catch bountiful Blues and Spanish Mackerels. The Kure Beach Fishing Pier was, and remains today, a major attraction for beachgoers throughout North Carolina.

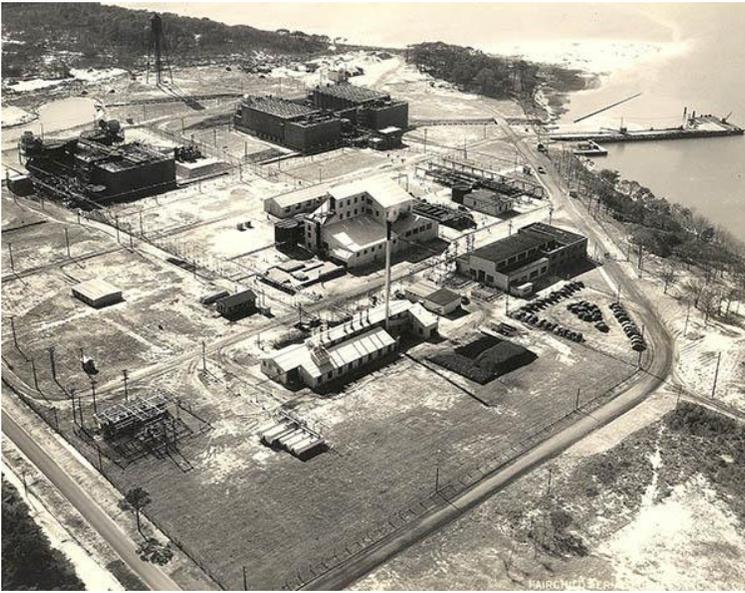
World War 2 Period and Incorporation. The construction of the Ethyl Dow Chemical Plant in 1934 and the outbreak of the Second World War transformed the project area from a solely seasonal community to a hybrid seasonal and year-round community. The Ethyl-Dow Bromine Plant, which was located a few hundred yards east of the project area, extracted bromine from the seawater. This was the first time in history that an element was extracted from seawater.³ The Ethyl-Dow plant employed many people from Wilmington and Kure Beach.

Kure Beach gained notoriety on July 24, 1943 when it was reported that a U-boat surfaced and fired shots at the plant. While unsubstantiated in wartime documents, many eyewitnesses recount the same story.⁴ It is known that U-boats were very active off the North Carolina coast and were responsible for sinking numerous freighters and considering the same, the story of the U-boat firing upon the plant is an important part of Kure Beach lore.

³ "Ethyl-Dow Chemical Co. Builds Bromine Plant Here." *Star-News* April 1, 1934. Wilmington, NC. Print.

⁴ <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/did-nazi-submarine-attack-chemical-plant-north-carolina-180964292/>

During the Second World War, Wilmington experienced a period of substantial growth. The Wilmington-based North Carolina Ship Building Company was created as a



part of the U.S. Government's Emergency Ship Building Program and Wilmington experienced a housing shortage as a result of the industrial growth. Subsequently, some of the shipbuilders moved to Kure Beach to escape the crowded areas. Also during the early 1940's, civilians and military personnel built and manned a military training center at Fort Fisher, just south of the project area. After the war, many of the barracks were sold off to civilians as cottages. Two of these converted barracks exist within the project area,

at 108 K Ave. The conclusion of the war created an economic boom in the area resulting in increased vacation home construction in 1946⁵ and this rapid development led to a need for infrastructure construction and maintenance which, in part, led to the incorporation of Kure Beach in April 1947.



108 K Ave



108 K Ave

⁵ Davis, Sheila. "History of Kure Beach." *Island Gazette*. 1997. Print.

The oldest surviving residential structures within the project area were constructed between 1920 and 1940. The four cottages at **209 K Ave** are the oldest with a construction date of 1920.



209 K Ave



209 K Ave

Other examples of early residential cottages within the project area are **121 Fort Fisher Blvd N.** and **117 S. 3rd Ave.**



121 Fort Fisher Blvd N.



117 S 3rd Ave

Kure Beach Pier. L.C. Kure built the first pier in 1923. The property, later purchased by Hans Kure, has been in the family since the turn of the century. The first pier was 120 feet long and 22 feet wide, crafted from pine poles harvested from the forest along the river and used as pilings. The pier was rebuilt in 1924 and was 240 feet long and 32 feet wide—twice as long as the original pier. Cement pilings were used that were built by L. C. Kure using a new method of pouring concrete which today is known as reinforced concrete. Due to damages from various storms, the pier has been repaired/renovated several times over the subsequent decades. However, the pier and its associated pavilion/store front has retained a look and feel similar to that in the 1950s.



