

heights • forward

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF
THE HOUSTON HEIGHTS
HISTORIC DISTRICTS
(EAST, WEST, SOUTH)
DESIGN GUIDELINES PROJECT

Issue 3, March 2016



Next Meeting

Tuesday, April 26, 2016

5:30–7:30 p.m.

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

1819 Heights Blvd., Houston, TX 77008



In This Issue

Welcome to *heights forward*! Every month, we bring you the latest information about the City of Houston's initiative to develop historic preservation design guidelines for Houston Heights Historic District East, Houston Heights Historic District West, and Houston Heights Historic District South. Here's what you'll find in this issue:

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Looking for more information?

The latest news and an archive of project information and materials are available online at
<http://www.houstontx.gov/planning/HistoricPres/Design-Guidelines-Heights.html>



**PLANNING &
DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT**



Project News and Updates

No community meeting to be held in March

Meeting – February 14, 2016

The third meeting for the Houston Heights Historic Districts Design Guidelines project drew an audience of 30 people representing the three historic districts, as well as the builder community. The meeting included a project update and a presentation on the concept of *massing*. Attendees asked thoughtful questions and provided feedback.

Project manager Steph McDougal noted that the meeting schedule will be updated once a design guidelines consulting team is hired; the City is in the process of evaluating proposals from several qualified firms.

Community Engagement

Of the 110 individuals who have attended meetings for this project so far, 42 have been from Houston Heights East, 16 from Heights West, and 30 from Heights South. Twenty-two people were from other historic districts (Norhill, Woodland Heights, Freeland), members of the builder/real estate community, journalists, representatives of City Councilmembers, or unaffiliated.

To date, the City has received 293 unique comments, plus several lengthy letters or emails from individuals. Please send your comments or questions via email to Steph McDougal at steph.mcdougal@houstontx.gov. All comments will be posted on March 31.

Steering/Advisory Committee

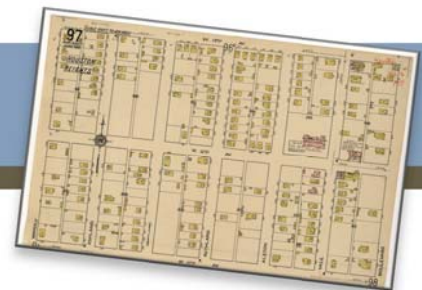
The City is seeking volunteers to meet several times with the design guidelines consultants between April and October 2016. While many property owners from Houston Heights Historic District East have volunteered, we are still looking for a few more people in Houston Heights West and South who are willing to provide input and feedback. The committee will include three representatives from each of the three historic districts, three members of the builder community, and one representative from the Houston Heights Association. To volunteer, please email Steph McDougal at steph.mcdougal@houstontx.gov.

Explain That Term: *Contributing*

When a historic district is created, whether through a local designation or by listing on the National Register of Historic Places, each building or structure in the district is classified as either Contributing or Non-Contributing.

The term *Contributing* means that the building or structure adds to the historical significance of the district. Each district must meet at least one of the adopted criteria for the evaluation of significance.

The City of Houston uses eight such criteria when considering potential district designations. Each Houston Heights historic district was designated because of the value of the area as part of the City of Houston Heights, from 1891–1918; its identification with Oscar M. Carter, Daniel D. Cooley, and other notable residents; its residential, commercial, religious, and governmental architecture; and its importance to the City of Houston as a whole. In summary, significance is based on more than just the architecture.



As a result, some buildings in the three Heights historic districts might be identified as Contributing, even though they are modest in size, style, or decoration.

One more important note: significance and Contributing status is *not* based on the condition of the building, in terms of upkeep or maintenance.

Spotlight on Architectural Styles

Each month, this column will focus on the architecture found in historic districts.

In this issue: *Queen Anne*



When most people think about “historic homes,” they probably picture a Queen Anne house. That style of architecture was incredibly popular with the American public — especially in the southwestern U.S. — between 1880 and 1910, thanks to the availability of mail-order house plans and decorative building materials, delivered via the nation’s growing network of railroads.

Some distinguishing characteristics of a Queen Anne house are complex roof forms, often hipped roofs with a front gable, cross gable, or both.

