

Nashville Historic Zoning News

An occasional newsletter published by the Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission

Winter 2005

■ LANDMARK PROGRAM EXPANDS

Twelve New Properties Added to Local Landmark Program

In 2004, the local landmark program in Nashville nearly doubled in size with the addition of twelve new properties. The newest additions to the local landmark program include a variety of different properties, including a residence, a cemetery, a bridge, and several schools. Two additional properties, Fort Negley and Cameron School, will be going before the Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission, the Planning Commission, and Metro Council this spring for designation, bringing the total number of locally-designated landmarks to twenty-nine.

One new local landmark is Airdrie, also known as the Petway-Buell-King House, on Avenal Avenue in the Radnor area. The home is a two-story I-house with Greek Revival and Classical Revival influences that demonstrate its evolution from a two-story log cabin believed to have been built around 1800 to an estate home that received a Greek Revival exterior during the 1830s and a Classical Revival modernization around 1900. The house has been home to several prominent Nashvillians, including U.S. Congressman William Dickson, early settler Hinchey Petway, and General George P. Buell. Harold and Dorothy King are the current owners. In addition to being listed as a local landmark, Airdrie is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places in 2005.

The other new local landmarks are all Metro-owned properties and include the City Cemetery, the City Reservoir, Lindsley Hall, the Omohundro Water System, the Shelby Street



Airdrie is one of only four privately-owned locally-designated landmarks and is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

Bridge, the Trolley Barns at Rolling Mill Hill, Martin Luther King, Jr., Magnet School at Pearl High School, the East Schools Campus, West End Middle School, Hume-Fogg Academic High School, and the new home of Metro Historical and Historic Zoning Commissions, Sunnyside at Sevier Park.

Designation as a Historic Landmark District honors a Nashville landmark's historical significance while protecting the unique character of the landmark by requiring review of any exterior work on the building. The Metro Historic Zoning Commission must review and approve any exterior work on a designated local landmark before issuing a preservation permit. The guidelines for local landmark districts are based on the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* and are available from the MHZC staff.

Why are Synthetic Siding Materials Inappropriate for Historic Buildings?

Historic preservation professionals often speak out against the use of vinyl or aluminum siding materials on historic buildings. This objection is much more than a "knee jerk" reaction against products which are not historic building materials. In reality, use of these siding materials can have serious harmful consequences beyond simple aesthetic issues. Often owners of historic see use of these materials as a solution to maintenance problems. These owners should be aware of the serious problems that such installations can cause.

1. Vinyl siding can disguise unchecked deterioration leading to major structural problems. In many cases, building owners opt to install artificial siding materials when buildings are in a deteriorated condition. Peeling paint, stains, and rotted wood siding and trim are situations that might lead an owner to choose aluminum or vinyl siding. If the material is installed on top of deteriorated material, even on minor problem areas, further deterioration can occur and will go unchecked as it cannot be seen. This deterioration can lead to major structural problems which can be quite costly to correct.

2. Application of vinyl or aluminum siding can lead to moisture problems for older

buildings. Moisture created in the interior of a frame building from cooking, cleaning, bathing, etc. passes through a frame wall to the outside. The new artificial siding material does not allow this passage to happen and therefore the moisture is trapped and damage can occur. Preventative measures such as the addition of an interior vapor barrier or other ventilation devices are necessary to avoid this problem. These measures add to the expense of the work and are not typically standard work items for the artificial siding contractor.

3. Vinyl siding is not maintenance free. Vinyl and aluminum siding materials are often touted as maintenance free by manufacturers. In fact, these materials are not maintenance free. Aluminum siding is subject to indentation from scratches and dents as it is a relatively thin material. Some painted aluminum sidings are subject to chalking and fading and may need to be repainted. If this occurs, the siding will then have to be painted with the same frequency as wood. Vinyl siding can become brittle when cold which can lead to cracks and shattering which must then be repaired.