Kure Beach Pier, 1940s



Kure Beach Pier, Present Day

Downtown Kure Beach. At the present time, downtown Kure Beach is comprised primarily of commercial buildings catering to entertainment, recreation, and tourism. The character of the downtown area is distinctly, and uniquely, that of a 1950s/1960s beach community. The following picture provides an aerial picture of the proposed District.



The earliest structures in the downtown area are sited east of Fort Fisher Blvd on K Ave. **101 K Ave** is the current site of the Kure Beach Diner. The building was once the original pier house that was relocated and repurposed after Hurricane Hazel in 1954.⁶ Other notable commercial buildings include **111 K Ave**, and **108 K Ave**.



101 K Ave



108 K Ave

⁶ Coffey, Brenda. Oral Interview conducted by Ann Hertzler. November 15, 2006.

In summary:

1. Architecture: The Downtown Preservation and Historic District contains primarily small to mid-sized commercial structures with a “handful” of residential buildings scattered throughout. Modest in size and scale, the buildings display a progression of architectural styles during the mid-twentieth century.
2. Archaeology/History: Vacant and ocean front lots within the Downtown Preservation and Historic District have potential for yielding information on coastal life along the Lower Cape Fear. As an example, the site of the Civil War Battery Anderson, a small earthen fortification two miles north of Fort Fisher, is located within the proposed district. Subsequent troop landings, bombardments, and military combat took place in and around the project area during the First and Second Battles of Fort Fisher in, respectively, December 1864 and January 1865.
3. Culture: The Downtown Preservation and Historic District retains coastal community elements which lend themselves to a 1950’s/1960’s small-town, family-friendly feeling and make the district’s surroundings a desirable family vacation destination with walkable streets in a relaxed environment.

URBAN DESIGN SIGNIFICANCE

The designation of the Downtown Preservation and Historic District will provide an important tool for achieving the applicable LUP goals discussed above by:

1. Preserving the historical, architectural, and cultural elements significant to the Town’s history and development.
2. Safeguarding the Town’s heritage by protecting the district’s historical and cultural elements from inappropriate development.
3. Providing for smaller-sized commercial structures within the district which, with their lower overhead, will more effectively serve small business and consumer needs therein.

INTEGRITY

The integrity of the Downtown Preservation and Historic District is sufficient for a coastal community that is frequently impacted by storms, wind and salt air. Exterior materials such as siding, windows, doors, and roofing, while often modern replacements, tend to maintain their original size, shape and location. The pedestrian scale of structures, and their relationship to streets and sidewalks continue to convey the atmosphere of the community as it existed during the period of influence. The original plan as drawn in 1947 is largely intact. The greatest changes are seen on the blocks closest to the ocean where original structures have been lost and parcels combined. The pier continues to serve as the core of the community with commercial business and public spaces centrally located thereto. The original street grid has been maintained and offers ocean views from a variety of locations.

ARCHITECTURAL NARRATIVE

The Downtown Preservation and Historic District, an approximately four-block area located between Avenue J, Atlantic Avenue, Avenue L and 3rd Avenue, contains a significant collection of historic buildings dating from the early to mid-twentieth century. The Town is located on the southern tip of a peninsula flanked by the Cape Fear River on the west and the Atlantic Ocean on the east. Named for Hans Kure who originally bought the property in the early 1900's, the land that is now Kure Beach has served as a Civil War staging and battleground, an industrial town, a World War II military training area, and a seaside recreational community. Included among the approximately 45 parcels within the project area are 18 residential structures, 10 commercial structures, 8 recreational/hospitality structures, a Community Center, a park, and 8 vacant lots. A majority of the structures within the district are frame or concrete block construction, 1 to 2 stories in height and have minimal adornment. Gable, hipped and flat roofs are most common.

