

HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION MINUTES- May 3, 2006

MISCELLANEOUS ACTION ITEM:

(2:29)

REQUEST TO FORWARD THE LOWER RIVIERA SPECIAL DESIGN DISTRICT GUIDELINES TO CITY COUNCIL FOR ADOPTION.

The Lower Riviera Special Design District was created as part of the Demolition Review Ordinance Amendments in October 2004. Over the past few months, City Staff and volunteers from the Bungalow Haven Neighborhood Association have worked on creating draft guidelines which are intended to guide development within the Lower Riviera Special Design District in order to ensure its continuing compatibility to the proposed Bungalow Haven Historic District, which lies within its core. The guidelines, once adopted, will serve to assist property owners, architects, contractors, and commissions and design review boards to design projects that will be appropriate, compatible, and beneficial to the Special Design District, and to assist the City in reviewing applications for new projects and alterations to structures within, and in close proximity to, the proposed Historic District.

Present: Jake Jacobus, Urban Historian
Jaime Limón, Senior Planner

Mr. Limón stated that 300 neighborhood property owners were provided notice of this discussion meeting. The Special Design District Guidelines are an interim document and the Commission is being requested to decide as to whether the guidelines along with the revisions are ready to be presented to City Council.

Mr. Jacobus explained that the Special Design District Guidelines were revised in response to the Historic Landmarks Commission's comments and briefly reviewed the changes during the meeting. The preparers are also expecting comments from the Architectural Board of Review and the Planning Commission. The HLC members will be informed if there are any revisions before the final document is presented to City Council

Copies of letters received from the public were given to the Commission members and discussed by Mr. Jacobus. One of the letters was from a resident who requested to remain anonymous in fear of retribution. The anonymous writer is concerned that too many building regulations will affect the ability for residents to make necessary alterations to their buildings.

The other letter received was from Randy Wright, resident, addressing concerns relating to the Guideline's requirement that historically authentic materials be used in the renovation process that ignore modern practicality, such as maintainability and energy efficiency.

Mr. Jacobus explained that the preparers of the guidelines need equal input from the public, including those that are in opposition to an Historic Bungalow District, and are depending on neighbors to inform them of their preferences. Districting guidelines are being prepared to resolve issues relating to the creation of historic districts.

Post/Hazeltine is also preparing a report to determine whether a historic district would be appropriate.

Public comment opened at 2:42.

Mr. Joe Rution, Bungalow Haven Neighborhood Association, briefly reviewed suggestions he submitted in a letter to the Commission relating to the revisions to the Guidelines that were made by Staff.

Public comment closed at 2:45.

Mr. Limón responded to Mr. Rution's suggestion that Section 11.3 "New Development – New Multi-Family Projects" be dropped. Staff carefully analyzed how the Special Design District area is zoned currently and found that the majority of the parcels contained within the Special Design and Historic Districts are zoned "multi-family". The Guidelines would be incomplete if they did not address the potential for second unit additions to bungalows and multi-unit projects to be constructed on larger parcels. The zoning guidelines do allow additions in the neighborhood and both guidelines must be compatible.

Mr. Jacobus commented that the wording on page 3, section 3.5, where it says "preservation of historically significant buildings outside of the Historic District may be accomplished through individual designation as City Structures of Merit or Landmarks" will be reviewed by Staff.

The Commission, either individually or collectively, had the following comments, suggestions, and/or questions:

1. Stated that conflict between historic preservation and the zoning ordinance has been an issue in the past.
2. Agreed that language for multi-family projects should be in the Guidelines so that developers know that the Commission is looking for compatibility between the existing and proposed projects, and to clarify that multi-family units are not excluded in the Guidelines.
3. Spoke about the need to have specific language to emphasize that parking should be out of sight and that in special circumstances it can be in another area, but not in the front.
4. Commented on section 4.2, item C, where it says that one of the goals is to preserve the "pedestrian friendly" character of the area by minimizing the prominence of garages, and said that the concept of a two-car garage facing the street that eliminates the front porch does not avoid the parking of cars in full view outside the garage. Modifications for one car garages that are more historically appropriate should be addressed in the document. (Mr. Jacobus responded that language covering garages is in the Guidelines, but in a different section.)
5. Would like a stronger word than "promote" in item 4, on page 5, under section 4.3, where it says "promote the use of the Historic Building Code where appropriate" because the Code is a valuable resource to be used for preservation of historic structures.
6. Suggested that item 5 include the language "subject to architectural review of the expansion". The word "expanded" is unclear as to the extent of expansion and needs to be better defined to indicate how or by how much.
7. Requested clarification of letter E, under section 8.2 on page 7, where item 4 says

“alterations that do not require a building permit but negatively affect an historic resource may be subject to scrutiny when a project is before the ABR or HLC”. (Mr. Limón responded that when an existing site has had alterations made to the property that are inconsistent with the historic appearance of the structures or have been painted with nontraditional colors, the Commission could require that alterations be returned to their original appearance.)

Public comment reopened at 2:57.

Ms. Kathleen Daig, 1429 Olive Street, expressed that too many regulations limit the ability of families to stay in the area and would like to be excluded from the bungalow historical district.

Public comment closed at 3:02.

Mr. Limón clarified that the City is not advocating a historic bungalow haven district at this time and that City Council formed the Special Design District in December 2004. The Special Design District Guidelines is clarifying and expanding on what guidelines apply to that special district.

Motion: The Commission forwards the Special Design District Guidelines to City Council with the following comments: 1) Modifications to allow one car garages that are more historically appropriate should be addressed in the document. 2) Should include specific language to emphasize that parking should be out of sight and not in the front of the house. 3) A stronger word than “promote” needs to be used in item 4, under section 4.3 on page 5. 4) Item 5, under section 4.3 on page 5, should include the language “subject to architectural review” and have the word “expanded” better defined. 5) Clarify item 4, in section 8.2, under letter E.

Action: La Voie/Boucher, 9/0/0.