

LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

LANDMARK/SITE NAME: The McTighe-Durham House
OWNER: Marguerite and Dean Swanson
APPLICANT: Marguerite and Dean Swanson
LOCATION: 848 Heights Boulevard
30-DAY HEARING NOTICE: Oct-6-96

AGENDA ITEM: Ia
PC MEETING DATE: Dec-12-96
HPO FILE No.: 96L011
DATE ACCEPTED: Oct-2-96
HAHC HEARING DATE: Nov-7-96

SITE INFORMATION:

Lot 24, Block 247, Houston Heights Subdivision, City of Houston, Harris County, Texas, being a 50' X 150' parcel, containing 7,500 sq. ft. The building on the site is a two-story, brick veneer residence with pedimented entry porch. The outbuilding is a contemporary wood, two-story garage apartment which is compatible.

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED: Landmark Designation

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE:

The house at 848 Heights Boulevard is contained within the boundaries of Houston Heights, which was designated a Multiple Resource Area by the National Register Program on June 22, 1983. The house has not been nominated individually for a historical designation previously. Houston Heights was developed by the Omaha and South Texas Land Company in 1891 and was later incorporated as a city in 1896. It was the earliest and largest totally planned community in Texas. It flourished as a distinct municipality until the residents voted to be annexed by the City of Houston in 1918.

Today, the area still maintains the feeling of a distinctive, self-contained "small town" with its predominantly small 19th-century, one-story and two-story Victorian-era homes, and numerous early 20th-century bungalow style buildings. It also boasts a thriving business district on 19th Street (now predominantly antique shops and restaurants) and a large industrial district west of the business section. The neighborhood also contains the original city hall of Houston Heights (also the firestation and jail). There are a number of historic churches, theatres, cornerstores, private and public parks and schools also in the neighborhood.

The two-story residential, brick veneer home was constructed in 1923 according to Houston City Directories. According to information supplied to the applicant by Mildred McTighe, daughter of the original owners, John and Katherine McTighe, the home was constructed by Temple Lumber Company. The business was then located at 425 W. 18th Avenue in Houston Heights. Also according to Ms. McTighe, the home was designed by an architect from Ohio. Since the home has a full basement, which is not commonly found in Houston homes, it supports the fact that it was designed by a non-Southern architect. The McTighes occupied the home for only two years until Mrs. McTighe died in 1925. John McTighe was employed by the Peden Iron and Steel Company at the time and chose to reside in the Brazos Hotel rather than live alone at their home. Also according to their daughter, Mr. McTighe later became a developer in the City of Bellaire, Texas. McTighe Drive, located just north of Bellaire Boulevard and east of Newcastle in Bellaire, was named in his honor.

Jay L. Durham purchased the home at 848 Heights Boulevard after selling his home at 921 Heights Boulevard, which became too small for his large family. The Durhams lived in the home until 1932. At the time, Mr. Durham and his wife, Anna, were involved in a real estate business which was located at 108 W. 13th Avenue in Houston Heights. The Durhams were originally from Galveston. After the Hurricane of 1900, the family left Galveston and moved to Houston and eventually built their home at 921 Heights Boulevard in 1903. Mr.

Durham became first Vice-President and Secretary of the Model Carriage Company. He later became the first paid fire chief of Houston Heights serving in that capacity from 1911 to 1915. He continued to be involved in civic matters in Houston Heights until his death in 1942. (Source: National Register Nomination-921 Heights Boulevard)

According to the applicant, the home was leased for use by various business concerns for a number of years including a furniture store, until it was purchased in 1976 by Glen Dickerson, an architect. He restored the building as his home, later using it as the office for his architectural firm. It was eventually purchased in November, 1994 by the applicants for their home and their Bed and Breakfast establishment.

The house is not typical for Heights Boulevard or for Houston Heights. It is an unusual configuration and blending of the Prairie, Amercian Four-Square and Colonial Revival styles. Its features include prominent, gable-front, pedimented porch supported by square, columns with inset wood panels; porch embellished with dentils; prominent Prairie/Craftsman style entry door with matching sidelights; large hip roof dormer with paired Prairie/Craftsman style windows; attached two-story sunporch on south elevation; pedimented service entry on north elevation with same detailing and door as the main entry.

RESTORATION HISTORY/CURRENT CONDITION:

The exterior of the building was restored in 1976, including restoration of the front porch. The sunporch windows on the first floor were fitted with plate glass. The rear sunporch was enlarged and columns were constructed to match front porch columns. Plate glass was installed between columns below which are wood panels. An balcony above the sunporch was constructed using stick balustrade and square newel posts to match front porch columns. A two-story, wood garage apartment was constructed at the rear of the lot (east elevation) which is compatible to the building and surrounding neighborhood. The interior of the home was restored in 1995 by the current owners. In 1996 they constructed a 4' decorative iron fence supported by brick newel posts to match brick of home.

HAHC RECOMMENDATION:

At a public hearing on November 7, 1996, the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission determined that the application complied with criteria 1, 4, and 5 found in Section 33-224 and recommended designation of The McTighe-Durham House as a landmark to the Planning Commission.

APPROVAL CRITERIA FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION....:

Sec. 33-224. Criteria for designation of a Landmark.

(a) The HAHC and the commission, in making recommendations with respect to designation, and the city council, in making a designation, shall consider one or more of the following criteria, as appropriate for the type of designation:

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| S D NA | S - satisfies D - does not satisfy NA - not applicable |
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- (1) Whether 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;
 - (2) Whether the building, structure, object, site or area is the location of a significant local, state or national event;

- (3) Whether 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;
- (4) Whether the building or structure or the buildings or structures within the area exemplify a particular architectural style or building type important to the city;
- (5) Whether 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;
- (6) Whether 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;
- (7) Whether specific evidence exists that unique archaeological resources are present;
- (8) Whether the building, structure, object or site has value as a significant element of community sentiment or public pride.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

That the Planning Commission accepts the recommendation of the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission and forward it to the City Council for the adoption of the McTighe-Durham House as a Landmark of the City of Houston.

AGENDA ITEM: 1a

THE MCTIGHE-DURHAM HOUSE

West Elevation
848 Heights Boulevard
Not to Scale



LANDMARK DESIGNATION ↑