The Downtown Preservation and Historic District is locally significant as a representative example of a mid-twentieth century beach town that reflects its military, industrial, and recreational history through the retention of its original plan, pedestrian scale, and intact historic structures. The period of influence for the district is the 1900s through the 1960s. This period begins ca. 1904 when Hans Kure constructs the piers along the Cape Fear River and establishes a rail line to carry visitors, supplies, and materials from the piers to the beach. The width of K Avenue, where the rail line was constructed, remains broader than the balance of streets in the community and is the earliest element of the Kure Beach plan that remains intact. The August 11, 1947 "Official Map, Town of Kure Beach, North Carolina" illustrates

the plan for the community, which is largely unchanged today. Blocks retain their original shape and size, and the street network is intact. In many instances, parcels have been combined to allow for multi-unit structures such as motels and commercial structures which has changed the orientation of a parcel to a use not originally contemplated under the 1947 plan.

Most structures in the proposed district date from the 1940s to the 1960s, the peak of activity in the community's twentieth century history. During this period, the military installation is growing and active with World War II training, the Ethyl-Dow Chemical Company is operating and population growth in Wilmington is driving residential and recreational interest in Kure Beach. That blend of interests is unique and evident in the style and design of the built environment. Unlike other beach towns, such as Wrightsville Beach, Beaufort or Nags Head where large summer homes were built for wealthy families, Kure Beach is distinctly working class. Houses are small, practical and have minimal adornment. The commercial district is focused around the pier, which continues to serve as the core of the community. In the original plan of the Town, no houses are proposed on the beach and public access is by design. Excepting one block of Atlantic Avenue, between J and K Avenues, this public access remains present.

Mid-twentieth century motels are landmarks within the proposed district. These motels are most often a collection of buildings set around a common space in a way that maximizes views toward the ocean. The Moran Motel at 118 Fort Fisher Boulevard South is an excellent example of a mid-twentieth century beach motel. The 1 and 2-story concrete block multi-unit buildings are situated in a U-shape facing Fort Fisher Boulevard. The motel retains its original metal balustrades and V-shaped posts along with the original entry doors. Aluminum frame one-over-one sash windows and casement windows also appear to be original.

The South Wind Motel at 109 Fort Fisher Boulevard South is a similar but less intact example. The 2 original multi-unit buildings, each of a 2-story concrete block and frame construction, sit perpendicular to the highway with an internal open space for parking and a pool. The original windows and doors appear to have been replaced, but the size and placement are maintained. A third building was added to the site in 1983.

Both the Palm Air Cottages and the Pier View Apartments and Cottages are representative examples of a collection of individual units set on the same parcel to create a motel. Palm Air was constructed in the 1950s and consists of 6 1-story, and 1 2-story, frame, hipped roof cottages set in a U-formation around a pool and parking area. The small one-over-one sash windows are vinyl replacements, exterior siding is a

mix of a faux brick wainscot, that is likely original, and vinyl siding. Located at 209 K Avenue, the cottage portion of the Pier View Apartments and Cottages includes 4 of the oldest structures in the district. Constructed ca. 1920, the 4 1-story, frame, front gable cottages with hipped roofs, and central-bay entry doors are identical. In 1963 a 2-story concrete block side-gable building was constructed behind the cottages. Similar to Moran and South Wind structures, the 2-story structure includes a porch connecting the individual rooms.

Commercial structures within the project area, located in the 100 block of K Avenue, are universally 1-story and are built up to the sidewalk. Inset storefronts with larger windows and full-glazed entry doors are common on commercial buildings in the proposed district. Of the 10 commercial buildings, 5 are conversions from earlier uses. The Kure Beach Diner, a frame, 1 story building with large windows facing the street, was originally constructed in 1935 as a pier house and moved to its current location after Hurricane Hazel in 1954. A few doors down at 109 K Avenue, the current location of Happy Hippies Java Hut, is an unattached 1-story frame side gable structure with a large picture window. This building is listed as a post office on the 1955 Sanborn Map. The 2 1-story frame, front-gable structures located at 108 K Avenue were originally army barracks constructed at the training facility south of the district and moved to this location sometime after World War II. The diminutive frame gable-roofed structure located on the largely vacant lot at 118 Fort Fisher Boulevard North appears to be the last of the Sandlin Cabins. The structure that currently houses Better Beach Burgers, according to the Sanborn Map, is the last cabin of a collection of 11 frame cabins at this location in 1955.

