

AGENDA ITEM: Ib

SITE NAME:

HPO File no. 091002

SITE LOCATION: 1328 Cortlandt Street – Houston Heights Historic District East

Owner: Patricia Mayo

Applicant: Same

Time Frame	Date Accepted	90-day Waiver
	October-6-2009	Jan-4-2010

SITE INFORMATION: Lot 21 Block 168 Houston Heights Subdivision, City of Houston, Harris County, Texas. The building on the site is a one-story, wood framed building containing one efficiency residential unit.

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED:

The primary residential building, which once occupied this location, was demolished at some point between 1985 and 2007. The current building on this site is a 432 sq. foot one story building which had occupied the back yard of the now demolished original historic residence which was located at the front of the lot. There are no available building permit records for this site to determine the exact age of this building. The subject building does not appear on the original Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. map of this site from 1924, but does appear in a 1957 aerial view of the property. The owner and applicant requests approval of a certificate of appropriateness for the following work:

- Demolition of the one-story rental building which is located at the rear of the lot;

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE:

At the time of the Houston Heights Historic District East survey, the primary building which had occupied this site had already been demolished and the secondary building located at the rear of the lot was classified on the inventory as "Potentially-Contributing". The existing building is a secondary residential building which was constructed at the rear of the site at some point after the construction of the original primary residential building. The building appears to have been constructed circa 1945 as a one story rental unit as was common in the years following World War II in response to the housing crunch of that time. The building's current classification as potentially contributing is due to the fact that the building is more than 50 years old, but represents a later phase of development of the site.

The property is contained within the boundary of the Houston Heights Historic District East. The Historic District is contained within the boundaries of Houston Heights, which was designated as a Multiple Resource Area (MRA) on June 22, 1983 by the National Park Service. Houston Heights was designated as a MRA because it was at one time an independent municipality of less than 50,000 inhabitants (1896-1918), a requirement of the designation, and the area also contains a large number of buildings that have been individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places, another requirement. On April 10, 1991 in conjunction with the Houston Heights Centennial Celebration that year, Houston City Council designated the entire Houston Heights Subdivision as Houston Heights Historic District of the City of Houston (Resolution No. 91-15). The resolution proclaimed Houston Heights as "one of the first planned communities in the State of Texas ... the largest intact historic district in the city tangible evidence of Houston's architectural and historical legacy an area with great potential for enhancement and revitalization as a point of interest in the city." While that designation granted no powers or conferred no rights or privileges associated with the designation, it was the second of such resolutions passed by City Council to recognize neighborhoods in Houston for their historical and architectural significance to the city. The resolution designating Houston Heights had also been recommended to City Council by the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission (HAHC) at the request of the Houston Heights Association (HHA). The action taken by City Council was also warranted as Houston Heights had been honored previously in 1988 when the Houston Heights Urban Main Street Project on West 19th Street was established by the Texas Historical Commission and the

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National Trust for Historic Preservation. The program successfully achieved economic development and at the same time preserved the historic buildings which enhanced the success and made it unique. The Texas Historical Commission approved a Recorded Texas Historical Landmark (Subject Marker) for Houston Heights which was dedicated during the Centennial Celebration in 1991. Many other sites and buildings in Houston Heights have been designated as Recorded Texas Historical Landmarks as well. After the passage of the city’s Historic Preservation Ordinance in 1995 by City Council, many buildings have been designated also as City of Houston Landmarks and Protected Landmarks.

Houston Heights was so well planned from its inception by the Omaha and South Texas Land Company in 1891, and as the result, it became very attractive to investors, and Houston Heights grew rapidly and eventually was incorporated as a city in 1896. It flourished as a distinct municipality until 1918 when the residents, by vote, agreed to be annexed to the City of Houston. The reason that the citizens of Houston Heights voted for the annexation to Houston was primarily to guarantee a broader tax base with which to support their public schools. Houston Heights voted "dry" in 1912, guaranteeing that alcohol may not be sold – an extremely unique ordinance adopted by Houston Heights and continuously enforced by the City of Houston. Houston Heights grew rapidly in the 20th century, but continued to maintain its unique identity, which was reflected in its original planning. Today the area still maintains the feeling of a distinctive, self contained “small town” with its predominantly small 19th century, one-story cottages and larger, 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, retail 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 fire station and jail). Also located there are a number of historic churches, theatres, corner stores, private and public parks, fraternal halls and schools.

