



HISTORIC PRESERVATION ZONING NEWS

Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission

A periodic newsletter for architects, designers, contractors, craftsmen and applicants.

Inspections: An Important Part of Any Permit

Once you have obtained a Preservation Permit, certain inspections are required throughout the construction process, just like with the Codes Administration's Building Permits.

These inspections may help you save time and money as they are geared toward identifying problems early in the construction process, before they become violations.

To know what inspections need to be scheduled, see the bottom of the first or second page of your Preservation Permit. When ready, contact Fred Zahn with the Metro Historic Zoning Commission at 615-862-7970 or



fred.zahn@nashville.gov to schedule an inspection.

You will not need to be present during the inspection, assuming that the inspector can access all areas of the lot. We do not review interiors.

If in doubt, it is easier to

give us a call to check on completed inspections or to determine if something requires an inspection.

Remember that the Building Permit and the Preservation Permit require different inspections by different inspectors.

Inspection results will be entered into the city's computer system and it may be publically accessed by visiting

<https://permits.nashville.gov/kivanet/2/index.cfm>. This information may take up to 24 hours to be updated.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION
January 2014

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Infill Design Tips

DEFINITIONS:

Contemporary: Existing, occurring or living at the same time; of the present time

Modern: Characteristic of styles that reject traditionally accepted or sanctioned forms and emphasize individual experimentation and sensibility.



The essence of a building is its basic form. Match that and even a modern building can “fit into” a historic district.

Both the National Park Service’s Secretary of Interior Standards and local design guidelines for historic overlays require that new construction *fit in* but not necessarily *imitate* its historic context. How far is too far and how close to a historic design is too close varies from community to community. In Nashville/Davidson County, the Metro Historic Zoning Commission takes a broad approach to interpreting these standards and guidelines.

On one end of the spectrum, a new building can closely resemble historic buildings in the neighborhood with the only distinguishing feature being contemporary materials. For instance, many architects, designers, and property owners choose a split faced block foundation instead of stone, a cement fiber lap siding instead of wood, and aluminum clad wood windows rather than wood windows. The building may look historic in terms of style and form with only the materials serving as the clue that a building is contemporary.

On the other end of the spectrum, a more challenging approach, is to create a modern interpretation of a historic building. Manuel Zeitlin, with Manuel Zeitlin Architects, says that he feels it is important that new houses in historic districts reflect their own time rather than being replicas of historic buildings. “Perhaps a major characteristic of older urban neighborhoods that make them attractive,” explains Zeitlin, “is that they evolved over time, with each evolution responding to what came before, not necessarily copying it. Advances in building technology, the promotion and use of new materials and current design trends all influenced, what we now consider to be, historical architecture.” Architect S. Mitchell Hodge agrees that it is more important to be complimentary to the neighborhood than to copy it. “We’ve all seen that quirky old home on a street, visually different, but still within the scale of the street,” offers Hodge. “It works...being the

house that neighbors pause to look at. We have many more design options today and a home should reflect that.”

For Zeitlin, designing a contemporary interpretation begins with a survey of the neighborhood. “Early in the process,” says Zeitlin, “we look for contextual clues to relate to or to reinterpret in new ways. What are the patterns and scales of adjacent houses in relation to the street, to each other, and to the site we’re working on? What are predominant materials, window shapes, porch configurations, etc. that might suggest ways to articulate a new house or addition in new ways that feels totally at home with its neighbors?”

Where does neighborhood activity take place and how might the new site layout respond to varying degrees of interface with neighbors? i.e. think about how to transition from public to private spaces.”

Creating an appropriate contemporary design isn’t



Infill Design Tips, continued

just about taking pieces and parts of buildings found in the district and it isn't just about doing something different for the sake of having something different, it takes an understanding of the essential form of the buildings and its individual parts.

For example, a major character defining feature of a historic building is the primary entrance. For residential buildings this usually consists of a door facing the street and a porch or hood over the door. A new porch might implement an "abstract" of a traditional porch post, like the column shown top right. The bands at the top represent the cap of a Doric or Tuscan column and the vertical open bands represent the fluting, without being too literal. The result is that the form of the porch may be similar to historic porches but its elements are defined in a fresh way.

Both Hodge and Zeitlin place an emphasis on meeting the scale and proportions of the neighborhood over style.

Hodge explains that "scale" is not the same as "size." "It is not the square footage, but how the new building scales in relation to the neighbors. With property side setbacks of only five feet, nobody wants to feel like they are sitting in the middle seat of the plane between two Titans."

Hodge suggests "layering the front façade," calling attention to a width that is compatible with the neighbors while the remaining façade acts more as a background.