Residential structures dating back to the period of influence in the district are most often 1-story frame or concrete block structures with gable, hipped or flat roofs. Porches spanning the full façade, central bay entry doors and small sash windows are common features. The houses at 134 and 138 North 3rd Avenue and 117 Fort Fisher Boulevard North are representative examples of simple, frame, front gable dwellings located throughout Kure Beach and reflect a design influence of the military barracks and mill housing of the era. The dwellings at 109 and 113 Fort Fisher Boulevard North reflect a more national bungalow style with hipped roofs and dormers, are slightly larger in scale, and maintain full façade porches, both of which are enclosed on these dwellings. The concrete block flat roof dwelling at 137 Atlantic Avenue North is a unique example of a structure that is stylistically more modern than other residences in the district. Similar dwellings exist in Kure Beach outside the district's boundaries.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

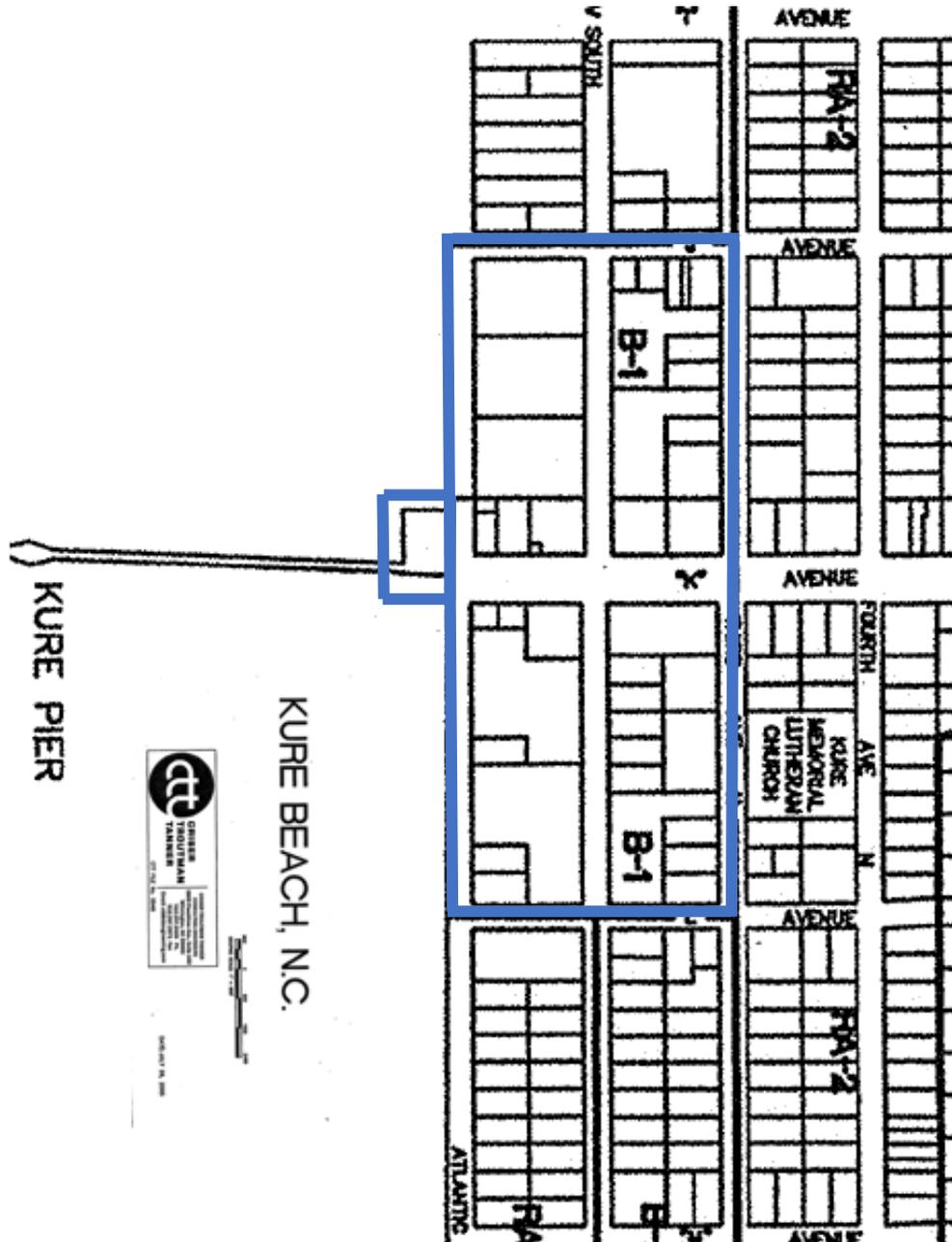
The Town's primary goal in designating the Downtown Preservation and Historic District is to regulate, provide for, and ensure, through the required COA process, that the exterior portions of buildings, above-ground structures, their appurtenant features, and commercial signage located therein remain harmonious with the district's historical and cultural significance, atmosphere, and feeling.

