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**HISTORIC PRESERVATION
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The City of Tempe is a
Certified Local Government,
in association with the United
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Tempe Historic Preservation Office

Tempe Historic Preservation Commission

Thursday, March 31, 2005

1. Please send the electronic files (such as power-point files) of what was presented ...

The PowerPoint presentation given at the Neighborhood Meeting on February 10, 2005, would probably answer all these questions to your satisfaction. Staff is very proud of this presentation created specifically for the U-Heights NA, however, the 40mb file could not be sent by email. I am unsure if the problem was on our end or on yours. Accordingly, and thanks to your inquiry, we are working to post the presentation to our website at: <http://www.tempe.gov/historicpres/> to provide more convenient public access. We are enclosing hard copy of this presentation as well as the Staff Summary Report, which is transmitted along with the nomination materials submitted by the applicant, to the Tempe Historic Preservation Commission (Tempe HPC) for the public hearing scheduled to be held on April 7, 2005.

...and the process the neighborhood will go through as this process continues.

The process for historic designation is prescribed at Chapter 14A of the Tempe City Code – the “Tempe Historic Preservation Ordinance” available online from the City Clerk website at: <http://www.tempe.gov/citycode/14aHistoricPreservation.htm> and enclosed herewith for your convenience. The designation process involves four public hearings; first at the Tempe HPC, then at Planning & Zoning Commission, and finally twice at City Council. The purpose of these hearings is to take public input as a means of ensuring value to the community by protecting these significant properties and sites.

The Borden Homes Historic District is being processed for local designation. Once listed on the Tempe Historic Property Register, the City will assist the Neighborhood Association with pursuing listing on the National Register of Historic Places through the process administered by the Arizona State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). The requirements for local designation are based on National criteria, and the Tempe HPC encourages property owners to achieve both local and national listing so as to participate in the complimentary benefits of both designations.

Whether or not National Register listing is pursued, listing an historic district on the Tempe Historic Property Register provides enhanced public process for evaluation of proposed development. Proposed development with the potential to adversely affect the historic integrity of a district is routed through the normal permitting process upon review by the Tempe Historic Preservation Office or the Tempe HPC.

Commission and Staff bring additional expertise in areas of historic architecture, landscape architecture, history and planning to bear on the permitting process and help identify development solutions compatible with conserving and enhancing the historic character and integrity of the district.

Review of the Ordinance indicates the final step after listing on the local register is the development of District Design Guidelines. While the Ordinance provides for developing guidelines specific to each district, the degree of detail and regulatory control is left open. Guidelines may be as general as a simple citation of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties or as detailed as to provide strategies and design principals for the maintenance of historic integrity for any or all of the character defining features identified in the district. Under the provisions of the Ordinance these guidelines are developed in cooperation with the stakeholders in the district.

2. I would also like a list of all requirements to be historical in this area ...

On December 14, 2001, Tempe HPC produced a Post World War II Subdivisions Survey as an update to the 1997 Multiple Resource Area Property Survey. This study examined approximately 4,500 properties that were built in Tempe between 1946 and 1960. From this group, inventory forms were completed for about 1,500 properties occurring in 62 subdivisions. Tempe HPC has identified 31 subdivisions as candidates for designation as historic districts in two groups; 7 first-tier subdivisions (including Borden Homes) which are recommended for designation now, and 25 second-tier subdivisions from which a representative sample of more contemporary districts can be drawn in the future. Tempe HPC is pursuing designation for each of the first-tier subdivisions. Please refer to the enclosed Ordinance and Staff Report for additional eligibility discussion.

... and what the benefits are to being historical.

From the SHPO website – “Historic preservation is the identification, management, and protection of tangible elements from the past for future generations. It is the history that we can see and experience. As we move into the future with the explosion of new technologies, historic preservation provides an anchor to our past. Historic preservation encourages the protection of historic and archaeological resources that are associated with important past events, themes, and people; that are representative of periods and types of architecture; that possess high artistic value; or that are likely to yield valuable information about the past. Historic preservation helps us to know who we are by teaching us about where we came from.”

