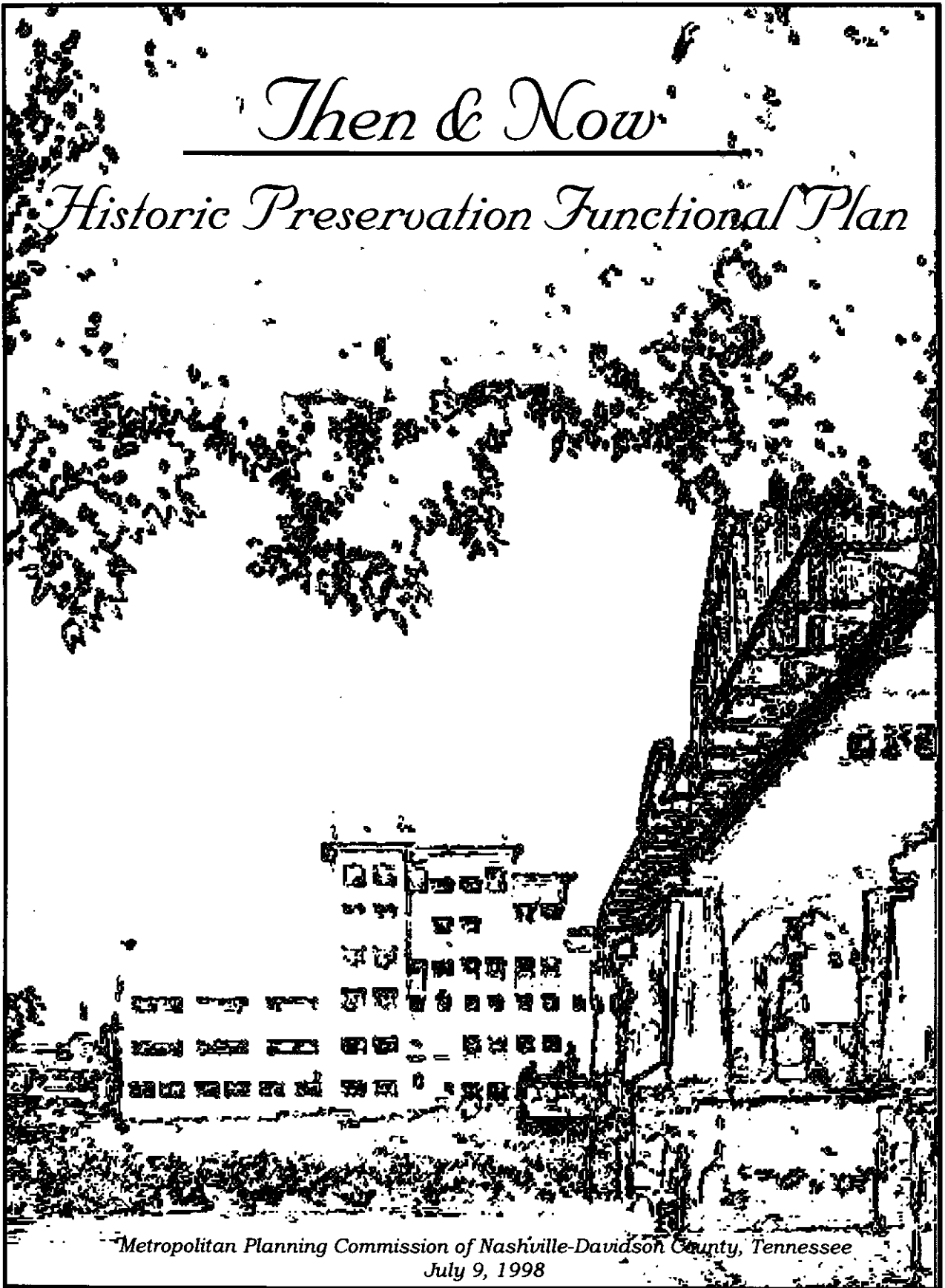


Then & Now

Historic Preservation Functional Plan



Metropolitan Planning Commission of Nashville-Davidson County, Tennessee
July 9, 1998

Then & Now:
A Historic Preservation Functional Plan

Metropolitan Planning Commission

Metropolitan Government
of
Nashville and Davidson County, Tennessee

Adopted
July 9, 1998

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**METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION
OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY, TENNESSEE**

Resolution No. 98-517

Whereas, the Metropolitan Planning Commission directed staff to undertake the development of a Historic Preservation Functional Plan to guide the preservation of Nashville and Davidson County's historical heritage;

Whereas, Concept 2010, A General Plan for Nashville and Davidson County, sets the vision (goals and objectives) for the long term preservation of Nashville and Davidson County's historical heritage;

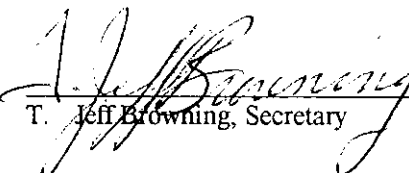
Whereas, the Historic Preservation Functional Plan was established to implement Concept 2010 by pursuing strategies to achieve the vision; and,

Whereas, the Historic Preservation Functional Plan was developed in cooperation with the Metropolitan Historical Commission staff;

Therefore, Be It Resolved, that the Metropolitan Planning Commission hereby **Adopts** a plan entitled "Historic Preservation Functional Plan" as a part of the General Plan in accordance with Sections 11.504 (e), (j) and 18.02 of the Charter of the Metropolitan Planning Commission of Nashville Davidson County, Tennessee.



Gilbert N Smith, Chairman



T. Jeff Browning, Secretary

Date of Adoption: July 9, 1998

**Preservation
planning is a
proactive approach
to protecting
Nashville's unique
historic character.**

The very nature of a vital city is that of change. Since its incorporation in 1784, Nashville has experienced significant periods of change, as reflected in its numerous self-proclaimed identities. From the title of "Athens of the West" to the more appropriate "Athens of the South," as well as "Wall Street of the South," "Minneapolis of the South," and its most recent moniker "Music City, U.S.A.," Nashville has created images of itself that reflect the progress of the day.

While the city will continue to evolve and project itself in different ways, it will always be shaped by its storied and unique history: The current success of Second Avenue recalls the prosperous days of the 19th century; Centennial Park's Parthenon reminds us of our stature in the South as a cultured, educated city; the Ryman Auditorium represents our long-standing country music tradition. Failure to preserve this history—our buildings, neighborhoods, landscapes, archaeological sites—will deprive Nashville of the qualities that contribute to its identity. In order to forge a successful partnership between Nashville's familiar past and its ongoing progress, it is necessary to incorporate historic preservation more fully into the comprehensive planning efforts in Nashville-Davidson County. The specific mechanism by which this is done is the Historic Preservation Functional Plan.

The purpose of the Historic Preservation Functional Plan is to implement the goals and objectives of Concept 2010: A General Plan for Nashville-Davidson County. The General Plan offers as its primary goal the preservation and enhancement of the local quality of life, which in turn will provide a solid base for economic development.

The General Plan recognizes the importance of historic preservation in attaining this goal. The preservation of historic resources is viewed as a quality of life issue, our historic character contributing to the well-being of our community. In establishing the appropriate policies to implement the long-range goals of the General Plan, a balance must be achieved between historic preservation and other components of the General Plan (e.g. Land Use, Transportation and Economic Development). This plan strives to set forth policies to achieve that balance.

Like history, the Historic Preservation Plan is expected to evolve over time. It will be revisited on a regular basis in order to evaluate the progress made in attaining its prescribed goals. In addition, any necessary modifications may be made so that the shared heritage of Nashville is best served.

The Historic Preservation Functional Plan will contribute answers to the question: “How can the quality of life for Nashvillians be improved?”

CHAPTER 1

History of Development in Nashville

page 1

This brief history of Nashville's evolution as a city provides the historical context in which to determine the significance of physical, cultural, and social resources.

