



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
Planning Division

m e m o r a n d u m

TO: Bruce Walden, Chief Administrative Officer

FROM: Elizabeth H. Tyler, AICP, Director

DATE: July 14, 2004

SUBJECT: Case HP-04-HDD-1, Request for designation of the “Buena Vista Court Historic District,” property consisting of 1-8 Buena Vista Court.

Introduction

The proposed district includes the eight properties contained within Buena Vista Court. Titled the “Buena Vista Court Historic District,” the proposal includes the original eight bungalow buildings, courtyard, entrance arch, and the birdbath all as contributing historic resources within the proposed district. The nomination has been submitted by Urbana resident, Lauren Kerestes. Of the eight affected properties, five property owners have consented to the nomination by signing the application. To this point there has been no objection to the nomination.

On April 14, 2004, prior to the submission of the application, the City of Urbana Planning Staff met with the Buena Vista Court residents in an informational session to discuss the process of local Historic District designation. Following the informal meeting, a completed historic district nomination application was submitted on May 14, 2004. The affected property owners were properly notified of the request and the Department of Community Development Services held a second informational meeting with the residents to discuss the process of historic district designation. After all notifications were complete a Historic Preservation Commission meeting date was set for June 2, 2004.

On Wednesday, June 2, 2004 the Historic Preservation Commission met and made a Preliminary Determination that the request was valid and met the criteria for historic district consideration in its entirety and that the request should be further considered at the July 7, 2004 public hearing where the Historic Preservation Commission voted 4-0 to approve to forward a recommendation to the Urbana City Council to approve the proposed Historic District.

If designated, the Buena Vista Court Historic District would represent Urbana’s second local historic district. The Joseph Royer Historic District (801 West Oregon Avenue and 701 South Busey Avenue) was designated as a local historic district in 2002. In addition, five individual local landmarks were designated as historic under the Urbana Historic Preservation Ordinance back in 2000. The Buena Vista Court properties were designated as a historic district on the National Register in 2002.

Background

Description of Properties

For complete details about the architectural and historical features of the structures, please refer to the Historic Preservation Commission Memorandum prepared on June 30, 2004. The application provides a thorough description of the proposed eight contributing bungalow structures, two contributing objects, and one contributing site.

Contributing Structures

Each of the eight bungalows was constructed in 1926 and demonstrates a combination of the Spanish Colonial Revival style of architecture. None of the structures have been significantly altered since their construction. Although all the homes are similar, each structure within the proposed district is unique in design and expression of the architectural influence.

Contributing Site & Objects

The courtyard area is included as a contributing site to the district because it serves as a central focal point of the properties and contains a private sidewalk which circulates throughout the courtyard. A contributing object found at the center of the courtyard is a concrete birdbath believed to be original to the site. The second contributing object, freestanding entrance arch, is found north side of the site. It serves as a gateway between the court and parking area. It is influenced by the craftsman style and compliments the Buena Vista Court properties.

Discussion

Section XII-4-C-1 of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance outlines the criteria for considering a proposed historic district. The request must meet one or more of the following criteria:

Historic District Criteria:

1. A significant number of buildings, structures, sites or objects meeting any of the standards in Section XII-5-C-1.
2. An area containing a contiguous grouping of properties having a sense of cohesiveness expressed through a style, period or method of construction.
3. An area of sufficient historical integrity to convey a sense of historical time and place.

The standards of Section XII-5-C-1 are as follows:

1. Landmark Criteria. A proposed landmark must meet one or more of the following criteria for designation:

- a. Significant value as part of the architectural, artistic, civic, cultural, economic, educational, ethnic, political or social heritage of the nation, state, or community.
- b. Associated with an important person or event in national, state or local history.
- c. Representative of the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type inherently valuable for the study of a period, style, craftsmanship, method of construction or use of indigenous materials and which retains a high degree of integrity.
- d. Notable work of a master builder, designer, architect or artist whose individual genius has influenced an area.
- e. Identifiable as an established and familiar visual feature in the community owing to its unique location or physical characteristics.
- f. Character as a particularly fine or unique example of a utilitarian structure, including, but not limited to, farmhouses, gas stations or other commercial structures with a high level or integrity or architectural significance.
- g. Located in an area that has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.

At the July 7, 2004 Historic Preservation Hearing the Commission moved that the request met all the three of the criteria for a historic district.

Options

The Urbana City Council has the following options in case HP-04-HDD-1, the Council may:

1. Approve the request for the proposed historic district; or
2. Deny the request for the proposed historic district; or
3. Request additional information not presented at the Historic Preservation Commission public hearing on July 7, 2004.

