Houston Heights
Design Guidelines:
A presentation to the
City Council Committee on Quality of Life
June 28, 2018

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Chairperson, Houston Archaeological and Historic Commission

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Deputy Director, Planning & Development Department
Illustrate how the City of Houston’s historic preservation ordinance (as amended in Fall 2015) applies to resources in each historic district.
Design Guidelines Purpose:

Create a formula for more **predictability and certainty** in the application process for:

- applicants
- staff
- the Commission
Houston Heights Historic Districts

Heights East
Houston Heights Historic Districts

Heights East

Heights West
Houston Heights Historic Districts

Heights East
Heights West
Heights South
Houston Heights Historic Districts

Heights East
Heights West
Heights South
Other Heights-area
Historic districts
Houston Heights Historic Districts

There are 2273 properties in the three Heights districts. In 2017, the Heights districts comprised 38% of all Certificate of Appropriateness applications.
Houston Heights Historic Districts

In 2017, 88% of all applications for Certificates of Appropriateness were approved. The four-year average is 89%
Average Sales Prices

Houston Association of Realtors (HAR), February 2018
Days on Market

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Heights Historic Districts</th>
<th>Outside Heights Historic Districts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Houston Association of Realtors (HAR), February 2018
Public Process
Public Process

Consultants conducted an extensive data-collection period that included:

• Existing conditions analysis
• Site visits, photography
• GIS analysis of development patterns, building footprints
Public Process

A 2-1/2 year, inclusive and transparent process:

• Nine workshops with the general public;
• Four Advisory Committee meetings (comprised of property owners, builders, architects and realtors);
• Two community-wide meetings to explain, in detail, the contents of the draft documents;
• Four meetings with the HAHC; and
• Two public hearings in front of the HAHC.
Public Process

Additional engagement:

• Eight notification letters mailed through the USPS;
• Near-monthly emails sent to a distribution list of more than 200;
• 2 CitizensNet blasts; and
• All meeting recaps and written comments were posted on the project website at houstonplanning.com
More than 576 individuals attended at least one of these events and the department received more than 267 written comments on the two drafts circulated.
Compatible Design Survey
Compatible Design Survey:

Only one survey response was allowed from each property located within the three historic districts.

Approximately 100 architects and builders were also invited to participate.
Compatible Design Survey

Extensive outreach conducted to encourage fair and comprehensive participation included:

- Letters mailed to each property owner included a unique identifying code;
- Followed by door hangers placed on each owner-occupied home; and
- Flyers placed in neighborhood shops, restaurants and at events.
Compatible Design Survey

4.1 Building coverage is compatible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2 Overall mass (size) is compatible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Compatible Design Survey
Compatible Design Survey
Compatible Design Survey
Lot Coverage

Heights HD East
Heights HD South
Heights HD West
Weighted Average

Lot Coverage

Heights HD East
Heights HD South
Heights HD West
Weighted Average

24
Compatible Design Survey

Property owners for 558 properties in the three districts responded. This equates to a response rate of 25% combined for the three districts.
Compatible Design Survey

“A 25% response rate is strong and the sample is representative of the population studied.”
- Dr. Robert Stein
Document Drafts
Document Drafts

Strategy Document, released in February 2017

• Identified findings and initial recommendations
Draft Document, released in June 2017

• Established measurable standards
Document Drafts

Second Draft Document, released in August 2017

• Reduced cumulative side setbacks for one-stories from 15' to 10'

• Increased exemptions to Lot Coverage and FAR
  o Exempt accessory buildings; open or screened porches
  o Increased detached garage and garage apartment exemption from 250 SF to 400 SF each

AND
Document Drafts

Second Draft Document, released in August 2017

• Increased Finished Floor Height from 30" to 32"
• Increased Plate Heights from 8' and 9' for first and second floors, to 9' and 10' for first and second floors
• Increased garage Ridge Heights from 25' to 26'
Document Approved by Commission in June 2018

• Increase Finish Floor Height from 32" to 36"
• Reduce setback for garages placed at back of lot
• Reduce setback requirements for lots under 35' wide to 3 ' on each side

AND
Increase exemptions from FAR and Lot Coverage

- Exempt all attic space, with or without dormers
- Increase exemption for detached garages and garage apartments to 528 SF for each (totaling 1,056 SF for 2 stories)
- Exempt 264 SF of one-story garages on a one-story house
Conclusion

This document is the result of an inclusive and transparent process with:

- robust and engaged community participation;
- data-based standards;
- multiple revisions based on community feedback; and
- Consensus-driven results