CHAPTER 2

How Nashville Preserves Its Heritage

page 8

This section examines the primary means by which Nashville has preserved, and continues to preserve, its past. Provided is the legal context in which local governmental preservation efforts are undertaken. The current preservation program--comprehensive planning and zoning, a preservation ordinance, historic resources surveys--that has been in place for over twenty years is evaluated in order to recommend those measures that will enable Nashville to best preserve its heritage.

“Communities...should be shaped

CHAPTER 3

Who Preserves Nashville's Heritage

page 19

The major “players” who operate within, or have an impact upon, the current preservation system are identified, the majority being local governmental agencies. A discussion of these groups focuses on their responsibilities as they relate to historic preservation as well as their interaction with the two bodies charged with promoting Nashville’s history, the Metropolitan Historical Commission and the Metropolitan Historical Zoning Commission.

CHAPTER 4

How Nashville Can Enhance Its Preservation Efforts: Policy Recommendations

page 30

Providing “teeth” to preservation efforts, this chapter offers the policies necessary to achieve the goals of both the Historic Preservation Plan and the General Plan. It also sets an agenda for monitoring the progress made in protecting Nashville’s historic resources.

by choice, not chance.”

Richard Moe, President
National Trust for Historic
Preservation

Chapter One -

A History of Development

Nashville-Davidson County, in many respects, is a city whose development over the past 200 years has been shaped by factors common to the rest of the nation: settlement patterns based on topography, the replacement of agrarian traditions with commercial and industrial enterprises, the migration from the city to the suburbs with the advent of the automobile, the post World War II “suburbanite boom,” Urban Renewal’s revised definition of the city fabric, and a renewed interest in the central city. It is within these shared events, however, that can be found those elements that are unique to Nashville and its history.

Settlement by the River

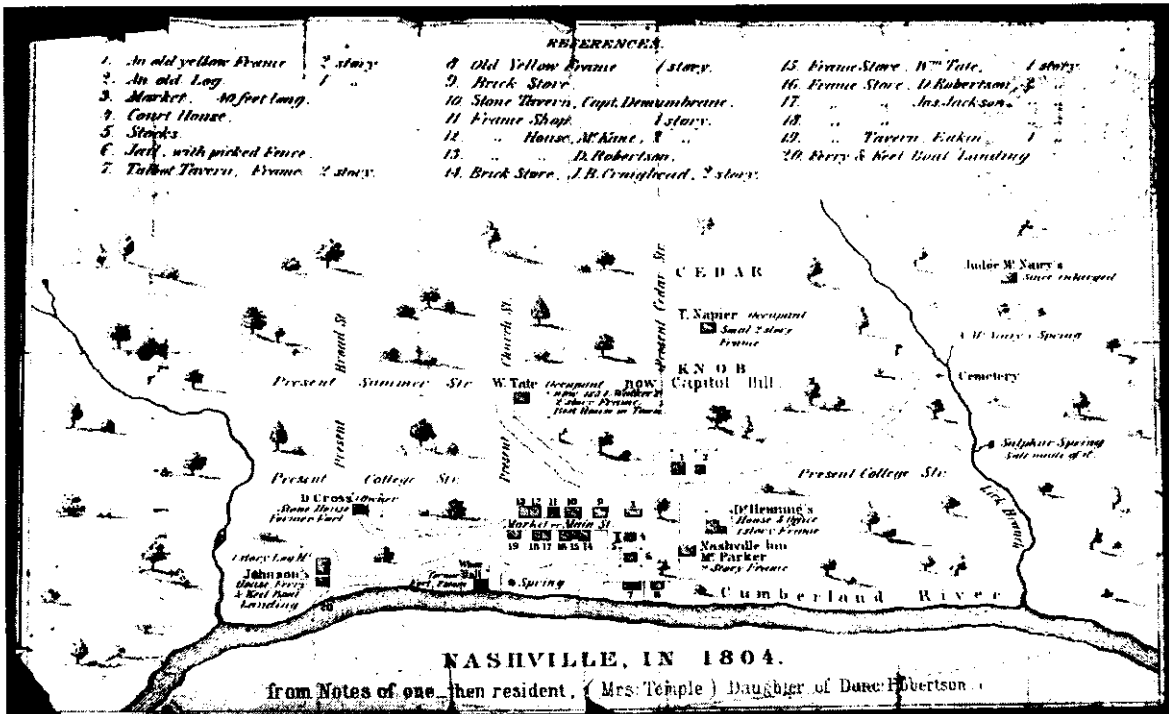
In the years following the American Revolution, families migrated west hoping to acquire fertile, unoccupied land beyond the Appalachian Mountains. When Captain James Robertson scouted the Middle Tennessee area in 1778 he found rich soil, plentiful game, and a navigable river in an area devoid of any permanent settlements; French traders had established a trading post in the early 1700s along the "French Lick," a stream located in the area between what is now the James Robertson Parkway and Jefferson Street. Native Americans occupied the area only when they were hunting, fishing, or trading.

A year later, Robertson returned with a group of settlers, followed by Colonel John Donelson and his party in 1780. About 400 men, women, and children settled into camps at the base of what is today Capitol Hill, eventually constructing groups of cabins or "stations" around the Nashville area.

The station with the most central location, Fort Nashborough, fronted the Cumberland River and became the capitol of the settlement. In 1784, an Act of the North Carolina Legislature set aside a 200 acre tract of land with the intent that it be subdivided into one acre lots, officially establishing the City of Nashborough. A few months later, the city's name was changed to Nashville.

Establishing a City

In 1784, the area was surveyed and a plan for the city was developed. Twenty-seven rectangular blocks, containing 165 lots, were laid out in a grid pattern. The area was bound by what is now Broadway to the south, 9th Avenue to the west, Charlotte Avenue/James Robertson Parkway to the north and 1st Avenue to the east. Four acres were reserved for the construction of a Public Square, the location of which reinforced the importance of the Cumberland River in the new city. Rather than locating the square in the



A growing city on the Cumberland River, 1804

actual center of the city, it was situated between 1st and 3rd Avenues. Today, the Metro Courthouse sits to the rear of the original site, and its parking lot occupies the center of the square. To the south of this settlement, 240 acres were granted by the North Carolina legislature for the support of higher education. Davidson Academy, Nashville's first educational institution, was established on this site.

With numerous lots available for settlement and the presence of important public and religious institutions on the Square before 1800, Nashville was taking shape as a city. In 1806, it was incorporated by the Tennessee Legislature.

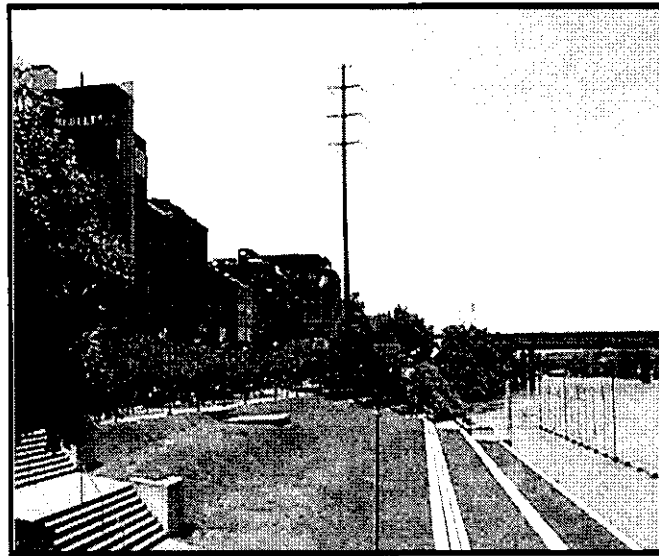
Outside of the central city, the first prosperous homes were built on large tracts of land owned by such families as Elliston, Belmont, McGavock, and Harding for the purpose of farming. With the region's agriculture-based economy and navigable river, Nashville soon distinguished itself as the commerce and trading center for all of Middle Tennessee.

Into the 19th Century

The decades up to the Civil War witnessed unprecedented growth in Nashville. Development continued to radiate outward from the Public Square, although it remained within close

proximity to the banks of the Cumberland. As river traffic increased, warehouses and wholesale houses were built on 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Avenues. In order to further increase the volume of trade on the river, roads were built to connect all the large communities in the region, and by 1843 the city was the center of a network of turnpikes.