The scale and shape of the roof form is also important. As Hodge states, "Don't build a five gallon house with a ten gallon roof." He advises that roof volume can be captured for living space, if done in a way that helps to reduce the home's exterior massing with simple tricks such as pulling down the eaves to create vaulted ceilings and fun nooks or by using dormers.

One way to assure appropriate scale and form is to familiarize yourself with the historic buildings in the

neighborhood and imagine them void of all architectural features. Mentally strip away the porches, windows, doors, and decorative detail until you are left with the basic form. It might help to think of that form as a collection of children's building blocks. These simple shapes and how they connect and interact are what should be copied when designing the basic framework of your new building, or at least the front half of your new building. This form should match the context in terms of height, width, roof pitches and location on the lot. Matching these forms is what makes a new building "fit into" the historic context and is the blank slate for your modern design.

Whatever direction you choose to take, meet with Historic Zoning Staff early in the design phase and don't scrimp on the budget in terms of working with an architect or designer. Often, property owners are anxious to get to the

(Continued on Page 6.)



The column on the left is a modern interpretation of a classical column, like the one to the right.



Historic bay window



Contemporary interpretation of a historic bay window



Awards & Old House Fair

2014 PRESERVATION AWARDS

New! Call for Nominations: 2014 Preservation Awards

That's right! We are now accepting nominations for the 2014 Preservation Awards. Please bear with us as we work out the details of a rolling nominations process. We'll provide information about judging and the awards ceremony as it becomes available. In the meantime, feel free to nominate your favorite preservation project as soon as it is complete!

The deadline to submit nominations is **Friday, March 14, 2014**. As this is earlier than in years past, so please take note that we will not be able to extend the deadline for photographs or incomplete nomination packets.

For more information, please visit Preservation Awards or email scarlett.miles@nashville.gov.

2014 OLD HOUSE FAIR

The Metro Historic Zoning Commission and partners are pleased to announce the third annual **Old House Fair** on Saturday March 8, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m at The Martin Center, 2400 Fairfax Avenue, Nashville.

The Old House Fair is a FREE day-long festival that introduces property owners to new ideas, practical advice, innovative materials, and quality services through exhibitors, presentations and hands-on demonstrations. The event includes door prizes and opportunities for children to learn more about historic architecture through guided craft projects.

Lectures and hands-on demonstrations focus on enhancing energy efficiency, maintaining and restoring old houses, and appropriate design elements for the architectural styles and eras found here in Nashville. "We will have a full range of sessions," said historic zoning administrator Robin Zeigler, "everything from

how to make an old house more energy efficient, to how to navigate the Metro permitting process, to how to repair old windows or make a decision on replacement windows." Even if you are not a DIYer, these sessions will help you know what to look for and what to ask for when planning projects for your old home. The entire schedule of lectures and hands-on demonstrations and exhibitor's list will be available online at www.oldhousefair.org after the first of the year.

Participants will have a chance to talk to exhibitors and get advice and information on their specific projects. Exhibitors include companies that specialize in old houses, retailers and artists who cater to owners of Antebellum, Victorian, Bungalow, Tudor and Mid-century Modern homes.

Sponsorship opportunities currently available.



2013 Old House Fair



Around Town

1898 MAP OF DAVIDSON COUNTY

Have you admired the large map in our conference room? The MHC Foundation is also selling high-quality copies of the 1898 Map of Davidson County. They are 22" x 26" and printed on art paper. Cost is \$50.

NASHVILLENEXT

Work continues on a new Nashville General Plan which will provide a vision for our city's future over the next 30 years, along with guidance for growth and development in Davidson County and much of Middle Tennessee. Called "NashvilleNext," this is an ongoing, integrated plan for Nashville's future - and information about the plan is now available on a constantly updated webpage which includes contact information, volunteer opportunities, details of the plan in progress, and video

comments from some of the many community leaders who are already part of the NashvilleNext initiative. Visit www.nashvillenext.net or find NashvilleNext on Facebook for the "next" big news!

RAISE THE ROOF: AN EXHIBIT ABOUT BUILDINGS

September 14, 2013 to February 16, 2014

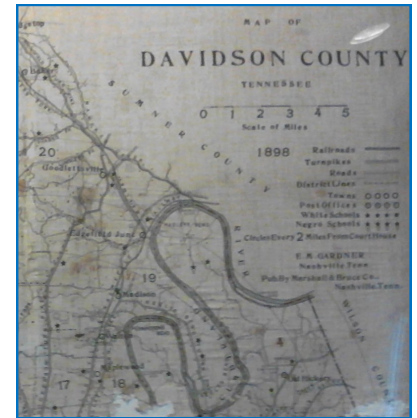
Adventure Science Center

800 Fort Negley Blvd.

Do you have a budding historic preservationist or architect in the family? Make sure to check out this great exhibit at the Adventure Science Center, where kids of all ages can learn about building construction, the cultural influences of building design, and yes, even building demolition.