While the websites referenced herein enumerate many benefits to historic property designation, one of the most important benefits to many owners is the demonstrated trend toward increased property values. The enclosed newspaper article cites a recent Arizona Republic analysis of ZIP codes where historic districts are located that shows a healthy increase in home values. Nation-wide, Real Estate professionals indicate home values are approximately 20% higher for properties located within historic district boundaries than for comparable properties in the vicinity. In Mesa and Phoenix, the difference is more typically 30 to 35% higher. As the Tempe Historic Preservation Officer, I am constantly contacted by prospective buyers and Real Estate professionals with clients interested in purchasing historic homes or homes in historic districts. How is this explained? One reason is the rate at which the metropolitan area is changing. Many people are moving here from areas where older neighborhoods predominate. These buyers are attracted to the charm and distinctive character of older neighborhoods and at the same time, seek some assurance that the neighborhood they select will retain these features amidst the hectic redevelopment that predominates throughout the Valley.

Local designation provides a specific range of benefits as identified in the PowerPoint presentation enclosed. Another great group of benefits, including additional financial benefits to the property owner, is available through National Register listing. Please refer to the National Park Service links from the Tempe Preservation website for additional information.

3. If a home is not irrigated it will not be considered to be part of the historic district or any benefits. Is this correct?

An historic district can be composed of three types of properties with respect to designation; individually eligible properties, contributing properties, and non-contributing properties, as defined in the Ordinance. In the case of the Borden Homes Historic District, current fieldwork indicates all but 9 of the 68 properties proposed for inclusion in the district boundaries would be contributing, none would be individually eligible, and 9 would be noncontributing. 87% contributing properties is a very high portion, adding to the basis for determining Borden Homes to be an excellent candidate for designation. You may be interested in knowing that the above address at 1620 E 12th Street is considered a contributing property.

This question asks about what determines which properties are contributing properties. Our Ordinance states a contributing property contributes generally to the distinctive character of the district. Properties that retain a significant degree of character defining features related to the period of significance are contributing properties. Historic integrity can be lost incrementally by degrees, for example a house that has replaced doors and windows, or changed the siding, or landscape elements may still be evaluated as a contributing property if the historic integrity of the remainder of the property is sufficiently present. At some point, however, the compound effect of too many changes would leave a property no longer contributing.

The effect on the landscape of the Borden Homes Historic District resulting from sixty years of flood irrigation is a significant character defining feature that distinguishes the district as a unique place worthy of preservation. The test for a contributing property to a district is less rigorous than for an individually eligible property. What district designation strives for is the integrity of the overall character of the streetscape. This macro view aggregates the details of individual properties to test for a broad impression of historic integrity. Each individual property may contain more or fewer features that collectively contribute to the unique character experienced in the neighborhood. Thus non-irrigated properties that generally maintain sufficient historic integrity overall have been identified as contributing properties. Please refer to PowerPoint slide number 14 of 51 for identification of contributing properties.

4. If irrigation is enabled for a lot that never had irrigation, will that property be able to receive benefits?

From the above discussion you can see that a property can be contributing with or without flood irrigation as the objective is to preserve and enhance the historic character at the macro level of the overall streetscape. Accordingly, properties that have replaced the historic mesic landscape with a contemporary desert- granite theme would not be contributing unless a more compatible palate of materials was installed – with or without flood irrigation.

5. Will the historic district assist in the construction of irrigation lines in areas that do not have it?

Although no program is being considered to expand the infrastructure, owners of properties within historic districts have access to a wide range of Federal, State, and City of Tempe grants for maintaining and preserving the historic character of their properties. Regrettably, as the City of Tempe struggles to maintain the quality of its resident services in the midst of decreasing revenues, services like flood irrigation become increasingly at risk. The Tempe HPC is, however, an effective advocate for the responsible stewardship of community cultural resources and will assist property owners in identifying and applying for preservation funding, and in lobbying for programs and policies that are sensitive to historic preservation.

6. What is the city getting out of the historical district?

On November 9, 1995, as an expression of civic pride, Tempe City Council unanimously adopted Ordinance 95.35 – the Tempe Historic Preservation Ordinance – creating the Tempe Historic Preservation Commission to act in an advisory capacity to the Council in all matters concerning historic preservation. The goal of the Historic Preservation Program is to enhance community character and heritage through the identification and preservation of significant sites, properties and districts.

