



CITY OF HOUSTON

Annise D. Parker

Mayor

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November 25, 2015

Dear Property Owner:

**You are invited to participate in the development of
Historic Preservation Design Guidelines for the three Houston Heights historic districts.**

As you may be aware, the City of Houston amended its historic preservation ordinance in September 2015. Part of that revision required that the City must adopt historic preservation design guidelines for three historic districts (Houston Heights East, Houston Heights West, and Houston Heights South) within 16 months. We are now beginning that process, and your participation is encouraged and welcomed.

Please plan to attend our first community meeting for this project.

Tuesday, December 8, 2015 from 5:30-7:30 p.m.
St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 1819 Heights Blvd., Houston, TX 77008

For more information about this project, visit

<http://www.houstontx.gov/planning/HistoricPres/Design-Guidelines-Heights.html>

Over the course of this project, we will hold seven community meetings in the Heights neighborhood. In addition to the December 8 meeting, we will meet in January, February, April, June, August, and October (dates and locations to be announced as soon as they are finalized). If you can't attend a meeting, you can send your comments to me via postal mail or email. We will gather your input, in order to determine what you want or don't want for the Houston Heights historic districts.

If you have any questions or comments, you are welcome to call me at 832-393-6541, send an email message to steph.mcdougal@houstontx.gov, or mail a letter to Steph McDougal, Attn: Planning Department, P.O. Box 1562, Houston, TX 77251-1562. Thank you! I look forward to meeting you and hearing from you during this project!

Very best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steph McDougal".

Steph McDougal

Project Manager, Houston Heights Historic Districts Design Guidelines

Frequently Asked Questions

How does the City maintain the character of locally designated historic districts?

Local governments can maintain the character of historic neighborhoods by adopting a historic preservation ordinance. Houston's first historic preservation ordinance was adopted in 1995. This local law affects people who own property that has been designated by the City as a Historic Landmark, or which is located in a locally designated Historic District. Those property owners are required to obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) before they make certain changes to the exterior of their house or building. New construction, demolition, restoration, or relocation of a structure also requires a COA.

How does that work?

The City of Houston historic preservation ordinance establishes city-wide regulations for historic districts. Recent amendments to the ordinance include new options to help the City process some COA applications more quickly and easily through staff review, while other COA applications must be reviewed by the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission (HAHC).

What are Design Guidelines, and how do they fit in to this process?

Design guidelines provide helpful information to property owners who are planning changes to their property that would require a COA. Although each proposed project is unique and considered on its own merits, design guidelines include a list of potential changes that are likely to be approved, as well as those that are not likely to be approved. The list is accompanied by explanations, photographs, and illustrations to help reduce confusion. This information, when used during the planning phase of a project, along with assistance from staff in the Planning & Development Department, can help property owners save time and money.

Once a historic district's design guidelines are adopted by City Council, the HAHC and the City's historic preservation staff use those design guidelines, along with the historic preservation ordinance, to review (and decide whether or not to approve) COA applications.

Why should the community participate in this process?

It is important for property owners to have a say in the design guidelines for their own historic district. Historic preservation is a tool that protects the property rights of people who have invested in their historic homes and buildings. Because historic districts can be very different from one another, design guidelines enable property owners in each district to decide if their neighborhood would like to add other regulations. Those additional regulations, if any, are then included in the design guidelines for that historic district and become mandatory. Design guidelines can also include suggestions for things that are not regulated, such as fences and paint colors, if property owners would find that information useful.