4. Vinyl siding is no cheaper than proper maintenance of original building materials.

Studies by the U.S. Department of Agriculture show that two coats of a good quality paint on a properly prepared wood surface can last 8 to 10 years. The cost of vinyl or aluminum siding typically runs between two to three times the cost of a good quality paint job and is more likely to be financed, adding additional cost. Therefore, even without weighing in on other disadvantages, the cost of vinyl or aluminum siding is at best usually equal and in some cases more than maintaining the building original materials.

These physical problems, when coupled with aesthetic concerns, should lead to the conclusion that vinyl and aluminum siding products are not appropriate treatments for historic buildings. Visually, "wood grained" vinyl siding does not resemble true wood. Also, during siding installation, decorative architectural features are often covered or removed to provide the necessary flat surface to receive the new material. Loss of these features in many cases equals the loss of the appealing historic character of the building and can lower property values. In summary, a property owner should carefully review all of these ramifications when considering using artificial siding on historic buildings.

■ NEWS BRIEFS

Preservation Awards celebrate Nashville historic architecture

The National Trust for Historic Preservation has declared the month of May as National Historic Preservation Month. The Metropolitan Historical Commission celebrates Preservation Month with its annual preservation awards program, rewarding quality historic preservation projects and infill architecture in historic areas. To nominate a project for the MHC Preservation Awards program, please call 862-7970 for a nomination form and guidelines. This year's awards program will be held in mid-May at the Nashville Public Library.

Save the Date!

The Tennessee Preservation Trust annual statewide preservation conference will be held in Chattanooga at the historic Sheraton Read House Hotel. The theme of the 2005 conference is "Preservation in the 21st Century: Managing Growth and Change" and will feature tours, sessions and speakers that will be of interest to residents of local historic districts, including sessions on residential infill architecture and demolition in historic neighborhoods. The dates for the conference are April 7-9, 2005. If you would like to receive more information about the conference, contact Tennessee Preservation Trust at 259-2289 or visit them on-line at www.tennesseepreservationtrust.org.

New face, new place!

Since the last edition of *Historic Zoning News*, the MHZC has added Matt Schutz to our staff and has moved to Sunnyside in Sevier Park. Our new address is 3000 Granny White Pike. Come visit us!

■ NEW CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Lockeland Springs-East End Expands; Eastwood Added to Conservation Zoning

Two areas in East Nashville received conservation zoning designation in the summer of 2004. The Lockeland Springs/East End district was expanded to include eighty-one additional properties to the southeast of the previous boundaries of the district. The largest conservation zoning district in Nashville, this expansion brings the total number of protected properties in LSEE to over 1500.

Also in the summer of 2004, the new Eastwood Conservation Zoning District was established. Bounded by North 14th Street and Chapel Avenue, the Eastwood District takes in 112 properties on Douglas, McKennie, Greenwood, Roberts and Sharpe Avenues in East Nashville. Although the earliest houses in the district date from the 1850s, most are from the expansion of streetcar lines across the Cumberland River around 1890 and later. The district is characterized by local variations on popular architectural styles found in the United States between 1890 and 1940, with the earliest

houses illustrating Queen Anne and Classical Revival characteristics. The majority of houses in the neighborhood are made up of later styles, including Bungalows, craftsman cottages and English cottages.

Several other Nashville neighborhoods are exploring the idea of conservation zoning or historic zoning in their areas. Belmont-Hillsboro anticipates its designation in the spring, as does Elmington Place. Other neighborhoods who have made inquiries to learn more about potential conservation zoning in their areas include Sylvan Park, Radnor, and Woodbine. For more information on how conservation or historic zoning can benefit your neighborhood, contact Tim Walker, historic zoning administrator, at 862-7970.



Eastwood, Nashville's newest conservation district, demonstrates a variety of early twentieth century architectural styles.



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Sunnyside in Sevier Park, one of the newest locally-designated landmarks, became home to the Metro Historical Commission staff in 2003. Built in 1852 for Mary Childress Benton, the house bears reminders of the Battle of Nashville, was home to Nashville dentist L.G. Noel for forty years, and was last privately owned by Granville Sevier, whose mother grew up in the house.

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