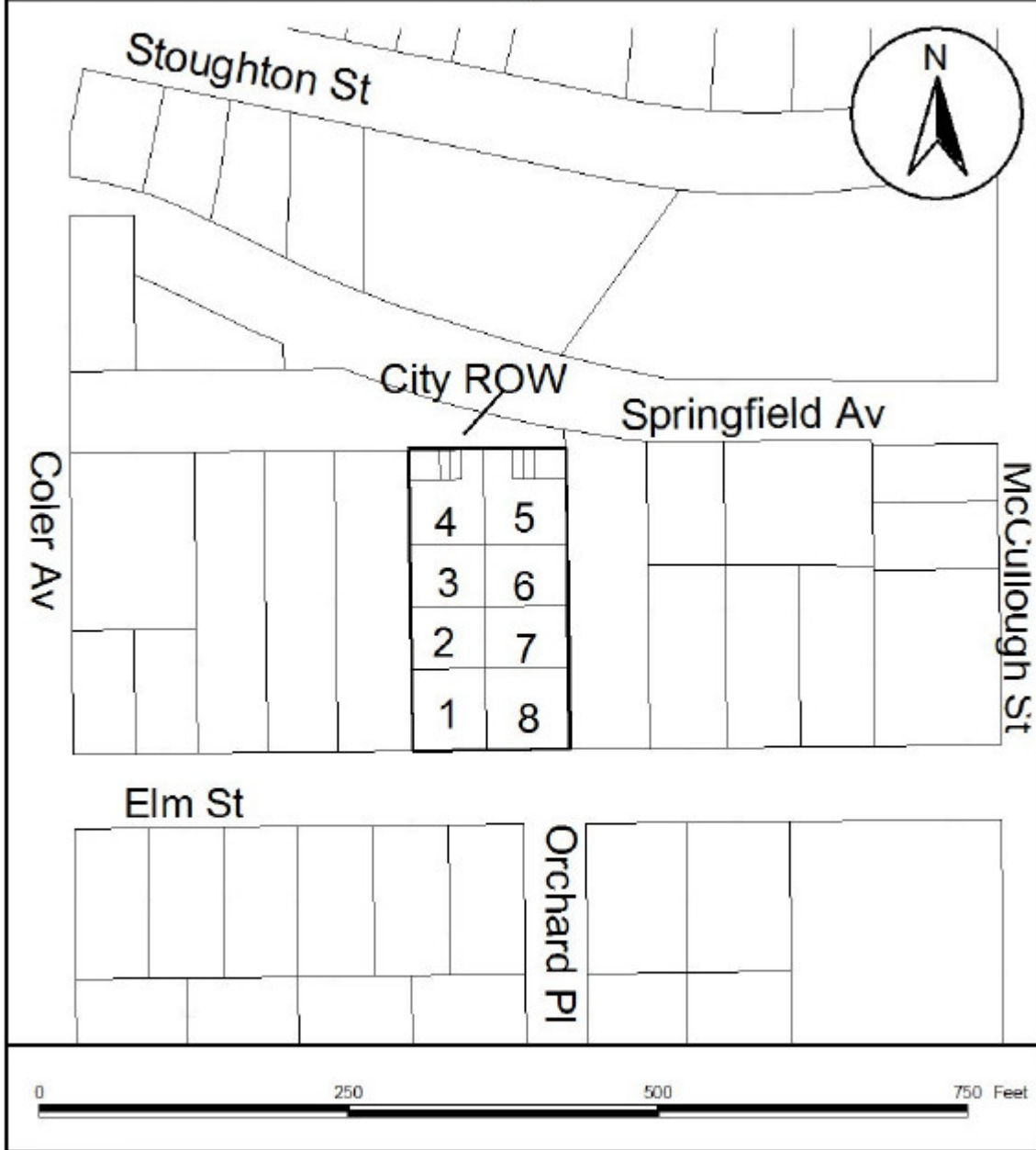
Staff Recommendation

Based on the summary of staff findings articulated in the staff report to the Historic Preservation Commission dated June 30, 2004, and the summary of the findings of the Historic Preservation Commission at the July 7, 2004 public hearing, Staff recommends that the Urbana City Council approve the proposed “Buena Vista Court Historic District” as presented in Plan Case HP-04-HDD-1.

Attachments: Location map
Zoning Map
Ordinance
July 7, 2004 Historic Preservation Commission public hearing minutes
Additional Photos as of June 8, 2004

c: Buena Vista Court Residents
Lauren Kerestes

Exhibit "A": Location Map



Buena Vista Court
Historic District Nomination

Buena Vista Court










Prepared June 2004 by Community Development Services - lk

Zoning Map



HPC-04-HDD-1
Buena Vista Court Historic District

Prepared by Community Development Services - mbo

-  B1 - Neighborhood Business
-  B2 - Neighborhood Business-Arterial
-  B3U - General Business - University
-  CRP - Conservation-Residential-Education
-  MOH - Mixed Office Residential
-  R1 - Single Family
-  R2 - Single and Two-Family
-  M4 - Medium Density Multiple-Family
-  M6 - Medium-High Density Multiple-Family

AN ORDINANCE APPROVING THE DESIGNATION OF THE "BUENA VISTA COURT HISTORIC DISTRICT" UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE URBANA HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCE.

