KNOXVILLE•KNOX COUNTY
M P C
METROPOLITAN
PLANNING
COMMISSION
TENN ESSSEE
Agenda Item 97
MEMORANDUM

TO: MPC Commissioners
FROM: Mark Donaldson, Executive Director

DATE: April 6, 2006
SUBJECT: HISTORI C PRESERVATI ON REPORT TO MAYOR HASLAM -4-B-06-OB

Included on the April 13, 2006, MPC Agenda is the adoption of the Mayor's Report on Historic Preservation, 2005. The report is mandated by a City of Knoxville Charter provision that was adopted in 2002. The Charter amendment requires MPC to forward the report of the Mayor of Knoxville, who in turn is to make a report to the Knoxville City Council on the state of historic preservation.

I urge adoption of the report.


Prepared by the Knoxville-Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission April 2006


Prepared by the Knoxville-Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission
April 2006

Adopted by:

## Table of Contents

Introduction ..... 5
Activities and Recommended Actions ..... 8
Summary of Past Activities ..... 9
The Properties ..... 10
Historic Resources Map ..... 12
Appendix A: Locator Maps ..... 13

## Introduction

This report, Preservation 2005, is an annual report on the state of preservation in Knoxville, required by a 2002 amendment to Knoxville's Charter. It is reviewed and presented by the Metropolitan Planning Commission to Knoxville's Mayor, who in turn is to make a report to the Knoxville City Council on the state of preservation.

2005 was a positive year for historic preservation in Knoxville. Those positive advances showed most in the historic buildings of downtown and the historic neighborhoods of Knoxville's first suburbs that surround downtown. For the first time in recent memory, Knoxville's historic buildings and neighborhoods are attracting investment in record numbers, new residents are returning to the inner city, and rehabilitated houses and commercial buildings have seen an increase in value that equals or exceeds the price of new housing in other sections of the city and county. The success of neighborhood revitalization has begun to attract new construction to inner city areas. The importance of preservation in the life of the city is recognized by Mayor Haslam and the Knoxville City Council, as they involve preservationists in decision-making about policies and projects in the city.

## Preservation Activities

From 1982 to 1985, MPC conducted an inventory of buildings and structures in the city, and in 1987, produced the first edition of The Future of Our Past, a preservation plan calling attention to historically and architecturally significant properties in Knoxville and Knox County. The plan was updated in 1994 in a second edition, also titled The Future of Our Past. The City Council has asked that the inventory be updated again, with a completion date in 2006.

Involvement in preservation has grown since 1982, resulting in the rehabilitation of many 19th and early 20th century buildings and neighborhoods throughout Knoxville. New and old residents of Mechanicsville banded together to create the city's first residential H-1 historic overlay in 1991; their efforts were followed by additional historic district
nominations. A list of properties drawn from The Future of Our Past and its update are included in "The Properties" section of this report, which notes properties that are listed under H-1 Historic Overlay, NC-1 Neighborhood Conservation Overlay and National Register of Historic Places, and suggests additional eligible properties.

## Activities 2005

With Mayor Haslam's support, Knox Heritage organized the effort to save historically and architecturally significant buildings in the 500 block of Gay Street, including the S\&W Cafeteria, while accommodating the construction of a new downtown cinema. Individuals from the Knoxville Historic Zoning Commission contributed many hours to its successful completion. With this and other activities, Knox Heritage continued to embellish its reputation as a strong ally of preservation in Knoxville.


The success of neil
Gill area. In th]

Other activities that supported preservation include the city's new home initiative in Fourth \& Gill on the site of the old McCallie School. Various organizations held activities such as historic tours held in neighborhood districts, Preservation Week activities, and Knox Heritage's Summer Suppers program all increased Knoxvillians' interest in its rich architectural heritage. Knox Heritage continued its role as a developer of historic properties through its Vintage Homes Program. Two properties in Old North Knoxville were rehabilitated and sold. One of these buildings had been vacant for many years; it was rehabilitated and returned to single family housing. The second building, which had been divided into several apartments, all extremely deteriorated, also became a rehabilitated single family house. Knox Heritage has made it a practice to become involved in the rehabilitation of homes that have problems preventing their rehabilitation from being competitive in the private sector. The successful completion of both of these projects


An example of Knox Heritage's Vintage Homes Program.
involved assistance from many city departments, and returned long-standing problem buildings to the tax rolls, strengthening the neighborhood and spurring additional investment in adjacent buildings.