HISTORIC OVERLAY DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

The boundaries of the Downtown Preservation and Historic District were identified by the HPC upon a recommendation from Town Council. Within these boundaries are the buildings and structures contributing to the district's historical and cultural significance and the areas of potential archaeological and historical interest. Also located within the boundaries are undeveloped properties and non-contributing structures where the implementation of design standards and COA procedures are deemed necessary to protect the project area from inappropriate future development; particularly in consideration of the intense population growth and developmental pressures North Carolina coastal communities are currently experiencing. No other North Carolina coastal community has such a coherent historical and cultural "feel" as does the District.

KURE BEACH DOWNTOWN PRESERVATION AND HISTORIC DISTRICT MAP

The following map graphically describes the boundary for the proposed Kure Beach Downtown Preservation and Historic District.



INVENTORY

The preparation of this report entailed architectural survey and historic documentation of the project area to assess the contributing significance and integrity of the area's historic resources. A listing of the significant buildings and property within the proposed District follows:

105 Atlantic Avenue

NC, Park

Public park with pavilion and restrooms owned by the Town of Kure Beach.

121 Atlantic Avenue

NC, ca. 2018

Three-story frame duplex style house with vinyl siding, an asphalt-shingled gable and valley roof. Two Garages on ground level. Balcony on second and third levels with Vinyl hip level balustrades. Square columns. Three 1/1 glass doors on each balcony.

137 Atlantic Avenue

NC, ca. 1958

One-story concrete block frame duplex style house with an asphalt-singled flat roof. Two 1/1 windows. Two 1/1 sliding glass doors. Slender posts with metal brackets.

109 Fort Fisher Blvd N.

C, ca. 1950

One-story frame house with vinyl siding, an asphalt-shingled hip roof with hipped ventilation dormers. Front porch with hip-level railing with lattice balustrade and slender posts. Two 2/2, one 1/1, and one 4/1 replacement windows. House on elevated concrete foundation with wooden doors to crawlspace.

113 Fort Fisher Blvd N.

C, ca. 1950

One-story frame house with vinyl siding, asphalt-shingled hip roof with flat roofed dormer. Enclosed porch with spender posts. One 1/1 sliding window.

117 Fort Fisher Blvd N.

C, ca. 1958

One-story frame house with vinyl siding, asphalt-shingled gabled roof. Enclosed front porch with hipped roof, lattice balustrade and slender posts. Front porch enclosure has five 2/1 screened window sections.

Beach Burgers**118 Fort Fisher Blvd N.****C, ca. 1950**

Single story food business with gabled and slanted asphalt-shingled roofs. Three 1/1 glass windows.

121 Fort Fisher Blvd N.**C, ca. 1921**

One-story frame house with vinyl siding, metal hip roof with slanted roofed ventilation dormer. Front porch with circular columns and hipped level balustrade. Three 4/2, and 1/0 windows.

... By the Pier Motel**122 Fort Fisher Blvd N.****C, ca. 1966**

There are two buildings on this lot. The first, constructed in 1966, is a single-story house with hipped asphalt-shingled roof. Front porch with metal balustrade and brick columns. 1/1 windows. The second building, constructed in 1983, is a three-level motel with a gabled metal roof. Customer services and parking are located on the ground level. Levels two and three have wrap around porches with hip-level vinyl balustrades and slender posts. The street facing side has 1/0 windows aside the motel room doors.

125 Fort Fisher Blvd N.**NC, ca. 1972**

One-story frame house with brick veneer siding, metal hip and valley roof with hipped dormer. Concrete slab front porch with square columns. Four 6/6 replacement windows.

129 Fort Fisher Blvd N.**C, ca. 1950**

Two-story framed duplex styled house with brick veneer siding, asphalt-shingled hipped and valley roof. Ground level front porch with brick veneer balustrade and 2x4 framing posts. 16/0 front window with 1/1 second story windows.

Seven Seas Inn**130 Fort Fisher Blvd N.****NC, Various Construction Dates**

There are four buildings on this lot. The first, constructed in 1958, is a two-story motel with wood siding. Each level has a wraparound balcony with wooden balustrades with 4x4 wooden columns. The remaining buildings were constructed in 1964, 1970, and 1985. They are elevated two story motel and condos with parking on the ground level underneath the

buildings. The second and third levels have wraparound balconies with hip level balustrades and slender posts. Each unit has 1/1 windows aside of the entryway.