Tempe General Plan 2030 states “Tempe is one of the oldest incorporated cities in the valley and enjoys a rich multi-cultural heritage evident through its historic buildings, open spaces, neighborhoods, and structures... Protection and enhancement of Tempe’s heritage is critical to preserving the unique identity of our community. Tempe’s built environment tells the story of Tempe’s growth through a blend of the past with the present, thus enriching our city, residents and visitors.”

An important historic preservation objective identified by the City of Tempe is to foster economic vitality through preservation and/or adaptive rehabilitation of historic properties that contribute to character of the community. The City of Tempe has identified various historic preservation strategies to accomplish this objective, including;

- Identify, inventory and assess historic buildings, structures, districts and archaeological sites,
- Use this information to set preservation priorities and promote the identification and classification of properties that are eligible for historic designation,
- Review development proposals that may impact designated or potentially eligible historic properties, including nearby development that might visually impact historic properties,
- Increase awareness of Tempe history and historic properties among students, residents, visitors and businesses for the education and promotion of historic preservation, and
- Encourage historic property ownership and neighborhood preservation by assisting owners in rehabilitation, restoration or maintenance through incentives obtained or developed with City, State Or Federal assistance.

7. What are the real drawbacks to going historical, what are people giving up?

The Tempe Historic Preservation Office is not aware of drawbacks to the protection of community cultural resources as provided by the process of historic property designation which is intended to assist both the property owner and the City of Tempe in achieving the goal of maintaining our unique community identity.

8. Too Many rentals in the area, Will this help us with our rental problems?

This question asks about what trends develop consequent to historic district designation. Preservation of historic and cultural resources contributes to the stabilization of neighborhoods. The Historic Preservation Program seeks to promote better awareness of our architectural and cultural history, and to foster civic and neighborhood pride so that future generations will have the opportunity to appreciate and understand Tempe’s unique cultural heritage. Nation-wide statistics corroborated locally demonstrate a marked trend toward increased property maintenance and values for historic properties attendant upon increased pride of ownership. It is as if by the very act of celebrating the unique identity of a district, that identity is enhanced and held apart as valuable. Over time, market forces continue to distinguish these neighborhoods as special places, eventually producing an acute demand for purchase by owner occupants.

The reader is advised to seek the testimonials of valley residents who have had this experience first hand. The City of Mesa currently has identified eight historic districts, and the City of Phoenix has 36 designated districts. Thousands of property owners enjoy the benefits of designation and you probably know someone who has participated in the preservation grants, property tax reduction programs, or who has first-hand experience with historic property values.

Richard Terrell

Links to the historic preservation websites for the City of Phoenix and the City of Mesa can be found at the Tempe Preservation site referenced above. These sites each provide contact information for preservation professionals who are administering similar programs and can provide additional opinions or relay relevant experiences. In addition, Staff at the Arizona State Historic Preservation Office can provide opinions and share information across a much greater range of experiences.

9. [Will a historical district restore the 2 missing lots back as properties?](#)

This question and the next ask how the period of historic significance that is the subject of historic interpretation has been determined. Historic neighborhoods evolve over time. Even when this character was originally determined in large measure by strong design principals or planning practices, their charm is the product of the gentle passing of time.

The National Park Service Bulletin titled "How to Apply the National Register Criteria" specifies procedures for identifying and focusing the interpretive opportunity provided by historic districts. A district derives its importance from being a unified entity, even though it is often composed of a wide variety of resources. The identity of a district results from the interrelationship of its resources, which can convey a visual sense of the overall historic environment or be an arrangement of historically or functionally related properties. A district must be significant, as well as being an identifiable entity. It must be important for historical, architectural, archeological, engineering, or cultural values. Tempe Preservation recognizes the post-war era as a formative period significant in shaping our modern Tempe.

Unprecedented annexation and development during the post World War II period in Tempe established broad patterns of community planning and development that characterize the city today. From 1945 to 1960, more than one hundred subdivisions were opened for development and thousands of homes were built in Tempe. During this fifteen-year period, Tempe's corporate limits increased by a factor of ten, and our historically stable population increased from less than 5,000 to nearly 25,000 persons.