In 2005, the Knoxville Historic Zoning Commission reviewed 136 Certificates of Appropriateness, an increase of $15 \%$ over the preceding year's Certificate reviews. The Certificates that have been issued reflect an increasing interest in maintaining and rehabilitating historic buildings. Of the Certificates issued in $2005,57 \%$ were issued for levels of work that involved major rehabilitation or new construction; the remaining $43 \%$ contemplated repair work that was fairly minor in nature or was maintenance of the affected buildings.

Hallmarks of the increased importance of historic preservation in 2005 include:

- Construction of new houses in historic districts or the areas adjacent to them;


Work continues on infill housing in Old North Knoxville.

- Rehabilitated historic housing that is competitive within the local real estate market; and
- Conversion of vacant space in downtown's historic buildings to living space and new retail.

Residential historic districts - Knoxville's suburbs of the early 20th and late 19th centuries - include very few vacant lots. The supply of houses available for purchase and in need of rehabilitation has continued to shrink. As a result, developers and home buyers have sought out the few vacant lots that do exist in Knoxville's residential historic districts in the past year, and 2005 has seen the construction of four new houses in Old North Knoxville and Fourth \& Gill, with several additional new houses now being planned for those neighborhoods and for the Mechanicsville historic district.

As the vacant lots available in the established neighborhoods have been used, and as the desirability and marketability of historic districts has improved,


Two homes on Oklahoma Avenure are rehabilitated.
developers have turned to the areas adjacent to historic districts, where larger numbers of vacant lots exist. Construction has begun on new housing in these adjacent areas. That new construction has been consistent in design with buildings in the historic districts. This consistent design is a reflection of the developers' understanding that historic architecture and inner city locations are desirable to a growing percentage of buyers.

In 1996, in a study titled The Economic Benefits of Historic Preservation, studies of sales prices of rehabilitated homes in two historic districts (Old North Knoxville and Fourth \& Gill) were compared to sales prices for Knox County as a whole. That study noted that, while average sales prices for houses in those districts had been increasing annually, they still commanded only $70 \%$ of the average price for the countr. The study noted that both of the neighborhoods were still revitalizing, and had not achieved the stability of some of the newer residential


The Park House in downtown Knoxville is being restored.
areas in Knox County. Comparable sales have not been analyzed in the intervening years, but for 2005, the typical revitalized home in Fourth \& Gill or Old North Knoxville usually sold for $\$ 90-120$ per sq. ft . These prices reflect the continued stabilization of the historic areas, and their increasing desirability as residential areas.

Perhaps the most startling change in perception of historic areas is the continuing resurgence of condominium and apartment units in downtown Knoxville's formerly vacant commercial and warehouse buildings. In 2004, the number of downtown residential units was reported at over 200. In the March 2, 2006, issue of Metropulse, Barry Henderson, the author of "A Brick Ceiling" estimated that the number of residential units downtown numbered over 500 by the end of 2005. In 2005, the article recounted that 362 residential building permits had been issued for downtown and the areas immediately surrounding it; 95 of those permits were for new construction while 267 were for renovation or alteration.

Retail development of ground floor spaces and retail and office development on Market Square has kept pace with the continued increase of residential units. Several years ago, permanent business on Market Square numbered only five or six, with upper floors primarily vacant. That situation is almost completely reversed, with retail ground floor spaces and office and some residential uses occupying upper floors. Only a few buildings are now vacant. The same level of activity is present in Gay Street buildings in the 400 block, and rehabilitation of the

100 block of South Gay is almost complete. Single noteworthy examples of proposed rehabilitation include the Holston Bank Building at the corner of Gay and Clinch, the Burwell Building on the opposite corner, and the YMCA Building. Loft developers have also begun to consider buildings that are adjacent to downtown, mirroring the peripheral development going on adjacent to single family residential neighborhoods. Meetings are now being held to address the feasibility of design guidelines for downtown, in both the historically designated areas and those areas without designated buildings.


The restored Phoenix Building on Gay Street utilizes the mixed-use philosophy, having loft apartments on the upper floors, office space in the middle and a variety of retailers on the ground level.

## Activities And Recommended Actions

Past conversations with groups and individuals active in preservation have resulted in a listing of actions they feel would be in addressing preservation concerns and additional properties they feel may be worthy of designation. Both are discussed below.

- Specific measures that have been recommended as beneficial to the preservation of historic building in downtown, historic neighborhoods and individual sites and structures include:

1) H-1 Historic Overlay zoning for historic downtown buildings; and
2) Design guidelines for areas of downtown that do not involve historic buildings.