133 Fort Fisher Blvd N.

C, ca. 1961

There are six buildings on this lot. Of the six buildings, four were constructed in 1950, while the other two were constructed in 1959 and 1961. Most of the buildings on the property serve as rental units, save one, which serves as the property managers office. One of the buildings is a two-story duplex style rental home with a hipped asphalt-shingled roof. 1/1 windows on the ground level. The upper level has a wooden balcony with a wooden balustrade and a 4/1 window. The remaining buildings are one-story with a hipped asphalt-shingled roof. Each building has enclosed screened porches with stone veneer balustrades.

Islander Kwik Mart

102 Fort Fisher Blvd S.

NC, ca. 1977

One-story brick veneer convenience store with gabled asphalt-shingled roof and attached food business and fuel station. The store front has multiple 1/0 glass pane windows.

South Wind Motel

109 Fort Fisher Blvd S.

NC, Various Construction Dates

There are three buildings on this lot, two constructed in 1963 while the remaining building was constructed in 1983. Two of the buildings are two-story vinyl siding motels with slanted roofs. Each level as a front porch/ balcony with hip level wooden balustrades with slender posts. Each unit has a 1/1 window aside the entry way. The remaining third building is three stories with a balcony on each level. The balconies have wooden balustrade with 4x4 columns.

112 Fort Fisher Blvd S.

NC, Parking Lot

Privately owned gravel parking lot.

Moran Motel

118 Fort Fisher Blvd S.

NC, ca. 1960

There are two buildings on this lot that make up the Moran Motel. The first is a single-story with asphalt-shingled gabled roof. The roof overhangs the building and is supported by 4x4 posts. Each unit has a single 1/1 window. The second building is two-stories with a

gabled asphalt-shingled roof. The second story has a balcony with metal balustrades and 4x4 posts. Each unit has a single 1/1 window aside the entrance. Both buildings were constructed in 1960

Admirals Quarters

129 Fort Fisher Blvd S.

NC, ca. 1985

A three-story motel with asphalt-shingled hip and valley roof. The second level has a wooden balustrade balcony with slender posts.

Sand Dunes Motel

133 Fort Fisher Blvd S.

NC, Various Construction Dates

There are three buildings on this lot constructed in the years 1958, 1962, and 1997. Two of the buildings are two-stories with vinyl siding and asphalt-shingled gabled roofs. The second stories have balconies with wooden balustrades and square columns. Each unit has 1/1 windows. The remaining unit is three stories with a combination of offices, rental units, and parking on the ground level. The second and third level have balconies with wooden balustrades and slender posts. There are no street-facing windows on this last building.

138 Fort Fisher Blvd S.

C, ca. 1935

One-story frame house with vinyl siding, an asphalt-shingled gabled roof and 1/0 windows. At some point the front porch was enclosed to be included into the home. This addition has a hipped asphalt-shingled roof and two awnings over the front windows.

Kure Beach Pier Building

100 K Avenue

C- Culture, ca. 1993

One story pier building with vinyl siding and asphalt-shingled Dutch roof. Attached to this building is the Kure Beach Fishing pier which was first constructed in 1923. Since then, the original fishing pier has been destroyed during various hurricanes. The existing pier was completed in 1996 after the previous pier was destroyed in Hurricane Bertha.

Kure Beach Diner

101 & 103 K Avenue

C, C-Cultural, ca. 1935

One-story frame business with flat roof which overhangs the entrance of the building. The storefront has two 1/0 windows. The Kure Beach Diner was originally construct as the pier house for the fishing pier in 1935. After Hurricane Hazel in 1954, the original pier house

was relocated to its current location and repurposed as the Old Pier House Restaurant. Since then, it has become the location for the Kure Beach Diner.

102 K Avenue

C. ca. 1947

One-story frame shotgun style commercial building with cedar shingle siding, an asphalt-shingled gabled roof. This building was originally an army barrack constructed in the mid-war period at Fort Fisher located a mile south of Kure Beach.

Freddie's Restaurant

Hi-Tech Arcade

105 & 111 K Avenue

C, C- Cultural, ca. 1945

Two Story frame commercial building with wood siding and slanted roof. The store front has two 1/0 windows and three glass doors. Across the entire store face, there is a wooden awning over the entrances. Above the wooden awning are the advertising signs for each business.

