

CITY OF HOUSTON

Archaeological & Historical Commission

Planning and Development Department

LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

LANDMARK NAME: Jay L. Durham House

OWNER: David and Lenora Carlson

APPLICANT: Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission

LOCATION: 921 Heights Boulevard - Houston Heights

30-DAY HEARING NOTICE: Feb-11-98

AGENDA ITEM: IIa

HPO FILE NO.: 98L45

DATE ACCEPTED: Feb-09-98

HAHC HEARING DATE: Mar-12-98

PC. MEETING DATE: Apr-02-98

SITE INFORMATION

Lot 5 and 6A, Block 231, Houston Heights Subdivision, City of Houston, Harris County, Texas. The building on the site is a two-story, wood frame residence with one-story porch which wraps to the south and a second-story turret projecting from the porch on the north side.

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED: Landmark Designation

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE

The house at 921 Heights Boulevard is contained within the boundaries of Houston Heights, which was designated a Multiple Resource Area (MRA) by the National Register Program on June 22, 1983. The Jay L. Durham House was individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places on January 15, 1988 (Reference No. 87002246). The house was built in 1903 and is classified as a Queen Anne style house with turret.

Houston Heights was designated a MRA because it was at one time an independent municipality. Within its original boundaries are numerous buildings individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Houston Heights was developed by the Omaha and South Texas Land Company in 1891. It was incorporated later as a city in 1896 and at that time, 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). Also located there are a number of historic churches, theatres, cornerstores, private and public parks and schools.

At the public hearing of the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission (HAHC) held on March 13, 1997, the HAHC discussed the matter regarding the expiration of the two-year temporary designation of all landmarks that City Council had previously designated when the Historic Preservation Ordinance was adopted on March 1, 1995. Since the designation had expired, the HAHC requested that the planning staff contact the owners of these landmarks to determine their interest in the HAHC initiating an application for permanent designation. On June 3, 1997 a letter was sent to the owner to ascertain an interest in the initiation of an application for the owner by the HAHC. The HAHC had instructed the planning staff previously that if any landmark had been designated either by the National

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Register program, as a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark, a State Archaeological Site or a temporary landmark of the City of Houston, then the application would be considered for permanent landmark designation on that merit alone. Therefore, regarding the preparation of the application, HAHC agreed to consider the application with minimal information provided to them.

RESTORATION HISTORY/CURRENT CONDITION

The house was restored in 1982 and is generally in good condition today. A compatible one-story, wood frame addition with a hip roof was added circa 1940 which extends from the southwest corner (rear) of the main house. In 1985 a porch was added to the northwest corner (rear) of the house which features a hip roof, turned wood columns and stick baluster (glass was installed between the columns). The porch addition is compatible to the main house. The porch of the house currently exhibits wood turned columns and a wood stick balustrade which is a compatible replacement to the original porch detailing which consisted of either round classical columns with a simple stick balustrade or turned columns with stick balustrade and stick frieze. A one-story, two car garage with gable front roof was added in 1982 at the southwest corner (rear) of the lot. In 1986, a second-story addition with gable-front roof was constructed on the garage using wood siding and windows to match the main house. The garage is compatible to the house. A 4' iron picket fence has been installed in the front yard in 1997.

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:

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;

The Jay L. Durham House was listed in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion "C" which includes "distinctive characteristics of a type, period, and method of construction."

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- (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.

HAHC RECOMMENDATION

At a public hearing on March 12, 1998, the Houston Archaeological and Historic Commission determined that the application complied with criteria found in the Historic Preservation Ordinance and recommended that the Planning Commission accepts the recommendation of the HAHC and forward it to City Council for the designation of the Jay L. Durham House as a Landmark of the City of Houston.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: NONE

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Recommends that the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission recommends designation of the Jay L. Durham House as a landmark to the Planning Commission since the application complies with the criteria of the Historic Preservation Ordinance.

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SITE LOCATION MAP
THE JAY L. DURHAM HOUSE
921 HEIGHTS BOULEVARD
NOT TO SCALE