If walls could talk, what sorts of secrets, surprises, or extraordinary engineering feats would they reveal? Discover the story behind

the structures humans spend 90 percent of their lives within. The *Raise the Roof* exhibit will feature buildings and building science from around the world, including a "Collapsible Dome." Other components will include a table top activity where visitors can examine and work with a variety of hand-crafted wooden joints.



View of portion of the map that hangs in the MHC conference room.



nashvillenext



Raise the Roof at Adventure Science Center



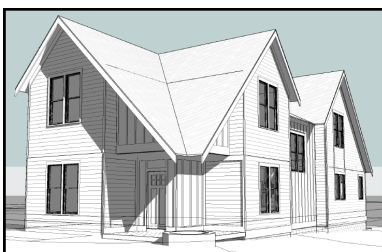
Infill, cont.

Spotlight: 319 & 321 South 11th Street



Above: 319 South 11th Street before.

Below: 319 South 11th Street after rehabilitation.



Infill at 321 South 11th Street

building phase and they skip all or part of the design phase, which can catch potential problems and solve them before the project is under construction, when every change is costly. More importantly, accurate drawings assure that what you expect in your new home or addition is properly communicated to the contractor and can help to avoid potential violations. “Invest in the design,” warns Hodge. “To paraphrase, an ounce of design is worth a pound of construction.” Whatever your design and whatever your chosen approach, the addition or building will have large impact on the overall look of the district and so should be considered very carefully. As Zeitlin says, ultimately any design “should not only reflect the unique requirements of the homeowners but also should add to the quality of the built environment.”

S. Mitchell Hodge, working with Woodland Street Partners, recently designed a rehabilitation with addition for 319 South 11th Street and an infill home next door at 321 South 11th Street. This team won a Preservation Award this year for another infill project.

At first glance, the design of the infill project might seem unusual for the area because of the deeply sloping front roof, but the inspiration for the design came from neighborhood context. Hodge explains that, “the roof is a response to the existing cross gables of the neighboring homes. I also wanted to pull down the eave lines in order to bring the scale of the home down in relation to the streetscape.” The house gives a nod, not only to the cross-gabled forms typical of Victorian era buildings but also to the Tudor Revival homes found in the neighborhood with their steep roof slopes and asymmetrical roof lines.

The cross gable roof creates a condition which focuses a good bit of water at the front of the house. Rather than installing a large

bulky downspout at the front, Hodge saw the opportunity for a more sculptural element to greet visitors. The water will be focused at the roof level with a half round gutter and then routed to a stone catch basin through a series of rain chains.

Hodge said that working on the rehabilitation and the neighboring infill together was a real advantage. Besides the obvious economy of scale for the builder, designing both in tangent allowed him to be more conscious of how the two homes communicate. The window arrangement between the two houses was studied to ensure privacy and daylighting.

Ensuring privacy for this smaller corner lot was perhaps his greatest challenge. Working with the constraints of a small lot, a highly visible corner, a church building across the street that could change in the future, and the requirements of the historic design guidelines, Hodge found a beautiful balance between something that really stands out but that is also understated.



**Guiding the Future by
Preserving the Past.**

Metropolitan Historic
Zoning Commission

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WE'RE ON THE WEB!

WWW.NASHVILLE.GOV/MHC

LIKE THE METRO HISTORICAL
COMMISSION ON FACEBOOK.



The Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission (MHZC) reviews applications to create new historic overlay districts and reviews preservation permit applications for historic preservation and neighborhood conservation zoning overlays and landmark sites for new construction, alterations, additions, repair and demolition.

The MHZC's nine volunteer members, appointed by the mayor and confirmed by Metro Council, include representatives from zoning districts, the Metropolitan Planning Commission, the Metropolitan Historical Commission; architect (s), and other citizens of Davidson County.

Our sister organization, the Metropolitan Historical Commission (MHC), is a municipal historic preservation agency working to document history, save and reuse buildings, and make the public more aware of the necessity and advantages of preservation in Nashville and Davidson County, Tennessee. Created in 1966, the commission consists of fifteen citizen members appointed by the mayor and confirmed by Metro Council.

Paul Hoffman joins historic zoning team



Paul Hoffman

The Metro Historic Zoning Commission welcomes a new staff member, **Paul Hoffman**. Hoffman is a Nashville native, a graduate of Hume-Fogg High School and Vanderbilt University, and a former Navy officer. Over the last decade he has worked on historic preservation projects on landmarks such as the Tennessee State Capitol, Ryman Auditorium, Belmont Mansion, Rosenwald schools in Sumner County, and the Francis Rogan House in

Omagh, Northern Ireland. Paul earned his M.A. in the historic preservation program at MTSU with a thesis on the Avery Trace, the primary land route into middle Tennessee in the 18th Century.