



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Planning Division

m e m o r a n d u m

TO: Urbana Historic Preservation Commission

FROM: Rebecca Bird, Planner I

DATE: June 30, 2011

SUBJECT: Urbana's 100 Most Significant Buildings

Introduction & Background

On February 24, 2011, the City of Urbana was awarded a \$5,908 Certified Local Government Grant from the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. The grant is for the creation of an illustrated guide of the 100 most historically significant structures in Urbana. The Urbana Historic Preservation Commission and Planning Division staff will compose the list based on public input and our community heritage and values. Upon completion, this guide will be made available to the public in print and on line. For more information on the background of this project, please see the following memorandum to the Historic Preservation Commission titled 'Urbana's 100 Most Significant Buildings Memo' dated May 27, 2011 (<http://www.urbanaininois.us/boards/historic-preservation-commission/meetings/2011-06-01>).

Discussion

Since the kick-off of this project at the June 1, 2011 Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) meeting, City staff has been compiling a preliminary list of properties for the HPC to consider for inclusion on the final list. The City's historic resource surveys and past studies and surveys and field work were used as a starting point for the preliminary list. Suggestions were requested from the public and interested parties and organizations through a press release (attached). Staff received nominations from over 35 people, including members of the public, the Historic Preservation Commission, and the City Council.

At the July 6, 2011 HPC meeting, the Commission will be asked to vote 'Yes,' 'No,' or 'Maybe' for each property on the preliminary list. All properties that receive at least four 'Yes' votes will be put on the final list. All properties that receive at least four 'No' votes will be removed from consideration. The remaining properties, those that receive a combination of 'Yes,' 'No,' and 'Maybe' votes will then be put on a list to consider at the August 3 HPC meeting. Attached to this memorandum is a DVD with a copy of the preliminary list and photographs of the

properties. Please look through the photographs and be prepared to vote on them at the meeting. There are over 300 properties on the list, so we will have to go through them very quickly.

When evaluating the properties on the preliminary list, the Commission should consider not only the list limit of 100 and the evaluation criteria determined by the HPC at their June 1, 2011 meeting (listed below), but also the desire to have a balanced representative sample of property types, architectural styles, and neighborhoods. The HPC determined that all property types including sites are eligible for inclusion and that properties generally have to be 50 years old for inclusion, though exceptions may be made for exceptional properties. The HPC had previously discussed not including University of Illinois buildings because not only could they then dominate the list but also because they felt the University was a separate entity. However, based on the large number of nominations from the public of University-owned buildings, City staff is asking that a representative of University-owned buildings be considered for inclusion. Some of the most significant buildings in Urbana are owned by the University and therefore ought to be represented on the list. To prevent University-owned buildings from dominating the list, the HPC could limit the number allowed on the list or include groups (such as the Quad and its surrounding buildings or a group of fraternities and sororities) which would allow multiple buildings to be included using just one space on the list of 100. That would allow a representation of these significant buildings to be included, while preventing them from dominating the list.

Evaluation Criteria

The following is the list of evaluation criteria set by the HPC at their June 1 meeting:

- 1) The integrity of primary structure or district;
- 2) The rarity or a particularly outstanding example of architectural style or type with consideration for building age;
- 3) The special decorative or structural features associated with the building or site; and
- 4) Historic associations with important individuals, but building integrity had to be sufficient enough that the historic individual would recognize the structure.
- 5) Places which exemplify events or trends important to our community, state, or nation. Examples could include railroads, the University, etc.
- 6) Places closely associated with outstanding achievements in the arts, sciences, and industry along with their innovators. Examples could include Nobel Prize winners, achievements in physics, chemistry, and engineering, etc.
- 7) Places which were important social, educational, and religious activity centers in Urbana. Examples could include the railroad depot, the County Courthouse, Krannert Center, Canaan Baptist Church, St. Patrick's Church, etc.
- 8) Outstanding and quintessential examples of architectural styles and building types in Urbana.
- 9) Properties designed by architects and engineers recognized as leaders in their respective fields. Examples here could include Royer buildings, Assembly Hall, etc.
- 10) Pre-Civil War buildings.

11) Significant landscapes or archaeological sites. Examples could include the Morrow Plots, Crystal Lake Park, etc.

Recommendation

The Historic Preservation Commission will be asked to vote on all 300+ properties on the preliminary list at their July 6, 2011 meeting. Using the guidance listed above and being cognizant that the list is limited to 100 properties, please come to the meeting with your votes for each property prepared.

Should you have any questions, please contact Rebecca Bird at (217) 384-2440 or rbird@urbanillinois.us.

Attachments:

Press Release

DVDs will be attached for Historic Preservation Commissioners

Additional copies are available from Rebecca Bird at (217) 384-2440 or rbird@urbanillinois.us

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE—Thursday, June 16, 2011

City of Urbana to honor 100 Most Important Buildings



The City of Urbana is creating an honorary list of the 100 most important buildings and sites reflecting Urbana's heritage and needs your help. Is there a house in your neighborhood with a strong connection to one of Urbana's founders or to one of our Pulitzer Prize winners? Do you pass a building on your morning commute that wows you with its architectural beauty? Do you have a favorite historical building? If you answered yes to any of these questions, the City of Urbana wants to hear from you.

The Urbana Historic Preservation Commission will work with Urbana planning staff to identify the 100 structures that best represent Urbana's architectural history, community heritage and values. The 100 buildings will then be featured in an illustrated guide, available in print and on line, that can be used for a driving tour or themed walking tours.

According to City of Urbana planner Rebecca Bird, inclusion on the list will be an honor: "Imagine living in a house that our city has identified as one of the 100 most important buildings in town!"

This project is made possible in part by a grant from the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency.

For more information or to submit a list of properties for consideration, please contact Rebecca Bird at (217)384-2440 or rbird@urbanaininois.us. Please submit recommendations by June 22, 2011.