A change in land use began to occur in parts of the city as single-family residences appeared along 2nd through 8th Avenues south of Buchanan Street, an area that until that time was used for agricultural purposes. The first residential suburb, Rutledge Hill, developed in South Nashville. In 1850, it claimed the distinction of being the first incorporated community and four years later was consolidated with the rest of the city. Due to the elevated location,



First Avenue's historic warehouses, now shops and restaurants, along the Cumberland River

residents along 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Avenues South

were afforded an unobstructed view of the highest hill in the city's center, Capitol Hill. Today, few of Rutledge Hill's homes remain to offer convincing evidence that the area was once a thriving neighborhood.

In the public realm, a substantial amount of new construction was completed mid-century. The predominant architectural style of the period resulted in the years

from 1845 to 1855 being called a golden age of classical architecture. The State Capitol, completed in 1853, is the pre-eminent example.

Nashville in the New South

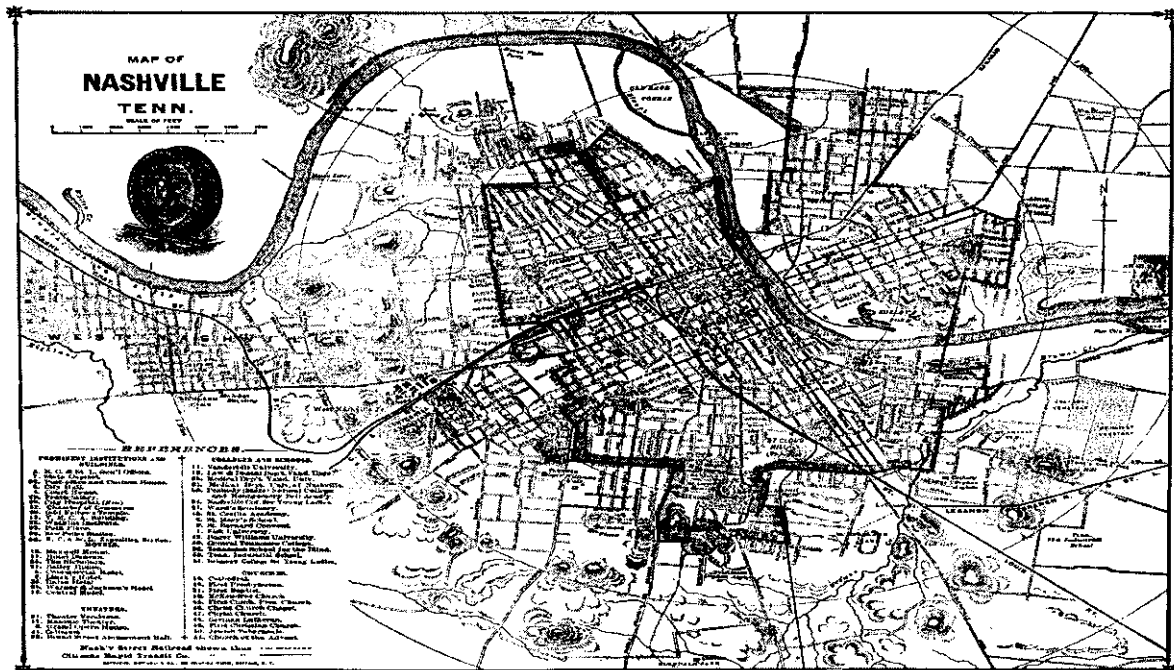
In the years following the Civil War, the railroad would supplant the river as the primary means of trade. Manufacturing and commerce would replace agriculture as the driving force of the local economy. Downtown growth continued, occurring in pockets of development that had their own street patterns.

In 1866, the first horse drawn street car was put into operation, extending from the Public Square out 4th Avenue south. The completion of a suspension bridge over the Cumberland River in the late 1860's accommodated this new mode of transport and facilitated the development of East Nashville. In 1868, Edgefield, a residential community on the east side of the Cumberland, was incorporated and later annexed by the

city in the 1880's.

By 1890, a large portion of the city's area was located on the east side of the river; however, the fastest growing area was west of the city limits. The founding of Vanderbilt University in 1873 and the introduction of electric streetcars in 1889 attracted potential homeowners to the vicinity of what would become Hillsboro-West End, as well as 16th Avenue and adjoining areas. West Nashville soon attracted real estate developers and businessmen in the expanding suburban venture that would gain momentum during the end of the nineteenth century and would provide Nashville with a number of historic neighborhoods, each with a distinct character. In addition, this area of growth introduced development patterns that strayed from the concentrated mix of building uses, social classes, and race which was prevalent downtown.

The earlier residential areas that extended from the central business district (Germantown to the north,



Nashville in 1897 - Moving westward

Edgefield to the east, and the area south of Rutledge Hill) were soon accompanied by industrial and manufacturing centers. This fact, in conjunction with the first suburban trend westward, contributed to the decline of these neighborhoods late in the 19th century. Within the central business district, the addition of new businesses and government offices expedited the conversion of grand single family homes on the north and west slopes of Capitol Hill into boarding houses as families left the city center.

There were a number of established residential corridors downtown that continued to house the city's wealthier inhabitants: On Park Place (along the east side of the Capitol grounds), on 6th and 7th Avenue between Church and Cedar Street, and southward on 8th Avenue from Union Street. Residents were able to walk to Nashville's financial district at the corner of 3rd and Union. The downtown's upscale retail area extended from the Square down 3rd, around the corner, up Union, and down 5th to Church. The wholesale district was located on 2nd Avenue between the Public Square and Broadway. Built between 1870 and 1890, the wholesale district has been cited as one of the country's best examples of late 19th century commercial architecture.



The "Wholesale District" - 2nd Avenue

The 20th Century

Prior to the turn of the century, most of the city was located within a two square mile radius of the Public Square. Shortly after this the city grew to 9 square miles. This growth would continue throughout the early twentieth century in the form of annexations.

In 1925, the mostly middle-class neighborhoods of Hillsboro, Belmont and Sylvan Park were absorbed by the city. Four years later, the wealthier suburb of Richland was annexed as well as a large area around Lockeland Springs in East Nashville. As of 1930, the city was approximately 26 square miles in size.

In the early 20th century, electric rail lines accommodated these suburban areas just outside of the core; however, any development located beyond the city periphery was inaccessible. The advent

of the automobile changed this, allowing a "leapfrog" pattern of suburban growth to occur. An early example is the development of single-family residences on the land that had once comprised the Belle Meade Plantation. A 500 acre tract of land, located about 6 miles outside of the downtown, was developed during the 1910's through the 1930's; its success was contingent on the automobile.

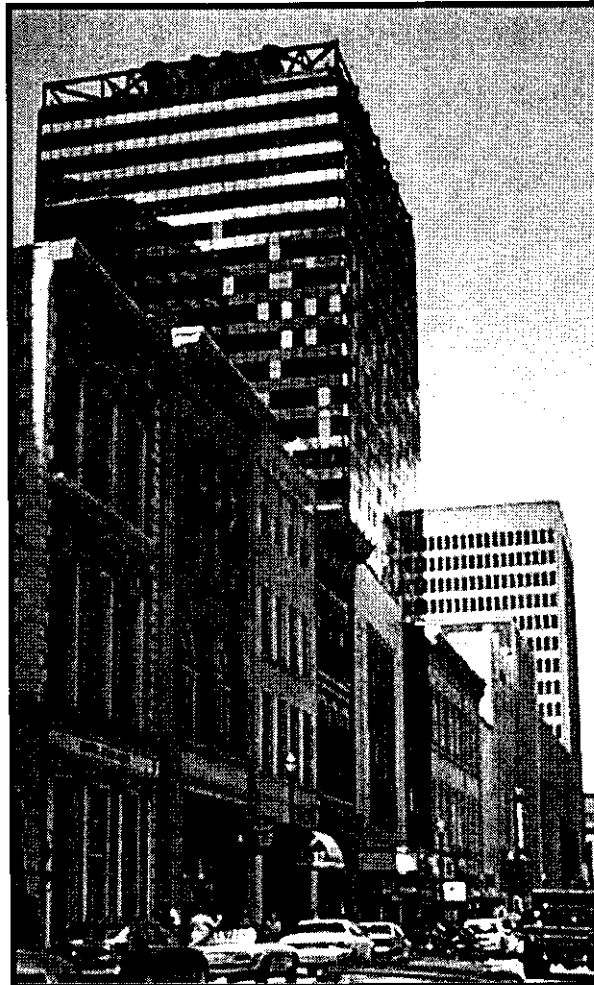
Retail, wholesale, and manufacturing businesses followed the new housing developments to previously inaccessible areas. This heralded the beginning of a decline of the core city. On the outer edges of the central business district, especially between Church Street and lower Broadway, an increasing number of older buildings were replaced by parking lots in order to attract cars that were opting for new suburban shopping centers. Nashville's ever expanding highway and interstate systems contributed to this post World War II trend.