(#1 through #8 Buena Vista Court)

WHEREAS, an application has been submitted for nomination of a historic district pursuant to the Urbana Historic Preservation Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, the district nomination is commonly referred to as the "Buena Vista Court Historic District" and contains the properties of 1-8 Buena Vista Court; and

WHEREAS, the owners of the subject properties as well as the petitioner have been duly notified of the nomination and each have registered a preference related to the nomination; and

WHEREAS, the owners of 1,4,5,6, and 7 of Buena Vista Court have signed the owner consent to register a favorable preference for the nomination; and

WHEREAS, after due publication and notice to all parties as is required under the Historic Preservation Ordinance, a public

hearing was held by the Urbana Historic Preservation Commission on July 7, 2004 concerning the historic district nomination; and

WHEREAS, following the public hearing, the Historic Preservation Commission voted to approve historic district designation for the subject parcels by a vote of 4 ayes, 0 nays, and 0 abstentions, and made a recommendation accompanied by a report summarizing the evidence presented at the hearing, with an explanation of its recommendation, which said recommendation and attachments was forwarded to the City Council; and

WHEREAS, the Urbana Historic Preservation Commission evaluated the designated criteria as documented in the Historic Preservation Ordinance and made the following findings of fact for designation of the Buena Vista Historic District:

1. The Buena Vista Court Historic District contains a significant number of buildings, structures, sites or objects meeting the standards as follows:
 - a. The Buena Vista Court Historic District is a significant value as part of the architectural heritage of the community. Properties yield high integrity and value in terms of architecture, community planning and design, community cohesiveness, and social heritage. Contributing structures and objects have a combination of Spanish Colonial Revival and Craftsman architectural styles that are significant to the community.

- b. The Buena Vista Court Historic District is representative of the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type inherently valuable for the study of a period, style, craftsmanship, method of construction or use of indigenous materials and which retains a high degree of integrity. The combination of Spanish Colonial Revival and Craftsman architectural styles are evidenced in features of the proposed district and retain high levels of integrity.

 - c. The Buena Vista Court Historic District is identifiable as an established and familiar visual feature in the community owing to its unique location or physical characteristics. The exclusivity as the only Spanish Colonial Revival style bungalow court in Urbana and the only bungalow court with an original functional common-courtyard in Urbana-Champaign distinguishes it as an identifiable and familiar feature within the entire community.
2. The Buena Vista Court Historic District is an area containing a contiguous grouping of properties having a sense of cohesiveness expressed through a style, period or method of construction. The proposed district includes eight contributing bungalow structures, two contributing structures (birdbath and entrance arch) and one contributing site (courtyard), all of which are contiguous and grouped with a strengthened sense of cohesiveness expressed through the Courtyard style of development. The layout allows the residents a community within their surrounding neighborhood, with seclusion, privacy and a smaller network of community within the courtyard district.

Although each structure is unique, they all relate to each other as each bungalow incorporates different elements and characteristics of the Spanish Colonial Revival and Craftsman architectural styles that strengthen the "community cohesiveness" of the proposed district.

3. The Buena Vista Court Historic District is an area of sufficient historical integrity to convey a sense of historical time and place. The district conveys historical integrity with importance of the historical time in US history at the turn of the century when bungalows and the courtyard bungalow style of developments were popularly used. Although construction of the Buena Vista Court was completed in 1926, Bungalow courtyards were common layouts built in the early 20th Century in the south and southwest of the United States of America. They are unique to the Midwest region. The proposed court follows in function and form associated with the rise of the bungalow as a residential unit in the United States. These factors strengthen the district by providing a sense of historical time and place.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF URBANA, ILLINOIS, THAT,

Section 1: The Urbana City Council hereby adopts the findings of the Urbana Historic Preservation Commission presented above and hereby determines that the subject historic district nomination for property commonly referred to as 1-8 Buena Vista Court along with two contributing objects including the birdbath and archway is hereby designated as a historic district, pursuant to the Urbana Historic Preservation Ordinance.

Section 2. The City Clerk is directed to publish this Ordinance in pamphlet form by authority of the corporate authorities. This Ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and publication in accordance with the terms of Chapter 65, Section 1-2-4 of the Illinois Compiled Statutes (65 ILCS 5/1-2-4).

PASSED by the City Council this _____ day of

_____, _____.

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSTAINS:

Phyllis D. Clark, City Clerk

APPROVED by the Mayor this _____ day of

_____, _____.

Tod Satterthwaite, Mayor

CERTIFICATE OF PUBLICATION IN PAMPHLET FORM

I, Phyllis D. Clark, certify that I am the duly elected and acting Municipal Clerk of the City of Urbana, Champaign County, Illinois. I certify that on the _____ day of _____, 2004, the corporate authorities of the City of Urbana passed and approved Ordinance No. _____, entitled "**AN ORDINANCE APPROVING THE DESIGNATION OF THE "BUENA VISTA COURT HISTORIC DISTRICT" UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE URBANA HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCE. (#1 through #8 Buena Vista Court)**" which provided by its terms that it should be published in pamphlet form. The pamphlet form of Ordinance No. _____ was prepared, and a copy of such Ordinance was posted in the Urbana City Building commencing on the _____ day of _____, 2004, and continuing for at least ten (10) days thereafter. Copies of such Ordinance were also available for public inspection upon request at the Office of the City Clerk.