The period of significance for the Borden Homes Historic District is considered to occur between 1947 and 1957; the ten year period from the time the plat was filed by J. A. & Annie N. Farnsworth on October 9, 1947, until the subdivision was substantially built out. Accordingly, there is no need to replace the missing lots recorded on the original Farnsworth Plat as the significance of the Borden Homes Historic District is the product of its graceful evolution over an extended period of time.

10. [Restoring our neighborhood as it was originally recorded?](#)

The Borden Homes Historic District exhibits a high degree of integrity at both the subdivision and parcel levels of analysis. Additionally, based on field recognizance undertaken by the Tempe Historic Preservation Commission in November 2004, this district has a frequency of contributing properties above the 85 percent level. The original subdivision design concept is clearly intact at Borden Homes with the U-shaped street configuration resulting in an interesting subdivision layout overall. The combination of a high frequency of contributing properties, the continuous presence of flood irrigation and its resulting mature vegetation, along with good integrity of the historic streetscape and formal subdivision layout are significant character defining features of the Borden Homes Historic District.

Maintaining the historic character and integrity of the Borden Home Historic District is central to historic designation. Preservation of community cultural resources contributes to the stabilization of neighborhoods and encourages complementary design of alterations and renovations on historic landmarks and within historic districts, and for contemporary buildings developed on properties adjacent to historic landmarks and districts. The Historic Preservation Program has been developed to encourage individuals, companies, and agencies to undertake programs that will preserve the historical, cultural, and architectural heritage unique to Tempe.

We hope the above information provides adequate and fair address of you questions. We hope you will have the opportunity to view the website links herein provided, and particularly the Tempe Preservation site which is the main public communication facility for our program. Additionally, we hope this reply convinces you that the historic property designation process is truly your process and that stakeholder participation is central to the successful outcome of designation. Finally, we again encourage you to attend one of the upcoming public hearings scheduled for the designation of the Borden Homes Historic District or any regular monthly meeting of the Tempe HPC as this is the best opportunity to ask questions and get the answers you need. When you participate, you support preservation as the ability of the Tempe HPC to effectively advise Mayor and Council on matters of historic importance depends on public participation and support. In closing, we thank you again for your inquiry and appreciate your patience in waiting for this reply. We will mail hard copy of this communication and attach the documents listed below today.

joe_nucci@tempe.gov

Joseph G. Nucci, Historic Preservation Officer

Attachments:

- 1) POWERPOINT PRESENTATION – Tempe HPO February 10, 2005, University Heights Neighborhood Meeting.
- 2) STAFF REPORT - Tempe HPO April 7, 2005, DSD# HPO-2005.30 Borden Homes Historic District Designation
- 3) CHAPTER 14A of the Tempe City Code – Tempe Historic Preservation Ordinance (Ord No. 95.35, 11-9-95 as amended)
- 4) Post World War II Subdivisions Tempe, Arizona: 1945-1960 – Neighborhood & House Type Context Development (Solliday 2001) Tempe HPC brochure
- 5) Arizona State Historic Preservation Office brochures
- 6) Newspaper articles related to historic preservation

REFERENCES CITED IN ORDER OF OCCURRENCE

Tempe Preservation website <http://www.tempe.gov/historicpres/>

Tempe Historic Preservation Ordinance (City Clerk) <http://www.tempe.gov/citycode/14aHistoricPreservation.htm>

National Register (National Park Service) <http://www.cr.nps.gov/places.htm>

Arizona State Historic Preservation Office <http://www.pr.state.az.us/partnerships/shpo/shpo.html>

"Cities promote older homes - Historic-area designation sought for more districts" Monica Alonzo-Dunsmoor for the Arizona Republic Mar. 28, 2005 <http://www.azcentral.com/php-bin/clicktrack/print.php?referer=http://www.azcentral.com/arizonarepublic/local/articles/0328oldandhot28.html>

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties <http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/secstan8.htm>

"HISTORIC PRESERVATION: Finding Room for History in the Desert: Can Tempe Afford-or Afford Not To-Keep Its Oldest House?" by Lisa Selin Davis in The Next American City http://www.americacity.org/article.php?id_article=57

Tempe General Plan 2030 <http://www.tempe.gov/tdsi/gp2030/FinalDocument/chapter3.pdf>

How to Apply the National Reg