Despite this fringe development, building construction proceeded at a steady clip, particularly with the Urban Renewal Projects of the 1950's and 1960's. The Capitol Hill Redevelopment Project, authorized in 1949, created 12 additional blocks for use in the central business district. Housing deemed substandard was cleared for the construction of parking lots and the James Robertson Parkway. By the 1960's, skyscrapers proliferated the downtown skyline, replacing numerous buildings built between the 1870's and 1920's. This effort rebuilt the area

between Union, Deaderick, the Courthouse and 8th Avenue. Although the Urban Renewal projects were intended to revitalize the city, there were many casualties including lower-income housing, all Federal and Classical townhomes surrounding Capitol Hill, the James K. Polk home, and the Public Square.

In 1963, the City of Nashville and Davidson County consolidated into a Metropolitan form of government ("Metro"). Prior to consolidation, Nashville encompassed 73 square miles of land. After consolidation, the unified government had jurisdiction over 508 square miles. Growth of the area

has continued in a low-density suburban fashion with a series of "regional activity centers" serving the development. These activity centers include shopping malls and large office complexes. This pattern of suburban development far from the city center continued throughout the 1970's and '80's and into the '90's, providing Nashville with a number of distinct suburban areas and satellite cities. These recent decades also witnessed an increasingly business oriented



Downtown's 5th Avenue - A mixture of old and new

downtown. Current planning and development efforts seek to create a 24-hour downtown in Nashville.

To date, Nashville continues to be one of the fastest growing cities in the South. This fact, while allowing the area to prosper, also imposes certain responsibilities upon the Nashville community. In particular, there is a real need to reconcile the changing face of the city with its existing historic resources and to recognize that our heritage can be used as a tool to enhance new development rather than compete with it.

Chapter Two -

How Nashville Preserves Its Heritage

Nashville's historic preservation program, established shortly after the passage of the Historic Preservation Act of 1966, is a relatively mature system composed of three essential tools:

- *Comprehensive planning and zoning*
- *A historic preservation ordinance*
- *A historic resources survey*

Documentation of these mechanisms provides a history of preservation efforts in Nashville; an evaluation reveals their effectiveness.

The following discussion offers a brief explanation of each tool as well as a more detailed description of its application in order to answer the question: How well is the current system working?

The Tools Defined

Comprehensive planning and zoning are integral components of any community's preservation efforts. They provide the legal framework in which a historic preservation program may be developed. A ***comprehensive plan*** (Nashville's *Concept 2010*) establishes a community's long range goals for its physical growth and development. It provides a forum for addressing community concerns, including the preservation of historic resources. The incorporation of historic preservation into a comprehensive or general plan is a necessary first step if preservation is to be a legitimate factor in local planning efforts. ***Zoning*** is the primary means of implementing the goals and objectives of the general plan. The ***zoning ordinance*** should implement the general plan's goals and objectives, making it essential that the plan address historic preservation. The zoning ordinance, as a regulatory tool, may greatly facilitate or hinder preservation efforts with its land use classifications and their application.

Since a zoning ordinance implements land use policy, it follows that a ***historic preservation ordinance*** does the same. Preservation ordinances provide for the local designation of historic overlay districts, a form of zoning to protect historic resources. In Nashville, there are three types of historic overlay districts: historic preservation districts, neighborhood conservation districts, and historic landmark districts. Additional requirements are applied to property, making the application of historic overlays a controversial issue; however, historic zoning is recognized by the

United State Supreme Court as a legitimate, constitutional public purpose (Village of Euclid, Ohio v. Ambler Realty Company, 1926 and Penn Central Transportation Company v. City of New York, 1978).

The ***historic resources survey*** illustrates how the built environment reflects the city's developmental history. Based on a consistently applied methodology, the survey inventories the community's historic resources and provides the community with a comprehensive database of potential historic resources that can be considered for designation as districts or landmarks. The survey, in addition to serving as an educational tool for the public, is useful to Metro agencies and boards when making decisions that affect historic resources.

The Tools Applied

I. Comprehensive Planning and Zoning

The ability to plan is conferred upon a municipality by the state in the form of enabling legislation. This legislation establishes the legal basis for undertaking historic preservation efforts. Title 13, Chapter 4 of the Tennessee Code authorizes the creation of a local planning commission, the function and duty of which is to make and adopt an official general plan for the municipality's physical development. Enabling legislation does not mandate the consideration of historic resources in a general plan; however, Nashville's general plan explicitly states that historic preservation shall be incorporated into

the general plan via the development of a detailed *functional plan*.

The functional plan serves as the resource and guidelines document, establishing policies for meeting the goals and objectives of the general plan. In the functional plan, detailed data and analysis are documented, resulting in the development of policies that detail specific requirements to implement *Concept 2010* goals.

The policies of the functional plan are applied to specific geographic areas of the county through the *subarea planning process*. The adoption of this functional plan allows the fourteen subarea plans to act as implementation forums for preservation measures at the community level. Currently, each plan merely lists the historic resources for each area of the county and does not offer detailed recommendations for preserving the resources. Coordination between a functional plan and subarea plans should address this need for a more systematic approach to conserving and enhancing historic resources county-wide. A major goal of subarea plans--the creation of planning documents that responsibly guide development decisions while protecting Nashville's character--may also be realized with the guidance of a functional plan.

The most recognized means of implementing the goals and objectives of *Concept 2010* is the *zoning ordinance*. Title 13, Chapter 7 of the Tennessee Code enables municipalities to adopt and enforce a zoning ordinance. The Metropolitan Charter stipulates that zoning regulations must be based on a comprehensive plan prepared and

adopted by the Metropolitan Planning Commission.

With respect to promoting preservation, the 1998 zoning ordinance offers development bonuses for the dedication of historic and/or archaeological sites in proposed Planned Unit Developments (PUDs). A major objective of the revised ordinance, however, was to dramatically reduce the number of new PUDs, which greatly reduces the effectiveness of this incentive. Bonuses and other incentives for *non-PUD* development should be incorporated into the zoning ordinance in order to foster preservation as growth occurs.

Besides PUDs, the commission also considers subdivision applications, ensuring they adhere to Nashville's *subdivision regulations*. Subdivision regulations are another mechanism for implementing the General Plan. Title 13, Chapter 4 of the Tennessee Code authorizes the development and adoption of subdivision regulations by the Planning Commission.

Nashville's subdivision regulations require that existing structures be shown on the submitted preliminary plat; however, their function and significance do not have to be identified. It is possible that a historic structure would go unnoticed and perhaps be demolished. In addition, archaeological sites and other historic features may be threatened if located on a parcel of land that will be developed.

It is important to have the ability to ascertain whether historic resources are located on the premises as well as the opportunity to encourage inclusion of these resources within a development.

This could be accomplished through the use of incentives such as additional density, reduction in road pavement width, reduced lot size, etc.

Devoid of any other means of encouraging preservation efforts, Nashville's primary preservation tool at the local planning level is historic zoning. To date, three types of overlay districts have been developed and adopted, each relating to the preservation of the built environment. The incorporation of these overlay districts -- **historic preservation districts, neighborhood conservation districts, and historic landmark districts** -- into Nashville's zoning ordinance was made possible with the adoption of a historic preservation ordinance.