DATED at Urbana, Illinois, this _____ day of _____, 2004.

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

DRAFT

DATE: July 7, 2004

TIME: 7:00 p.m.

PLACE: Council Chambers, 400 South Vine Street, Urbana, Illinois 61801

MEMBERS PRESENT: Rich Cahill, Alice Novak, Bill Rose, Art Zangerl

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Scott Dossett, Trent Shepard

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Rob Kowalski, Planning Manager; Teri Andel, Planning Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT: Curtis Pettyjohn, Hugh Phillips, Marya Ryan, Bernadine Stake, Christopher Stohr, Ed Tiedemann, Nancy Wehling, Roger Woodbury

8. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

Case # HP-04-HDD-1: Request for designation of the “Buena Vista Court Historic District,” property consisting of 1-8 Buena Vista Court.

Rob Kowalski, Planning Manger, gave the staff report for this case by giving a PowerPoint presentation on the following:

- Buena Vista Court Aerial Photo
- Buena Vista Court Zoning
- Photo of 1 Buena Vista Court
- Photo of 2 Buena Vista Court
- Photo of 3 Buena Vista Court
- Photo of 4 Buena Vista Court
- Photo of 5 Buena Vista Court
- Photo of 6 Buena Vista Court
- Photo of 7 Buena Vista Court
- Photo of 8 Buena Vista Court
- Photo of the Entrance Arch
- Photo of the Birdbath
- Historic District Criteria – Section XII-5-C-1 of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance

Mr. Kowalski reviewed the history of the application process for nominating Buena Vista Court for historic district designation. He noted that Lauren Kerestes had submitted the application for nomination of the district. Ms. Kerestes had interned with the City of Urbana for two years, and she was currently employed by the Town of Normal. She did this project as part of her studies at the University of Illinois – Department of Urban and Regional Planning. A lot of her work complemented the work that was done on the National Register nomination as well. Buena Vista Court was on the National Register of Historic Places. Staff had held two neighborhood meetings with the residents of the Buena Vista Court to find out what their thoughts were and to educate them on the process to become a historic district designation. The meetings went very well. At those two meetings, five of the property owners had signed the application form. No one had signed any kind of written protest or opposition to the nomination. At the June 2, 2004 meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission, there was a preliminary determination, in which the Commission decided that the proposed nomination was worthy of further consideration in a public hearing. He noted that this would be the second historic district in the City of Urbana.

Marya Ryan, of 1 Buena Vista Court, handed out a letter that she had written to the Plan Commission regarding additional language that could be added to the Historic Preservation Ordinance to help owner-occupants be able to afford maintenance and repairs on their homes. She would hate to see an owner-occupant have to sell their home, because they could not afford to maintain and/or repair their home in the expensive, historically authentic fashion required from being in a historic district.

Ms. Ryan thanked Ms. Kerestes for including some of her previous comments in the application. She clarified that the brickwork was not actually recreated on her home, but they did replicate it in the Dry Vit, so the design of the house was as it was before the work was done.

Mr. Rose commented that emergency care and maintenance of these properties and all properties were very important in historic preservation. Finding common characteristics in a grouping of buildings may open up the possibility for a discussion of issues that might concern the property owners. He suggested that the City of Urbana or the Historic Preservation Commission sponsor a get together with perhaps a roofing expert, gutter expert, plastering expert, etc. and property owners, in which these experts could describe common problems and common solutions, what property owners could do, and what some estimated costs of repairs might be down the line. Ms. Ryan stated that would be great. After talking to Ms. Oktay, she found that there were different options that property owners might have. Any opportunity available to learn more about how to maintain a home in an affordable way would be welcomed.

Curtis Pettyjohn, of 907 South Orchard, stated that he was very happy to see more historic property in the City of Urbana undergoing the process of historic designation. He felt it was important because of the “cancer” that the Presbyterian Church had perpetrated on the area near Buena Vista Court. The number of buildings that had been demolished was appalling. So, he was very excited that the beautiful houses could be saved and designated historic. He also noted

his appreciation to each member of the Historic Preservation Commission on the work that they did.

Mr. Kowalski pointed out that in the back of the information packet, there was a photo inventory of each of the units. Staff provided this inventory so that it may help in the future with Certificates of Appropriateness to know what was there at the time of designation. It may also be beneficial for the Historic Preservation Commission's discussion at this meeting.

Mr. Cahill felt that Ms. Kerestes had done a great job using the Commission's comments from the June 2, 2004 meeting when making changes to the application. There were a couple of minor changes that he mentioned should be made were as follows:

- 1) There were a couple of references to floor plans in the application. The first draft showed floor plans; however, the second draft did not. He suggested removing the notations to floor plans from the application.
- 2) It would be nice to clarify a little more about Saffer Court on the University of Illinois' campus. There were originally six structures there, and only one is left. It had been used as the Center for American Indian Studies. The other part of the lot was for a relocation of a significant structure that got moved.