APPROVAL CRITERIA FOR DEMOLITION:

Sec. 33-247. Same--Demolition of landmark, protected landmark, contributing structure, potentially contributing structure or within archaeological site.

(a) The issuance of a certificate of appropriateness for the demolition of a landmark, a contributing structure or a potentially contributing structure, or for demolition of a building, structure or object on or in an archaeological site shall be subject to the establishment by the applicant of an unreasonable economic hardship or the establishment of an unusual and compelling circumstance.

(1) Determination of an unreasonable economic hardship shall be based upon the following criteria:

- | | | | |
|--------|---------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| S D NA | S - satisfies | D - does not satisfy | NA - not applicable |
|--------|---------------|----------------------|---------------------|
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- (a) That the property is incapable of earning a reasonable return, without regard to whether the return is the most profitable return, including without limitation, whether the costs of maintenance or improvement of the property exceed its fair market value;
 - (b) That the property cannot be adapted for any other use, whether by the current owner, by a purchaser or by a lessee, that would result in a reasonable return; and
 - (c) That efforts to find a purchaser or lessee interested in acquiring the property and preserving it have failed.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval of the certificate of appropriateness as requested by the applicant.

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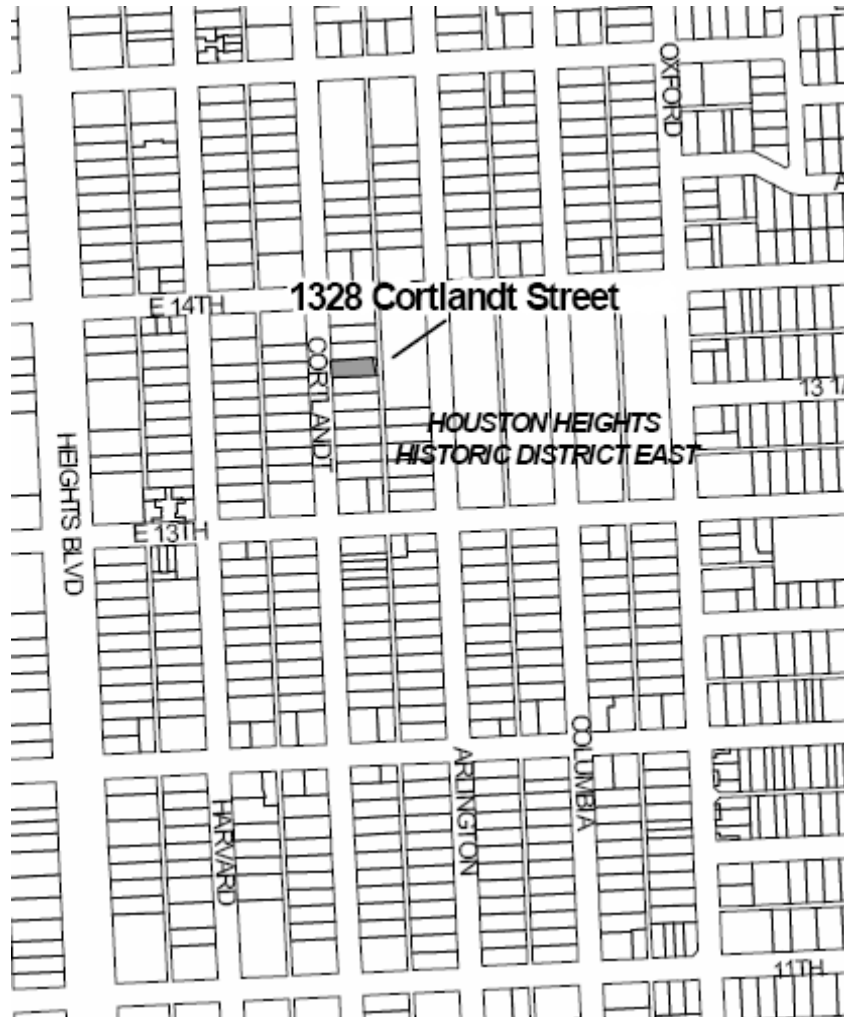
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**Site Location Map
Not to Scale**



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Photo of Existing Building



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**Interior Photos
Showing Current Condition**



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