II. Historic Preservation Ordinance

In 1966, Section 13-7-401 of the Tennessee Code was adopted, conferring the authority to establish special historic districts or zones via legislation within local and county jurisdictional boundaries. In 1974, Metro adopted an ordinance authorizing historic zoning and the appointment of a commission responsible for its administration. In 1977, the Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission (MHZC) was established for this purpose.

Historic Preservation Districts

The first type of historic overlay, the historic preservation district, was established in 1974 prior to the inception of the MHZC but was not used until the designation of the first district in 1978. The purpose of the historic preservation district is to foster the preservation of an

area's historic character and architectural integrity by regulating the exterior design of alterations to existing buildings, the exterior design of new buildings, as well as demolition, relocation, and alterations to existing property. To date, Nashville has three historic preservation zoning districts: Edgefield (1978), Second Avenue (1997), and Woodland in Waverly (1985).

Neighborhood Conservation Districts

In 1985, a less restrictive type of historic zoning, called a neighborhood conservation district, was amended into the zoning ordinance. This classification was developed by the Metropolitan Historical Commission and has served as a model for cities across the nation. As its name implies, neighborhood conservation districts emphasize the conservation of character (e.g. appropriate in-fill) rather than strict preservation. It affords a lesser degree of protection than historic preservation zoning because it does not regulate alterations to existing buildings and property. Currently, there are four neighborhood conservation zoning districts in Nashville: Lockeland Springs - East End (1985), Richland - West End (1996), South Music Row (1997), and Blakemore PUD (1989).

Historic Landmark Districts

The third and most underutilized form of historic zoning is the historic landmark district. It is defined as a building, structure, site or object, its appurtenances and the property on which it is located, whose demolition or destruction would constitute an

irreplaceable loss to the quality and character of Nashville and Davidson County. In addition to having historical, cultural, architectural, or archaeological importance for the area, a historic landmark must also meet the criteria for the National Register of Historic Places.

To date, Nashville has designated only three historic landmarks: Idlewild, Locust Hill, and Smith Farmhouse. The reasons cited for the infrequent use of this designation include the restrictions placed upon properties as well as the lack of financial incentives for the rehabilitation of private residences and commercial properties.

National Register Districts

The most common classification for residential and commercial areas, however, is not a type of historic zoning overlay. National Register, National Register Eligible and Worthy of Conservation Districts are designated based on the National Register of Historic Places criteria and most often relate to the architectural styles of structures within a particular area. Since these districts – there are 19 in the county—are not overlays, they are not afforded local protection. In addition, neighborhoods are more receptive to this honorary designation due to the absence of design guidelines.

Designation as a National Register District is often a precursor to designation as a historic overlay district. With the exception of South Music Row and the Blakemore PUD, every historic preservation district and neighborhood conservation district was first listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Incentives to Encourage Historic Zoning

To date, a number of National Register neighborhoods are considering designation as a neighborhood conservation district due to a desire to stabilize their neighborhoods. Others may be persuaded to do the same, or even pursue designation as a historic preservation district, with the provision of financial incentives. Currently, few incentives exist that encourage the rehabilitation and preservation of private residences in Tennessee. Most states make available a tax abatement for historic single family homes; however, Tennessee state legislation that allows some tax advantages for the rehabilitation of historic properties has been deemed unconstitutional. In addition, locally administered tax freeze or tax abatement programs that are employed in other cities of comparable size are not available in Nashville.

Despite the absence of such incentives, neighborhoods are likely to consider historic zoning to a greater degree than commercial areas. Commercial property owners are reluctant in part because of a concern that restrictions will limit their flexibility with respect to a building's use. The Broadway, Fifth Avenue, and Printer's Alley Districts located downtown are currently listed on the National Register but there are no regulations or incentives that prevent inappropriate alterations or demolition by a property owner.

Financial incentives already exist at the Federal level for the rehabilitation and/or preservation of these structures due to their inclusion in a National Register

District (e.g. rehabilitation tax credits, tax deductions for historic easement donations); however, it is not known at this time whether these financial resources are being maximized. Additional financial and development incentives need to be developed at the *local* level in order to encourage property owners to take the next step and agree to the added protection – and restrictions-- offered by historic zoning.

Another Benefit of the Historic Preservation Ordinance – The CLG Program

Additional funding for preservation efforts is made available via participation in the Certified Local Government (CLG) Program. Having adopted a historic preservation ordinance, Nashville was able to claim status as a CLG in the 1980's. The program allows communities to compete for Federal grants, channeled through the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), in order to undertake preservation-related projects such as preservation planning and historic resources surveys.

III. Historic Resources Surveys

Residential Structures

In 1974, the Metropolitan Historical Commission published *Nashville: A Short History and Selected Buildings*, which cited over 300 structures and places of architectural, historic, archaeological, and cultural significance throughout Davidson County.

This initial effort was expanded upon in 1976 with a survey that concentrated on

older urban neighborhoods. Twenty-three neighborhood areas were identified and grouped into eight larger areas based on their location for the purpose of the survey. Criteria used in evaluating the neighborhoods' historical significance included the historical and architectural significance of the structures, their surrounding environment, and their physical condition. Representative styles of architecture in each area were documented with black and white photos. Documentation also included an historical summary of each area, an analysis of the neighborhoods (boundaries, character, stability, the number of historically and architecturally significant structures, the presence of neighborhood organizations), and general policy proposals to foster preservation and enhance the stability of each neighborhood.

The resulting document, *Nashville: Conserving a Heritage*, offered more than just an inventory of individual structures. Older in-town neighborhoods were thoroughly surveyed for the first time, providing a basis for addressing the broader concept of urban conservation.

Commercial Structures

A key component of Nashville's urban fabric that was not addressed in the neighborhood survey was its commercial buildings. Another survey conducted earlier in 1976 on behalf of the Metropolitan Housing and Development Agency (MDHA) addressed commercial structures in Nashville's central business district. The survey, published in *Preliminary Plan:*

Downtown Nashville, was intended to be used as a reference by decision-makers when issues arose that might affect the cited structures.

Structures were selected based on their historical and architectural merit. Specific criteria included age (most structures dated between 1865 and 1910), composition of building elements, uniqueness, quality of detail, and historical-cultural significance. The structures were then classified into the following tiers: recognition as a National Register site; possessing historical, architectural, or aesthetic significance; having a lesser degree of significance but still meriting preservation or restoration; and, being a prominent feature of the landscape though lacking in visual and/or historical merit.

In 1982, the Historical Commission focused its attention on commercial structures outside of the downtown. The findings were published in *Neighborhood Commercial Buildings: A Survey and Analysis of Metropolitan Nashville*. The Historical Commission staff conducted a survey of Nashville's older commercial properties including areas that served neighborhoods in order to identify those properties that would have the greatest potential of contributing to commercial revitalization at the neighborhood level. Survey criteria included a property's location in relation to a residential area (whether a property served or could be made to serve neighborhoods), its relationship to other buildings (isolated or in a cluster), its eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places, and the largest allowable investment tax credit for which the

structure could potentially qualify based on this eligibility.

Cultural Resources Survey

In 1985, the Historical Commission began an expanded effort to survey city suburbs and rural areas, providing the most comprehensive survey to date. The narrow focus of the 1976 neighborhood survey and the rapid growth experienced in the mid-1980s prompted the Historical Commission to identify properties that were listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, as well as properties designated Worthy of Conservation. The latter classification is assigned to properties having *local* architectural and historical significance. Although these properties may not merit consideration as National Register properties, they are recognized as possessing some value to the community.

The Historical Commission commenced the survey, called the *Cultural Resources Survey*, after developing a methodology that addressed changing conditions in Nashville-Davidson County. By focusing their efforts on areas experiencing a significant amount of growth, MHC staff could document those historic resources most in jeopardy. Staff looked at the number of building permits granted in the county to prioritize the locations to be surveyed.