Mr. Zangerl asked if the owners in the proposed historic district had some contributions that they make to maintain the common areas? Ms. Ryan explained that there were no common areas. The courtyard was proportioned off to each individual property owner. Mr. Zangerl inquired who would be responsible for the archway. Ms. Ryan stated that there was not any organization responsible to date. Although if there were any repairs needed, she suspected that they would request contributions from all of the property owners, just like when they dealt with the dilapidated garages. Mr. Kowalski mentioned that the case of the archway and the birdbath could be an interesting dilemma years down the road, since there was not organized homeowner's organization. Ms. Novak commented that someone probably owns the birdbath, because it was in someone's yard. Mr. Kowalski stated that the Commission could keep an eye on these two objects over the years and help current or future owners identify possible grants to help maintain them.

Mr. Zangerl felt that Mr. Rose's idea of sponsoring a workshop in the neighborhood for stucco structure maintenance was a good idea. Ms. Novak mentioned that the Preservation and Conservation Association (PACA) had done workshops on window rehab as well. Maybe the City of Urbana's Historic Preservation Commission could partner up with PACA on sponsoring a workshop.

Ms. Novak agreed with Mr. Cahill about the clarification in the application on page 9. The building that was to be relocated was formerly 1003 West Nevada. She suggested adding in the address of the building that was left in Saffer Court or at least clarify the block side that the building was one.

She noted that Ms. Kerestes did a lot of work on providing the historic owners and occupants of the proposed buildings. However, Ms. Kerestes did not include the employment information, which would have been interesting as well.

Mr. Zangerl moved that the Historic Preservation Commission recommend approval to the City Council that the proposed collection of properties be designated as a historic district based on support of all three main criteria, namely that Buena Vista Court had significant value as part of the architectural heritage of the community, that it was representative of the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type with a high degree of integrity, that the proposed buildings are identifiable as an established and familiar location, that they are a contiguous grouping of properties having a sense of cohesiveness expressed through their style and method of construction, and that they contain sufficient historical integrity to convey a sense of time and place. Mr. Rose seconded the motion. The roll call was as follows:

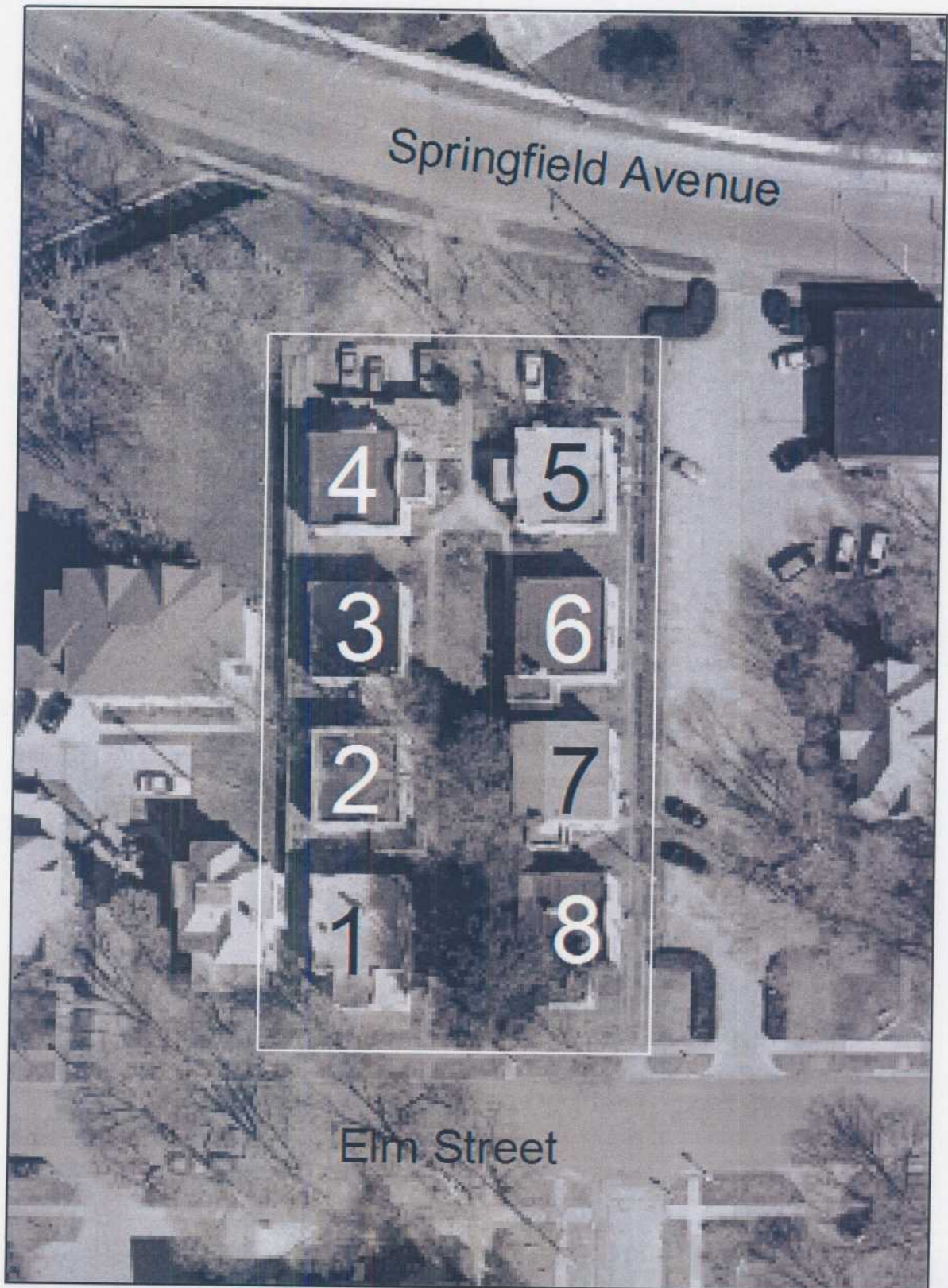
Ms. Novak	-	Yes	Mr. Rose	-	Yes
Mr. Zangerl	-	Yes	Mr. Cahill	-	Yes