- Historic neighborhoods could benefit from the following incentives:

1) Enforcement of city ordinances that prohibit parking on sidewalks, address problems with housing and building codes;
2) Additional street and sidewalk paving;
3) An amendment to the Knoxville Zoning Ordinance to recognize unique zones for residential areas that were developed in a preWorld War II form, even though buildings in the area may not be eligible for historic designation;
4) Outreach to realtors who market single family residential property as having "commercial potential;"
5) The use of property tax abatement to encourage rehabilitation of historic neighborhoods;
6) The use of street signs and distinctive entrances to promote neighborhood identity;
7) An increase in police patrols in residential areas, including facilitating the development of neighborhood watch programs;
8) Encouraging the development of strong neighborhood-based schools to strengthen and provide additional incentives for attracting families into historic, inner-city neighborhoods;
9) An increase in staffing to strengthen MPC's National Register and historic overlay programs;
10) Utilize the "demolition by neglect" ordinance for individual structures in need of maintenance within historic neighborhoods.
11) Development of parks in older city neighborhoods.
12) Financial assistance to Knox Heritage as it proceeds with its Vintage Homes program.
13) Marketing and promotion programs to assist Knoxville's historic neighborhoods.
14) A unified public relations campaign that publicizes the progress made in preservation in Knoxville, with the strengths of historic neighborhoods and downtown residential conversions as a special emphasis.

Some progress has been made in each of these areas, as the administration works to strengthen Knoxville's residential neighborhoods.

- For several years, there have been indications of additional properties that should be designated. The list of neighborhoods and properties mentioned in the past and, more recently, includes:


## 106 and 109 Naueda Drive

Island Home Park
(H-1 Historic Overlay)

## Old Westmoreland

(NC-1 Neighborhood Conservation Overlay)

## Forest Hills

(NC-1 Neighborhood Conservation Overlay)

## Kingston Pike

(H-1 Historic Overlay or NC-1 Neighborhood Conservation Overlay)

## North Hills

(National Register of Historic Places and H-1 Historic Overlay) East side of Broadway from Cecil to Washington Pike

Oakwood-Lincoln Park
(National Register of Historic Places and H-1 Historic Overlay)

## Sequoyah Hills

(National Register of Historic Places and NC-1 Neighborhood
Conservation Overlay)

## Sherrod Road

(NC-1 Neighborhood Conservation Overlay)
Chilhowee Park
(National Register of Historic Places)
Southern Terminal \& Warehouse National Register Historic District (H-1 Historic Overlay)
Gay Street National Register Historic District (H-1 Historic Overlay)
South Market National Register Historic District (H-1 Historic Overlay)
Fts. Dickerson, Higley and Stanley (National Register of Historic Places listing, H-1 Historic Overlay for Higley and Stanley)
Extension of Emory Place National Register Historic District to include Broadway @ Central
(National Register and $\mathrm{H}-1$ Historic Overlay)
Fountain City Downtown
(National Register and H-1 Historic Overlay)
Gibbs Road National Register of Historic Places District (H-1 Historic Overlay)
Adair Gardens National Register of Historic Places District (H-1 Historic Overlay)

## Extension of Old North Knoxville H-1 Historic Overlay District

As noted earlier, the Knoxville City Council will include an update of the listing of potential historic sites as part of its work program in 2006; that update may result in requests for additional designations.

## Summary Of Past Activities

Information about the status of preservation in
Knoxville has been collected over the past five years. A summary of preservation concerns is listed below, together with the ways they were addressed.

- A concern over the lack of maintenance for individual properties in historic areas was addressed by the adoption of a "demolition by neglect" ordinance.
- Legislation has been adopted to prevent demolition of properties being considered for inclusion in NC-1 Neighborhood Conservation and $\mathrm{H}-1$ Historic Overlays until the final decision about their designation.
- Reuse plans for schools that are not fully utilized as educational facilities has proceeded in some instances, but there is not a unified policy direction.
- While no one in the current administration has not been charged with preservation implementation, the consideration of preservation concerns has been incorporated in the city's decision-making process overall.
- A process for planning traffic calming measures for Knoxville's neighborhoods is underway.
- A design for street markers, to be used in designated historic neighborhoods, has been completed.
- Non-profit organizations like Habitat for Humanity and the Knox Housing Partnership are actively involved in producing new, appropriately designed housing or rehabilitating existing historic housing in historic neighborhoods.
- A street tree plan has been developed for Knoxville, including historic neighborhoods.
- Nominations to the National Register of Historic Places continue to be prepared for properties that area eligible; work is also continuing on H-1 Historic Overlay and NC-1 Neighborhood Conservation overlays.
- Knox Heritage has developed a speaker's bureau, a web page, a marker program, and walking and driving tours focused on historic areas. They have formed a neighborhood preservation council, and continue to present special events that focus on historic places and events in Knoxville.
- The East Tennessee Historical Center, with the development of new museum spaces and an expanded research facility, has enhanced its role as an invaluable resource for local residents.
- A program developed to assist in the rehabilitation of commercial buildings in the Broadway-Central area directly answers a request of prior annual preservation reports.