Queen Anne houses may be one- or two-stories tall. Most Queen Anne houses are wood-framed, with decorative shingles of various shapes that create patterns and texture, particularly under the roof gables (see below).



These houses almost always have an asymmetrical façade with a prominent front porch. Porches are an important design element of Queen Anne houses. Many porches wrap around a front corner of the house (right).

Most Queen Anne houses can be classified based on the shape of their porch columns — either *spindlework* (turned posts and balusters, see photo at upper left) or *free classic* (classical columns, photo right). It is not unusual for classical columns to be grouped in twos or threes.

Bay windows and towers or turrets are also common. Like other architectural features on Queen Anne houses, they are used to create texture and asymmetry.

Original doors are likely to have a single large window, located in the top half of the door; the lower half may be paneled. A transom window may be present above the door.

Windows are often tall and narrow, double hung with one or two panes in each sash. The window frames may be narrow as well.

Queen Anne houses often feature gable windows or louvered vents, or dormers set into the roof. All of these provide light and ventilation to the attic, which may be partially finished — the relatively steep pitch of the roof on a Queen Anne house can create usable space beneath. The windows in either gables or dormers are typically inset with plain clear glass; leaded or stained glass is less common.



Over time, some Queen Anne homes have been modified with later details, including Craftsman-style porch columns. In addition, some houses were built during the transition between these styles and incorporate elements of both.

History of the Heights: 1910-1920

By 1900, Houston Heights was less than 10 years old, but it was well on its way to becoming a bustling community. The population of Houston Heights nearly doubled between 1900 to 1910, jumping from 800 to 1,400 residents, with both modest and grand houses built to accommodate the newcomers. Many of these were constructed in the trendy styles of the day; although its popularity had begun to wane, the Queen Anne style was still fashionable, and both one-story and two-story versions can be found in the Heights today. Smaller houses, in styles now called Folk National and (with the addition of Queen Anne-style decorative elements) Folk Victorian, were also common.

The Houston Heights Hotel served both overnight guests and boarders, including several prominent citizens, until 1905, when it was converted to doctors' offices.

By 1910, Heights Boulevard and other streets had been paved and the community's first City Hall built at Yale and 12th Streets. The entire city received electric power in 1905; its plant had previously powered the streetcar system. Commercial and industrial expansion soon followed.

During those years, many social clubs and fraternal organizations were established in the Heights. The Odd Fellows lodge constructed a meeting hall, and the Houston Heights Literary Club (later known as the Houston Heights Woman's Club) was founded.

One of the distinguishing features of the Houston Heights community, then and now, is the absence of establishments selling alcohol. A large section of the Heights was voted "dry" in 1912, eight years before Prohibition became law in the United States. Even after Prohibition was repealed in 1935, much of the Heights remained dry; that ordinance was upheld by the Texas Supreme Court in 1937 and remains in force today.



The city government was, by all accounts, well-run and well-funded, when the City of Houston annexed Houston Heights in 1918. By that time, a commercial area had developed in the Heights, with a hotel, grocery stores, drug stores, meat markets, and other retail establishments providing many of the provisions that a middle-class family might need.

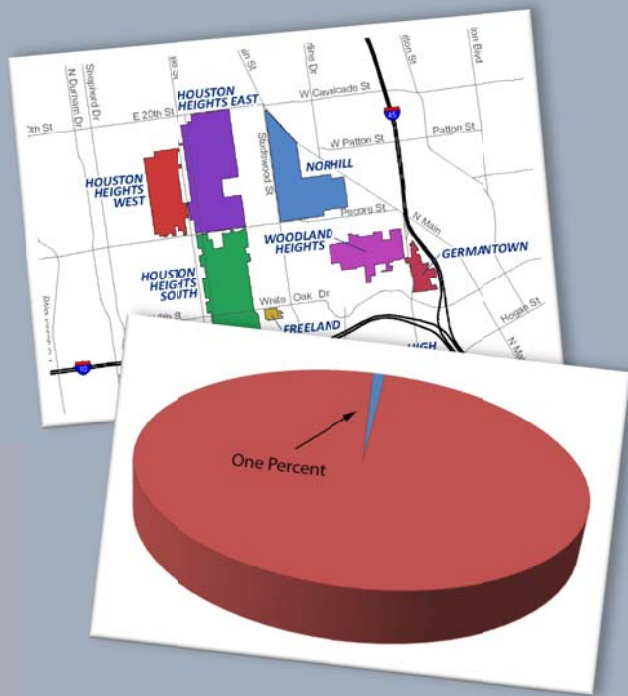
In the next issue: Houston Heights from 1920-1930