The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. Kowalski mentioned that this case would be presented to City Council on July 19, 2004.

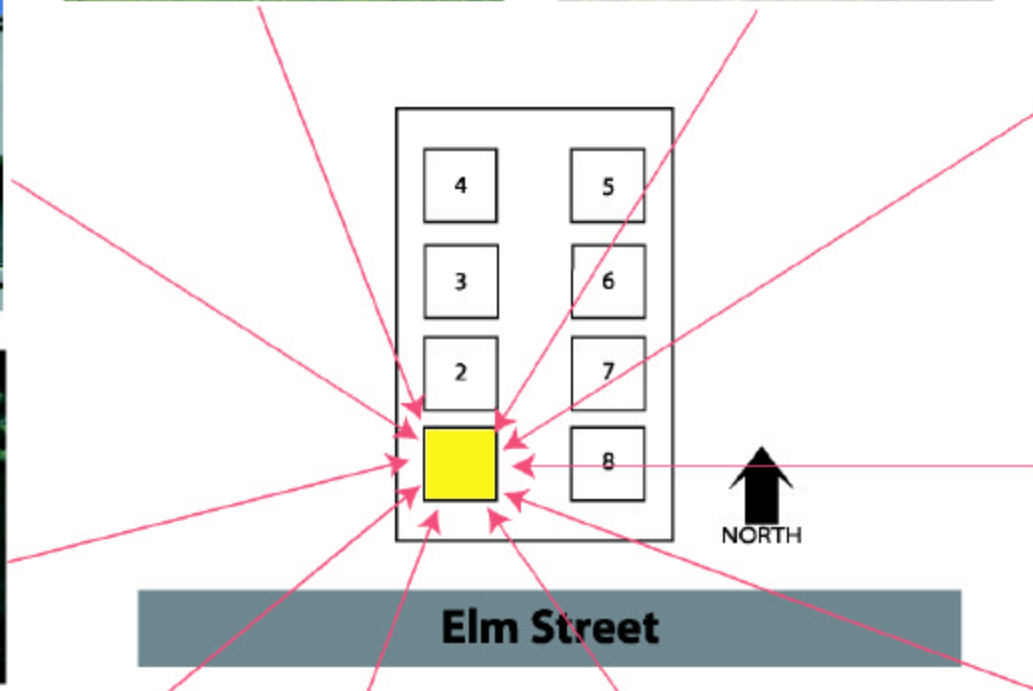
Anticipating that City Council would approve this case, Mr. Zangerl talked about signage. He preferred if there would be a plaque at both ends of the court rather than on each home. Mr. Kowalski stated that staff had begun to gather some materials to use for the plaques.