Legislative measures that could benefit historic preservation in Knoxville, and that have been recommended in the past, include

- Modification of the definition of "family" in the Knoxville Zoning Ordinance to prevent overcrowding, which is currently being discussed;
- Use of the One Year Plan to establish base zoning supportive of preservation;
- Establishing a "community schools" program, allowing for non-tradition educational programs for residents of surrounding neighborhoods;

Other programs recommended in the past that could assist in preserving buildings and strengthening historic neighborhoods include working with The University of Tennessee to protect university owned or impacted historic buildings and developing a parking permit system for Ft. Sanders and other neighborhoods developed before private automobiles and off-street parking were common.

One outcome of prior preservation reports is the development of a program to assist in the rehabilitation of commercial buildlings in the Broadway-Central Avenue area.


## The Properties

## Property

Lyons View Historic District James Park House
Col. John Williams House
Williams-Richards House
UT Campus-various buildings
Lones-Dowell House
Kennedy-Baker-Sherrill House
Thomas Walker House, 645 Mars Hill Henley Street Bridge
Kingston Pike
Candoro Marble
St. John's Episcopal Church
Immaculate Conception
Island Home
Market Square Historic District

## Hopecote

Fountain City Downtown
First Presbyterian Church, Cemetery
Gay Street Bridge
Mechanicsville
Camp House/Greystone
Old Post Office
Craighead-Jackson House
Southern Terminal District
Old City Hall
Ft. Sanders Historic District
Minvillas (5th Ave Motel)
Hill Avenue Historic District
Brownlow Elementary
South Market Historic District
Tennessee School for the Deaf
Holston Hills
Morningside
Areas bordering $\mathrm{H}-1 \mathrm{~s}$
Victorian Houses
Medical Arts Building
Old Gray National
Civil War Forts
Knollwood
Taylor House, 3128 Kingston Pike
Bleak House, 3148 Kingston Pike

Designated
Locally

| Partial | No |
| :---: | :---: |
| Yes (H-1) | Yes |
| No | Yes |
| No | No |
| No | No |
| Yes | No |
| No | No |
| Demolished | Demolished |
| Yes (H-1) | No |
| No | Yes (Neyland to Cherokee Blvd.) |

Endangered
(1 = High, $3=$ Low $)$


## Type of Significance

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## Property

North Hills
First Baptist Church
Sequoyah Elementary
Racheff Gardens, Office
Christenberry Clubhouse
Daniels House
Oakwood-Lincoln Park
Ft. Sanders W of 22
Maplehurst
Sevier Avenue Houses
YWCA
2921 Broadway
Apartment/Broadway
Lindburgh Forest
Tazewell Pike
Candy Factory
General John Wilder House
Forest Hills Blvd.
Clinch Ave Viaduc
Kendrick Place/Union Avenue
Ft. Sanders Manor
Savage Gardens
Adair Road
Temple Beth-El Cemetery
Dr. Joe Archer House
Miller House
Burwell Building/Tennessee Theater
Millers Building
Bijou Theater
US Post Office
Knox County Courthouse
Candy Factory
Cansler Building, 1518 University
Fairmont Park
1517 Emoriland
Craigglen, 1053 Craigland Court
Glen Craig, 6304 Westland
McIntyre-Roleau House, 3004 Kingston Pike
Knott-York House, 4810 Middlebrook Pike
Sequoyah Hills
Westmoreland Hills
Emory Place
Baker-Sherrill House, 9320 Kingston Pike

## Designated Locally

| No | No |
| :---: | :---: |
| No | Yes |
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| Yes (H-1) | Yes |
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| No | No |
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| No | No |
| No | Yes |
| Yes (NC-1) | No |
| Yes (H-1) | No |
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| Yes (H-1) | Yes |
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| Yes (H-1) | No |
| Yes (H-1) | No |
| Yes (NC-1) | No |
| Yes (H-1) | No |
| Yes (H-1) | No |
| Yes (H-1) | No |
| Yes (H-1) | Yes |
| Yes (H-1) | No |
| No | No |
| No | No |
| No | Yes |
| No | No |

Significance (1 = High, $3=$ Low )

Endangered ( $1=$ High, $3=$ Low $)$

## Type of Significance

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Appendix A:
Designated Properties





