Based on these criteria, the first area to be surveyed was the Vanderbilt University/Music Row. The University, adjacent to older residential areas, and Music Row, nestled in an older neighborhood, grew considerably during the mid 1980's. These factors prompted

staff to direct their attention to historic resources west of the downtown. The next survey area was the southeastern portion of the county. Rapid growth in the southeast, including expansion of the airport, widening of roads, and growth in and around Hickory Hollow, threatened numerous structures and impacted the rural nature of the area.

In addition, a number of Neighborhood Strategy Areas (NSAs) in southeastern Davidson County were surveyed. NSAs are designated by MDHA based on the percentage of low- and moderate-income residents in a neighborhood and may receive Federal rehabilitation assistance. The following NSA neighborhoods were surveyed: Woodbine, Woodbine-Radnor, South Inglewood, Boscobel Heights, Madison, Elkins Park, and Fisk.

The remaining survey sites were based on the direction provided by the subarea planning process that was developed in 1988. At that time, the county was broken up into 14 subareas in order to better address concerns at the community level. Historic resources were documented for each subarea and the information conveyed through a series of maps that became a required component of each subarea plan. Currently, efforts are being made to refine the computer generated maps as well as to update the listings of resources for the subareas as additional sites become eligible and others are deleted due to demolition.

The Historical Commission maintains files for each surveyed site, comprised of a completed Tennessee Historical and Resource Survey form - the State's

standard county survey form - as well as a form developed by the Historical Commission to address categories dealt with in local preservation planning. In addition, two black and white photos and a color slide are on file for the recorded sites.

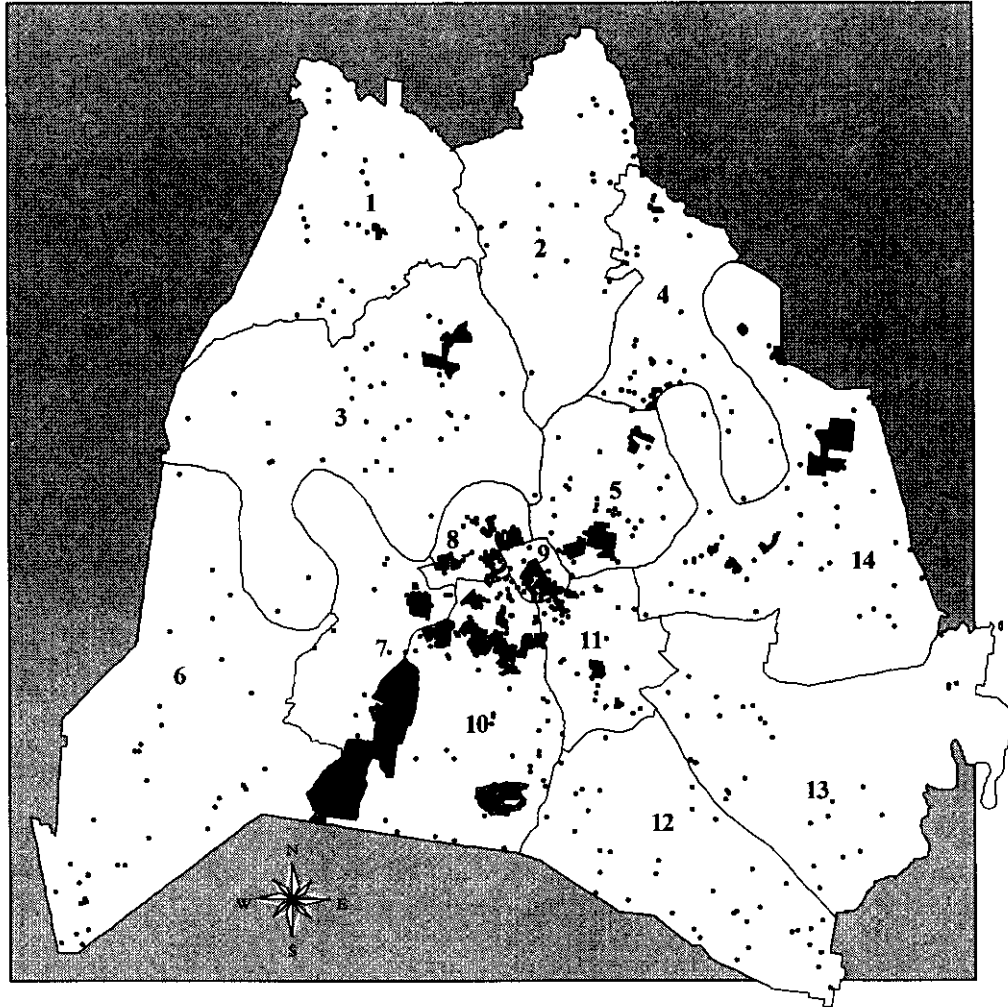
The Tools Assessed

Nashville is fortunate to have an established system within which to promote preservation activities; however, the three core tools that comprise this system can be better utilized. At the local planning level, the conspicuous absence of a functional plan for historic preservation has resulted in subarea plans that are unable to adequately address preservation needs at the community, or subarea, level. The tools available for implementing the General Plan -- the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations -- offer little to encourage preservation as Nashville continues to grow and develop.

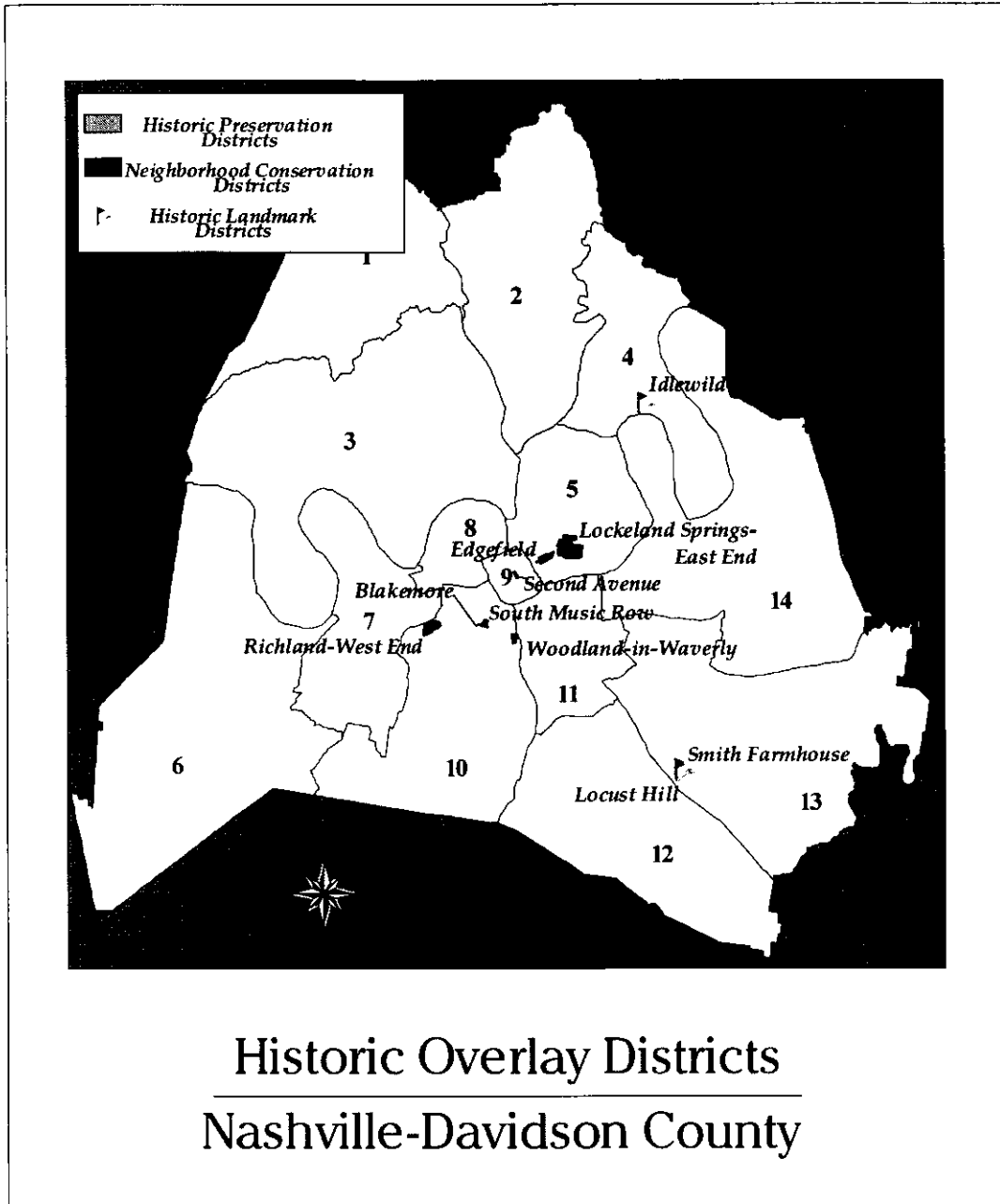
With respect to historic zoning, creative and attractive incentives should be promoted in order to encourage residential and commercial National Register Districts to consider local designation as a historic district. Of the three kinds of historic zoning, the historic landmark district is the only form that can provide protection to individual structures that are located outside of historic districts. As an increasing number of historic buildings are threatened by new development, it is necessary to examine ways of making this designation more palatable to property owners, such as offering rehabilitation tax incentives.