Buena Vista Court Aerial Photograph



1 Buena Vista Court

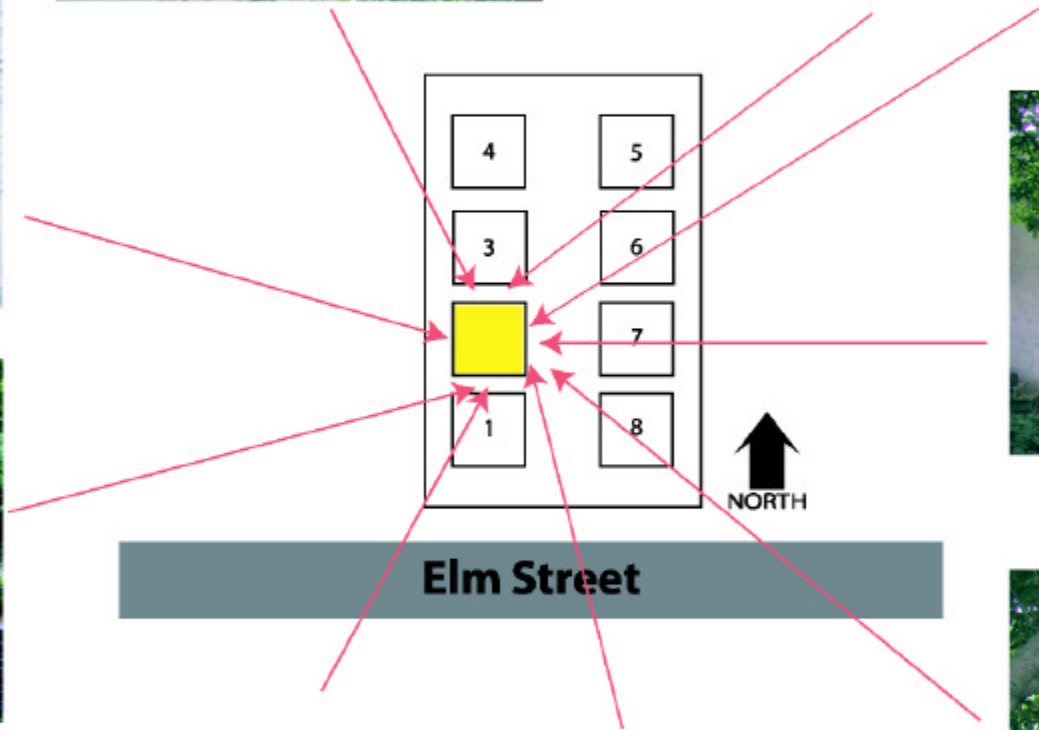
Photo Inventory
of building facades
June 8, 2004