Bud & Joe's

108 K Avenue

C, C- Cultural, ca. 1947

One-story frame shotgun style commercial building with cedar shingle siding, an asphalt-shingled gabled roof. This building was originally an army barrack constructed in the mid-war period at Fort Fisher located a mile south of Kure Beach.

Happy Hippies Java Hut

109 K Avenue

C, C- Cultural, ca. 1945

Single-story wooden frame commercial building with wood siding and asphalt shingled saltbox roof. On the street-facing portion of the roof is the business sign. The store front has a 1/0 window aside the glass door entrance. The Happy Hippies Java Hut is the former location of the Shirt Shack.

Jack Mackerels Grill

113 K Avenue

NC, ca. 1975

Single-story frame commercial building with stucco siding and a metal mansard style roof. Jack Mackerels property is the former location of the Canoutas store.⁷

⁷ Conoutas, Andrew; Oral Interview completed by Ann Hertzler and Jeannie Gordon. November 29, 2006.

Big Daddy's
206 K Avenue
NC, ca. 1962

Two-story commercial building with cedar shingles, wood, and stone veneer siding with a multi-level asphalt-shingled mansard roof.

209 K Avenue
C, ca. 1920

This lot has five buildings. Four of the buildings were constructed in 1920. These buildings are single level cottage style rental units. All have metal gabled roofs and vinyl siding. One building has an enclosed addition over the front porch. The others have enclosed porched with wooden balustrades and slender posts. These buildings also have two 1/1 windows. The final building on this lot was constructed in 1963. This building is two-story motel with cinderblock and vinyl siding and a metal gabled roof. There is a balcony on the second level. The balcony has wooden balustrades with slender square posts.

110 n. 3rd Ave
VL

Privately owned gravel parking lot for the employees and guest of Big Daddy's

Community Center
118 N. 3rd Ave
ca. 1960

Single-story commercial building with vinyl siding and metal Dutch gable roof. Building front has five 1/0 windows with a glass double door. The roof over the entrance is supported with four cylinder colonnades with square bases.

134 N. 3rd Ave
C, ca. 1950

One story frame cottage style house with cedar shingled siding, asphalt gabled roof, with octagonal vent on the house front. Wrap around front porch with wooden balustrade with square posts. 4/1 windows.

138 N. 3rd Ave
C, ca. 1950

One story frame cottage style house with asbestos siding, an asphalt gabled and slanted roof, with square vent on the house front. Enclosed front porch with screening. Single vehicle garage was added onto the home at some point.

142 N. 3rd Ave

C, ca. 1950

One story frame cottage-style house with vinyl siding, an asphalt gabled roof with square vent, and 2/2 windows.

109 S. 3rd Ave**C, ca. 1956**

One story concrete block frame house, an asphalt hipped roof, 1/1 windows. There are multiple sliding glass doors.

113 S. 3rd Ave**C, ca. 1956**

One story concrete block frame house, an asphalt hipped roof, four 1/0 windows.

117 S. 3rd Ave**C, ca. 1940**

One story frame house with vinyl siding, an asphalt Skillion and Lean-to roof with square vent and 1/1 windows.

125 S. 3rd Ave**C, ca. 1940**

One story frame triplex with vinyl siding, an asphalt gabled roof, and 6/6 windows.

129 S. 3rd Ave**NC, ca. 2010**

Three story elevated house with vinyl siding, an asphalt shingled combination roof and two-car garage on ground level. The second and third story have balconies with vinyl balustrades and square posts. There are six 1/1 windows.

133 S. 3rd Ave**C, ca. 1965**

Two story concrete block frame house with weatherboard siding, an asphalt shingled gabled roof and 2/2 and 1/1 windows.

References

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- Moore, Mark; Et al. *The Old North State at War: The North Carolina Civil War Atlas*. North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources.
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KURE BEACH ARCHITECTURAL STANDARDS
Parcel Map



- Proposed District Boundary
- Parcel
- Parcel Type**
- Contributing
- Non-Contributing
- Vacant

New Hanover County, NC
USGS 7.5' Quadrangle:
Kure Beach, NC, 33077-H8
Carolina Beach, NC, 34077-A8
NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
77.9066°W 33.9983°N

Base Map: ESRI ArcGIS Online,
accessed October 2020

Updated: 10/21/2020
Project No. 62318
File: 62318 Kure Beach Parcel Map