Many churches were organized in Houston Heights during the first decade of the 20th century, including:

- First Presbyterian (1903)
- Collins United Methodist Church (1903)
- First Baptist Church of Houston Heights (1904)
- Grace Methodist Church (1905)
- All Saints Catholic Church (1908)
- Baptist Temple, pictured at left (1908)

Most of the church buildings for these congregations were constructed in the following decade.



Did You Know?

Within the City of Houston, a total of 6,688 parcels are located within historic districts. That represents 1.08% of all parcels city-wide.



Landmarks and Historic Districts together cover 2.69 square miles — less than one-half of one percent of the total area of the city.

Meet the Preservation Planning Staff

If you have ever applied for a historic designation or a Certificate of Appropriateness, you probably have worked with the City of Houston's Preservation Planners. Each preservation planner meets the standards for professional qualifications for historic preservation as established by the Secretary of the Interior of the United States. Those standards require a master's degree in historic preservation or a related field, or a similar bachelor's degree plus several years of experience.

Diana Ducroz (J.D., AICP) is Houston's Historic Preservation Officer. She has been a preservation planner with the City of Houston for 13 years. Diana earned a bachelor's degree in Latin American studies, with an emphasis in history, from the University of Texas at Austin. She has a master's degree in urban planning and a law degree, both from the University of Washington, where she was a managing editor of the Washington International Law Journal. She was admitted to the State Bar of Texas in 2000. Diana is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP).

Amanda Barry has a bachelor's degree in history from Louisiana State University and a Master of Arts in public/applied history from Middle Tennessee State University.

Cory Johnson has a bachelor's degree in photography from Indiana University-Northwest and a Master of Science in Historic Preservation from Ball State University.

Matthew Kriegl has bachelor's degrees in anthropology and geography from the State University of New York at Plattsburgh and a Master of Science in historic preservation from Ball State University.

Kathleen Taus has a bachelor's degree in architecture from the University of Florida and a Master of Historic Preservation from the University of Maryland-College Park.

Lorelei Willett has a bachelor's degree in history from Texas A&M University and Master of Science in architectural conservation from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland.



Make your voice heard.

Whether you have any knowledge or expertise in building-related matters, we want to know what you would like to see constructed in your neighborhood.



We're all in this together.

The outcome of this project will affect property owners, building professionals, and City officials can create a product that allows the City and its citizens to effectively preserve historic districts for future generations.

We Want You! to Participate in the Design Guidelines Process

In order for this project to be successful, it needs to be inclusive and representative of the Houston Heights Historic Districts community. You can help and make your voice heard. Here's how:

- ✧ Visit the Houston Heights Design Guidelines website at <http://www.houstontx.gov/planning/HistoricPres/Design-Guidelines-Heights.html>
- ✧ Attend one or more community meetings. During these meetings, we will share information and gather your feedback. The next meeting is currently scheduled to take place on **Tuesday, April 26, 2016** from **5:30–7:30 p.m.** at **St. Andrew's Episcopal Church at 1819 Heights Boulevard.**
- ✧ Sign up to receive this newsletter via email. Share it with your friends and neighbors.
- ✧ Sign up for the Houston Heights Design Guidelines email list to get up-to-the-minute information right in your inbox. To subscribe, visit the website (above) and complete the registration form.
- ✧ Share your input and feedback with Steph McDougal (Project Manager):
 - Email Steph.McDougal@HoustonTX.gov
 - Call 832-393-6541
 - Send a letter to City of Houston, Attn: Planning/
Steph McDougal, P.O. Box 1562, Houston, TX 77251-1562