2 Buena Vista Court

Photo Inventory of building

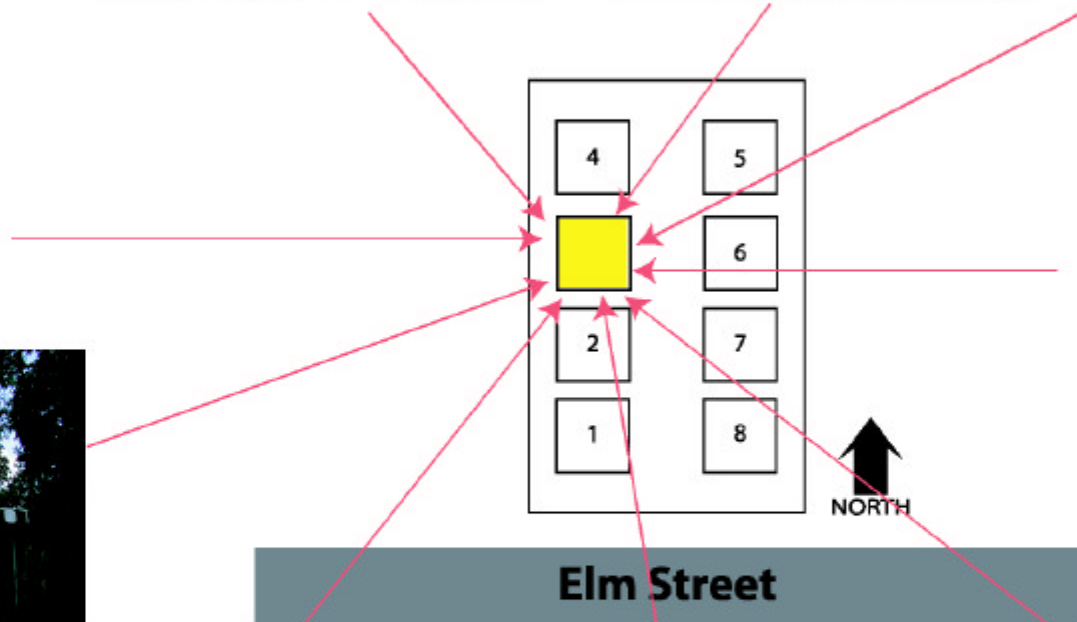
facades June 8, 2004



3 Buena Vista Court

Photo Inventory
of building facades

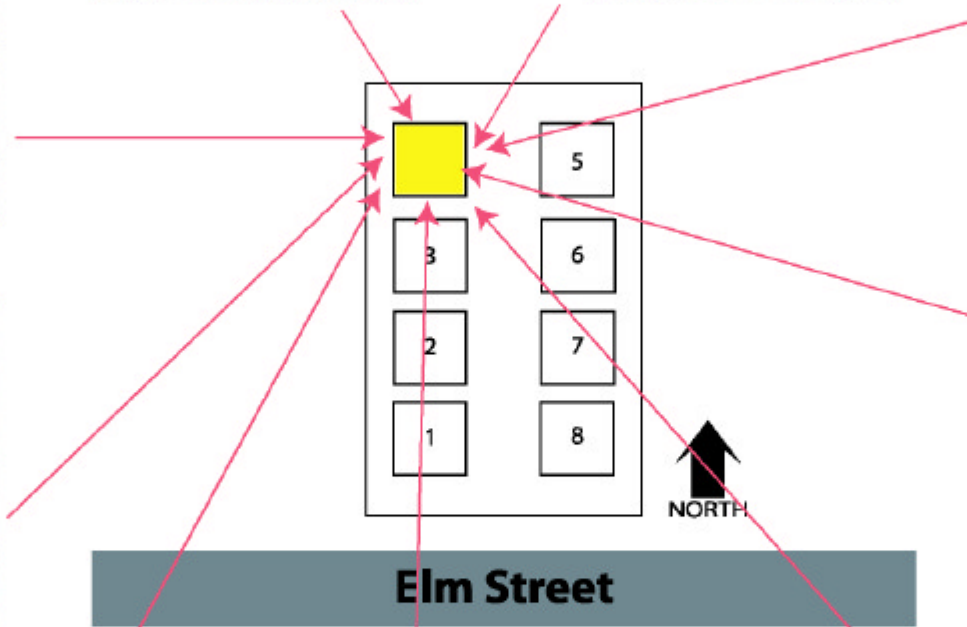
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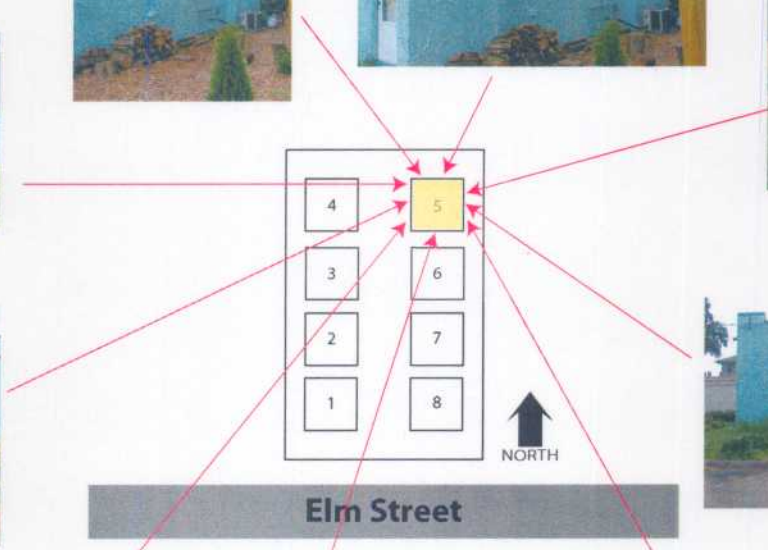
4 Buena Vista Court

Photo Inventory of building

facades June 8, 2004

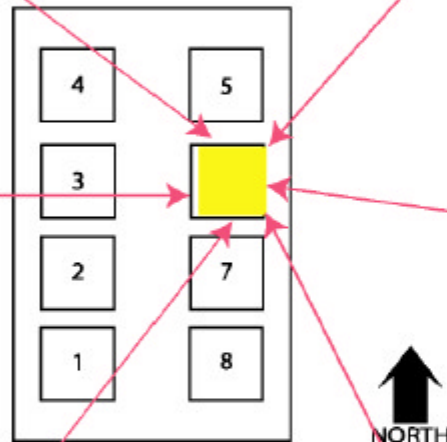


5 Buena Vista Court
Photo Inventory
of building facades
June 8, 2004



6 Buena Vista Court

Photo Inventory of building
facades June 8, 2004

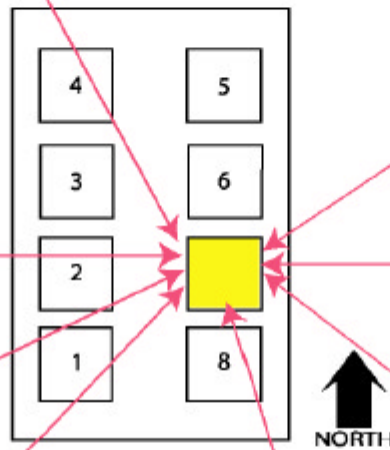


Elm Street



7 Buena Vista Court

Photo Inventory
of building facades
June 8, 2004

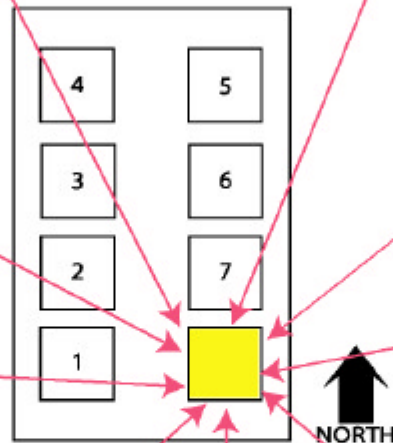


Elm Street



8 Buena Vista Court

Photo Inventory of building facades June 8, 2004



Elm Street