

Historic Designation (HD) for the Prospect Park neighborhood

The following are questions asked at a neighborhood the meeting on July 19 2007

Q: From a property owner's point of view, what is the effect of being in a Historical District?

A: Whenever a building permit is issued, the permit will be reviewed by the Historical Preservation Commission (HPC) in addition to the Zoning and Planning review it normally receives.

Q: What does the HPC review consist of?

A: The HPC staff reviews proposed changes and alterations and makes recommendations regarding their conformity with the characteristics of the district. It is rare that proposals are turned down. Of 100 recent reviews, HPC turned down only 4 and 2 of these were for signage.

Q: What is a National Historic District designation?

A: The US Department of Interior may grant this designation to a geographical area that fulfills criteria listed in the 1966 National Preservation Act which protects property from negative effects when using federal funds, permits and licenses.

Q: What are the disadvantages to property owners of a National Historic District.

A: None

Q: What is local Historic Designation.

A: The city of Minneapolis has a Historic Preservation Ordinance that allows the city council to designate city buildings or geographical areas as a local Historic Asset. The local Historic Designation regulates the city Zoning, Planning & Permitting process.

Q: What are the disadvantages to property owners of Local Historic District designation.

A: It depends on the local criteria. These are tailored to individual communities based on specific features of the neighborhood. HPC invites input to the process of setting criteria, however the process for deciding on local criteria has not yet begun for Prospect Park.

Q: How many other Mpls – St Paul neighborhoods have sought designation?

A: Several in both cities, including Loring Park in Mpls and Lower Town in St Paul

Q: Could one expect an automatic denial from the HPC if one intends to tear down an existing structure to build something significantly different?

A: Not necessarily. It would first depend on whether the structure to be torn down is a contributing property. Subsequent considerations would focus on how well the new structure would fit into the HD criteria. HPC is not interested only in saving old buildings, but in the creation of buildings that will be tomorrow's historic structures

Q: What impact would HD have on property values and taxes?

A: HD generally has an enhancing influence on neighborhoods that tends to increase property values. This unfortunately tends to increase taxes.

Q: How quickly could we feel the impact of HD?

A: At the national level, next spring at the earliest. At the local level, interim designation quickly follows nomination and could be in place in as little as a month. This is unlikely, however. Since we are protected throughout the HD process, there is

no need to rush the process, and we would like to see federal designation in place before we proceed to the local level.

Q: Will this apply to all the properties in Prospect Park?

A: No, but it will apply to most of them. The entire designated area has been recorded and catalogued. There are 591 structures, 95% of which have been designated as "contributing properties". A complete list of properties will soon be posted on the PPERRIA website (<http://www.pperr.org>)

Q: Does HPC review occur only if one is pulling a permit?

A: Yes.

Q: Should we wait until Historic District is in place before we begin renovations?

A: Probably not. Historic District designation does not affect the need to pull a permit.

Q: How has the community been involved in this process?

A: This process may be new to a number of people depending on their awareness and involvement with PPERRIA and/or NRP. The community involvement began with the discussion of allocation of NRP-I funds in 1996, and it involved the entire community. The NRP committee hired a consultant to conduct the survey of properties and recommendations for HD designation in 2000. A second phase of the designation process was begun in 2006 with NRP-2 funding and funds raised in the community.

A number of questions relating to specific properties were also asked including:

Q: Could a homeowner change the lap width of his/her house's siding?

A: It depends on whether the original width is determined to be a significant architectural feature.

Q: Are there restrictions on choice of exterior colors?

A: No. Although painting masonry is discouraged, restrictions apply only to work that requires a permit, which painting does not.

Q: Does Historic Designation affect houses that have already undergone renovations that have resulted in significant changes to the structure? How about further renovations to that structure?

A: There is no retroactive enforcement of HD restrictions. Any future changes will be evaluated on the basis of criteria in place at the time of designation.

Q: Are there restriction on fences?

A: None that go beyond zoning considerations that would apply in any case. Certain landscaping features such as significant retaining walls may be affected.

Q: Would it be more difficult to change or demolish a condemned property?

A: There are incentives for improving all existing properties, including condemned, that could allow for changes. The HPC can approve or even recommend demolition, but the overall goal is to give every old building a fair hearing.

Q: What about the replacement of a house that had burned down?

A: The same process would apply as in the case of a condemnation or tear down.

Q: What about vacant properties?

A: Same considerations as those for condemned properties, but neither HD nor HPC can have any stance or influence on markets, as in the case of vacant houses that are for sale.

Q: Will HD affect landscaping?

A: Only that landscaping that would require a permit.

Q: Would changes to an attached garage be more difficult than changes to a detached garage?

A: Changes to an attached garage would need to reflect more closely the architectural details of the house and the original garage than a detached garage.

Q: Could one build a larger garage?

A: This would be primarily a zoning issue. HD would apply only to the design of the new structure.

Q: Can detached garages be changed or replaced?

A: Garages can be complicated. Technically a garage would require the same roof pitch and siding as the house, but this is often impractical or even inadvisable, so the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) will attempt to preserve the architectural integrity of the property without undue rigidity to the restrictions.