In order to identify those individual buildings most in need of attention, it is important to verify that every potential historic structure has been identified in the *Cultural Resources Survey*. When the county's subarea plans are updated it is necessary for the Planning Commission staff to coordinate with the Historical Commission to ensure the inclusion of the appropriate resources into the plans.

In addition, it is important to consider historic features, landscapes, and archaeological sites and incorporate them into the survey. Protection for these resources by amending an additional historic zoning overlay into the zoning ordinance should be considered. Just as historic preservation needs to be thought of in a broader context, as more than an appreciation of old things, our historic resources also need to be recognized as incorporating more than the built environment.



Historic Sites & Districts By Subarea
Nashville-Davidson County
Cultural Resources Survey



Chapter Three -

Who Preserves Nashville's Heritage

Within Metro are two bodies that are mandated to promote Nashville's history: The Metropolitan Historical Commission, an advocacy agency, and the Metropolitan Historical Zoning Commission, a regulatory body. Their shared mission often brings them into contact with other Metro agencies. Common ground may be found with some, disagreements may arise with others. Regardless, it is important to analyze the level of coordination between these agencies and other varying "players" in historic preservation. The following discussion, while emphasizing the interaction at the Metropolitan level, recognizes that preservation is not limited to the governmental arena. Due to their direct influence on the tools available to promote preservation in Nashville, however, Metropolitan agencies are the primary focus of the following chapter. It should be noted that the information to follow was obtained through a series of interviews, both in person and by telephone.

Metropolitan Historical Commission (MHC) & Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission (MHZC)

The Metropolitan Historical Commission (MHC) is the municipal historic preservation agency charged with documenting Nashville's history, promoting the preservation and reuse of the built environment, and informing the public of the necessity and advantages of preservation. Formed in 1966, the MHC is comprised of 15 citizens appointed by the Mayor and maintains a professional staff. In 1973, it became an official Metro agency.

The MHC staff undertakes numerous tasks that promote the agency's primary mission: *Preservation of the built environment*. The MHC's primary tasks include providing technical assistance to property owners interested in maintaining or renovating historic buildings, developing financial strategies for the adaptive use of important architectural properties owned by Metro, and supervising restoration work. In addition, the MHC is involved in surveying residential and commercial neighborhoods, producing informational publications and historical markers, and coordinating special events.

The MHC staff also provides support to the Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission (MHZC), a nine member board established in 1977 to administer historic zoning regulations in designated historic overlay districts. The MHZC is responsible for making recommendations on the qualification and suitability of historic zoning

applications to the Metro Council. In addition, it serves as the architectural review board, adopting design review guidelines for locally designated historic districts, regulating proposed exterior changes and demolition to historic zoning properties, and providing design and technical assistance to owners of historic zoning properties and to Metro agencies and boards.

Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC)

The Planning Commission is comprised of ten members, as follows: the Mayor, a Metropolitan Council member, and eight individuals appointed by the Mayor and approved by the Metropolitan Council. The Metro Charter charges the MPC with guiding the physical growth of Nashville-Davidson County through comprehensive planning and land use controls. In addition, the MPC is responsible for advising elected officials on growth and development in the county. The MPC adopts long-range comprehensive plans, reviews zoning, and regulates subdivisions with the assistance of a professional staff.

The formulation of long-range plans does not require consultation with the Historical Commission; however, their expertise has been utilized in the development of *Concept 2010* and particularly in the Historic Preservation Functional Plan. The county's 14 subarea plans, when updated, require the MHC to provide current lists of historic resources for each subarea.

With respect to the administration of the

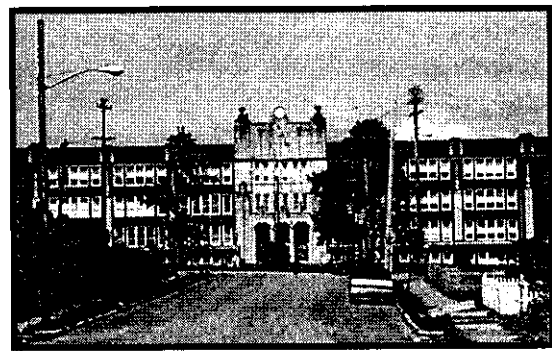
While policy stipulates that the MHC must be incorporated into MDHA's design review process, and the relationship between the two agencies is generally positive, the ultimate mission of MDHA does not always complement that of the MHC. As mentioned, economic stability is the former's overriding concern. Maintaining an unstable historic structure or trying to find a suitable use for the building may not be economically feasible. Adequate funds for purchasing a jeopardized structure—either by the MHC or by the community in which the building is located—are simply not available. Often, the result is demolition.

Unlike the MHC, MDHA is able to provide alternative funding sources for rehabilitation projects. Federal funding (HUD dollars) is channeled through MDHA in the form of Community Development Block Grants (CDBGs), which are used to establish revolving funds in some NSA's (Neighborhood Strategic Areas). Federal funding is also available through the Facade Loan Program and the Historic Loan Program, which makes available loans of up to \$18,000 for the rehabilitation, preservation, and/or renovation of the exterior of historically significant structures in NSA's.

These loan programs reflect a commitment by MDHA to rehabilitate Nashville's existing housing stock; however, older structures that fall into disrepair are often viewed as a blight on the community, necessitating their removal in the absence of sufficient funding to do otherwise.

Metropolitan Nashville-Davidson County Public Schools (Schools)

Currently, Nashville-Davidson County maintains 144 schools, 44 of which are 50 years or older; 80 are over forty years of age. The building stock was evaluated by the MHC for its historical and architectural significance, and the following determinations were forwarded to Schools: 2 schools in locally designated historic overlay districts; 1 on the National Register of Historic Places, 8 designated National Register Eligible, 4 located in National Register Districts, 11 considered Worthy of Conservation, and 5 deemed "of interest."



A school classified as National Register Eligible, adjacent to a historic overlay district

Use of this information is up to the Schools' discretion – no formal policy or process exists that provides for the reuse, or at least the consideration of reuse, when schools are no longer able to function in their current capacity due to size, location, or condition. Some success has been met with regard to finding new or altered uses for older buildings (e.g. libraries, community centers, Head Start programs, alternative schools, senior citizen's centers, etc.); however, numerous buildings have also been replaced on site with larger, more

modern facilities or have become vacant when immediate occupancy or reuse is not feasible.

These vacant buildings, while currently few in number, may be permitted to remain in that state for significant periods of time, as long as ten years. Maintenance of these structures becomes a subsequent problem. Should Schools ascertain that another use for the building is not feasible and that it can no longer be maintained, it is declared surplus. Other Metro agencies are given the opportunity to claim the building but are not bound to utilize it; they may raze the school and build anew on the site. In the event it is not claimed, the Department of Finance's Public Property Administration makes the building available for purchase by the general public.

