

CITY OF HOUSTON

Planning and Development Department



HISTORIC DISTRICT RECONSIDERATION

DISTRICT NAME: HOUSTON HEIGHTS SOUTH
DATE OF APPLICATION: 06/02/2010
HAHC HEARING: 07/15/2010
PC HEARING: 07/22/2010
RECONSIDERATION APPLICATION ACCEPTED: 11/17/2010
PUBLIC MEETING DATE: 12/8/2010
RECONSIDERATION SURVEY DEADLINE: 12/23/2010

HISTORIC DISTRICT SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

Houston Heights, established in 1891 and named for its elevation 23 feet above that of downtown Houston, was one of the earliest planned communities in Texas. It flourished as a distinct municipality until 1918 when it was annexed to the City of Houston. Despite rapid redevelopment in the 20th century, Houston Heights still maintains the feel of a small town with its historic Victorian and bungalow-style homes. Also found in Houston Heights are historic churches, theatres, corner stores, parks, fraternal halls, schools, a library, and a business district on W. 19th Street. The neighborhood boasts many buildings listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Many Heights structures have also been designated as Recorded Texas Historical Landmarks and City of Houston landmarks. Houston Heights Historic District South covers a portion of the original town of Houston Heights located east of Yale Street to Oxford Street and north of E. 4th Street to E. 11th Street.

BACKGROUND

The application for Houston Heights Historic District South was filed on June 2, 2010. The public hearings on this application were held on July 15, 2010 before Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission and July 22, 2010 before Planning Commission. Both commissions found that the application met the criteria for designation, and recommended approval of the historic district designation to City Council.

HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGNATION APPLICATION

Under the prior ordinance, there were two ways to initiate historic district designation: 1) at the request of the HAHC, or 2) at the request of the owners of at least 51% of the tracts, constituting 51% of the land area in the proposed district.

On June 2, 2010, an application for designation of Houston Heights Historic District South was received with the support of **53.22%** of tract owners, who owned **51.27%** of the land area within the proposed district. After establishing a public hearing we determined that publicly owned property was included in the support of land area calculation. The boundary was revised to maintain the 51% support representing 51% of the land area.

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APPROVAL CRITERIA FOR HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGNATION

To qualify for designation, an historic district must satisfy one or more of eight criteria. The Houston Heights Historic District South met the following **six** criteria:

- The building, structure, object, site or area possesses character, interest or value as a visible reminder of the development, heritage, and cultural and ethnic diversity of the city, state, or nation.
- The building, structure, object, site or area is identified with a person who, or group or event that, contributed significantly to the cultural or historical development of the city, state, or nation.
- The building or structure or the buildings or structures within the area exemplify a particular architectural style or building type important to the city.
- The building or structure or the buildings or structures within the area are the best remaining examples of an architectural style or building type in a neighborhood.
- The building, structure, object or site or the buildings, structures, objects or sites within the area are identified as the work of a person or group whose work has influenced the heritage of the city, state, or nation.
- The building, structure, object or site has value as a significant element of community sentiment or public pride.

In addition, **62.38%** of buildings in Houston Heights Historic District South were at least 50 years old and classified as contributing or potentially contributing to the historic district.

HISTORIC DISTRICT RECONSIDERATION APPLICATION

On October 13, 2010, while Houston Heights Historic District South was still pending designation by City Council, the Historic Preservation Ordinance was amended. The Planning Department sent notification of the amendments of the HPO to all property owners on October 29, 2010 which included a summary of the amended provisions. Houston Heights Historic District South was permitted by the companion Ordinance to go through reconsideration on the request of at least 10% of the property owners in the proposed district.

An application for reconsideration was received on November 17, 2010, and was signed by the required minimum 10% of property owners in favor of reconsideration. A public meeting was held at Reagan High School on December 8, 2010, and survey forms were due back by December 23, 2010.

CRITERIA FOR HISTORIC DISTRICT RECONSIDERATION

According to Ordinance No. 2010-813, the Director shall consider each request for historic district reconsideration pursuant to:

1. The criteria for designation of the historic district;

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2. The provisions of Article VII of Chapter 33 of the Code that were applicable to the percentage of property owners required to initiate an application;
3. Any changed circumstances identified in the request for reconsideration; and
4. The current level of support for repeal of the designation.

The ordinance also requires the director to make findings with each request for reconsideration and report the findings to the City Council. The director may recommend that City Council:

1. Adopt a resolution creating the historic district and establishing its boundaries; or
2. By motion deny the application for designation if the owners of 51 percent of the tracts in the proposed Historic District indicate that they do not support the designation of the proposed Historic District.

CHANGED CIRCUMSTANCES

The only changed circumstances identified in the request for reconsideration were the October 13, 2010 amendments to the Historic Preservation Ordinance.

SUPPORT FOR REPEAL OF HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGNATION

The results of the survey are as follows:

Total Tracts	Signed for Repeal	Percentage Owners for Repeal
771	185	23.99%

DIRECTOR FINDINGS/RECOMMENDATION

The recommendation is to designate the historic district subject to modifying the boundaries by omitting the following tracts:

600, 700 and 800 block faces of Oxford;
415 and 421 Oxford;
3201 White Oak;
402, 412 and 420 Columbia; and
525 and 539 Heights Blvd.

The surveys requesting repeal of the district designation were dispersed throughout the district. The reconsideration of the district designation was not supported by the owners of 51% of the tracts in the district, therefore denying the historic district designation is not recommended.

Houston Heights Historic District South

-  Revised Boundary
-  Repeal - 23.99%
-  Contributing
-  Noncontributing
-  Landmark
-  Landmark / Natl Register
-  Protected Landmark
-  Protected LM / Natl Register
-  Natl Register only

0 300 600 Ft



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