As far as MHC input on these matters, it may only offer recommendations on matters after having been approached by Schools. The remodeling of an historically important school, for example, may provide an opportunity for the MHC to offer technical advice. While the MHC is recognized by the Schools as having this expertise and has worked with the agency in the past, the extent of coordination between the two is limited.

Metropolitan Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks)

The Parks Department, while directing its attention to the preservation of the natural environment, complements the mission of the MHC in that historic structures situated within the Metro park

system may be rehabilitated for interpretive purposes. Although Parks does not purchase individual structures, acquired land may contain structures that are used as interpretive features. On-site buildings help the public to identify with the larger surroundings and encourage them to visit the parks. For example, Grassmere Park contains a 19th century residence that is now in use as an interpretive farmhouse, recalling its previous use on a 300 acre farm. Another current example relates to land that was acquired in 1945 (Sevier Park) that happened to contain what would later be classified as a National Register home, Sunny Side Mansion; the mansion is currently being rehabilitated. Parks also has jurisdiction over other National Register or National Register Eligible structures, though they number less than a dozen.

While some structures maintained by Parks are used as educational tools for the public, most have been adapted to serve a functional purpose. For example, a mansion may be used for wedding receptions or an older residence may be converted to administrative offices. Notable examples include the use of circa 1900 homes in Percy Warner Park by Parks staff as well as the reconstruction of a spring house, also used adaptively. The latter project came to fruition after funds were raised by a private group, one of a handful in the county, that has found great success with their fundraising efforts. This kind of private-public venture is more common with Parks than with the MHC, and communication between the private groups and Parks is positive and consistent.

Other funding efforts require coordination between Parks and the MHC. The two have successfully pooled their energies in tasks that raise funds for projects such as the Parthenon renovation in Centennial Park. In addition, the MHC contributes to the preparation of master plans for the county's parks and offers technical input on projects, most recently the plan for Ft. Negley's restoration.



Ft. Negley, one of Nashville's few remaining Civil War sites

Metropolitan Department of Public Works (Public Works)

Responsible for managing Nashville's infrastructure, the Department of Public Works encounters historic resources both above and below ground. The construction of a new roadway, for example, may unearth archaeological finds, or the realignment of an existing roadway may require additional right-of-way and "claim" a historic structure. During the initial survey process for a project, potential conflicts with historic resources are identified and the appropriate department is contacted. The Tennessee Historical Commission (THC) is contacted for projects funded with Federal or State dollars and the MHC is consulted when a Metro project

will be undertaken; however, no policy currently exists that requires coordination with the MHC.

At the local level, the department undertakes very few roadway alignment projects that have not already been privately built and then turned over to Metro. Most road projects involve widening within or adjacent to the existing right-of-way. In addition, Public Works undertakes improvement projects in historic districts and has made attempts in the past to comply with informal, neighborhood-specific design plans. For example, in the locally designated historic district, Edgefield, a neighborhood-sponsored streetscape plan was used as a guide when constructing sidewalks. While compliance with such plans is up to the discretion of the department, other plans formally adopted must be adhered to, including MDHA's redevelopment plans.

Tennessee Historical Commission (THC)

The THC, as Tennessee's designated State Historic Preservation Office, is responsible for administering Federal historic preservation mandates at the state level. Tasks include the review of National Register of Historic Places nominations, the maintenance of data on identified historic properties that have yet to be nominated, and the consultation with Federal agencies during Section 106 Review. This latter task requires that the potential effects of federally funded projects on historic properties be ascertained prior to construction. The MHC, on behalf of the THC, undertakes

the Section 106 review process for projects using HUD monies (channeled through MDHA); however, the MHC is not routinely involved in the Section 106 process for every eligible project in the Nashville area. This fact may require greater coordination between the Tennessee and Metro Historical Commissions.

Tennessee Division of Archaeology (State Archaeologist)

The impacts on archaeological resources are also considered during the Section 106 review process, thereby involving the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation's Division of Archaeology. Aside from federally funded projects, however, the State Archaeologist has limited authority. State projects may warrant a recommendation by the office yet compliance with the recommendation is not mandated. At the Metro level, archaeological preservation has not systematically been addressed.

Currently, development projects by either Metro or private developers do not require consultation with the Division of Archaeology unless cemeteries or Native American burial grounds are located on the premises. Cemetery statutes require that the State be contacted when remains are discovered; however, the owner has the right to relocate graves without having to retrieve information for documentation purposes. Often, the State Archaeologist's office is unaware that graves are located on a particular site due to a lack of information. A comprehensive survey of Nashville-

Davidson County requires time, staff, and significant financial resources that the State has been unable to furnish and that Metro has not attempted to find.



Nashville City Cemetery, 4th Avenue South

To date, over 500 archaeological sites have been recorded in Nashville-Davidson County by the Division of Archaeology, a number of which have yet to be field-checked. The significance of each site is not included in the database of information maintained by the State, and these records are not incorporated into Metro's files. Although the MHC flags structures located in historic overlay districts, nothing comparable exists for archaeological sites.

In order to complete survey efforts in Davidson County, further examination of rural areas and the downtown is required. Although the downtown's commercial architecture is well documented, potential urban archaeological sites have not been identified due to the need to conduct additional historical research. Existing pavement, parking lots, and structures make it difficult to evaluate the site without thoroughly researching its history.

Of those identified sites that are located downtown, a number relate to Native American settlement. The bends of the Cumberland River may be rife with Native American artifacts, potentially having implications on future development proposals. There have been instances when developers hire an archaeological consultant to examine a site; however, there is no requirement that they do so, and the time and expense are prohibitive factors in voluntary site examinations by developers.

Typically, developers have an area studied if it is already widely recognized as having archaeological significance or if artifacts are discovered after construction has commenced. Should any artifacts be recovered, they become the property of the property owner although donations to the Division of Archaeology are encouraged. Developers are also encouraged to incorporate sites of archaeological significance (e.g. earthworks, Native American villages, burial sites); however, current land use regulations provide very little incentive for the developer to cooperate.

Ideally, the Division of Archaeology would have information relating to a particular site already on file so that the developer could be contacted during the planning stages. However, as noted, this is not always possible due to the incomplete survey of archaeological sites in the area and because a flagging system is not in place to notify the State Archaeologist's office of new development plans.

Historic Nashville

Although private citizens have organized throughout the years to promote specific facets of Nashville's history (e.g. Civil War battlefields; plantation homes) Historic Nashville is the county's only non-profit organization with the broader purpose of preserving Nashville-Davidson County's built environment. Their mission, the "education, advocacy and preservation of the built environment" reflects that of the MHC and fosters cooperative efforts with that agency. Preservation-related activities undertaken by the two groups include the development of an "Endangered Buildings" List, sponsorship of Nashville's Annual Architectural Awards, preparation of National Register nominations, and the provision of technical assistance to owners of historic properties.

Despite a commitment to preservation, Historic Nashville is not as effective as it desires. The organization typically takes a "crisis" approach as problems arise, addressing the preservation of a single structure only after it has become threatened with demolition. The group wishes to become more proactive and comprehensive in its actions, such as ascertaining those structures most in need of protective measures before the "eleventh hour" strikes.

Second, fundraising efforts have not resulted in the desired level of funding. The absence of endowments for private organizations in Nashville makes it imperative that alternative funding sources be established, the most common for a local non-profit being a

revolving fund. To date, such a fund has yet to be established, although a State appropriation is anticipated in the near future.

The group has met with some success, however, in obtaining facade easements (a voluntary legal agreement between a property owner and the recipient of the easement) for over a dozen historic structures. One of only three easement holding non-profits in the state, Historic Nashville has ensured that the facades of the structures will be preserved regardless of subsequent ownership of the property.

Citizens

Nashvillians interested in protecting the county's heritage may volunteer with groups such as Historic Nashville. There are some, however, who don't have to leave their homes in order to have an impact on local preservation efforts. *Residents* of historic zoning and National Register districts are integral in maintaining certain facets of Nashville's history.

According to a number of these residents, the impetus for designation as a historic zoning overlay is often a perceived threat -- demolition and incompatible new construction -- to the integrity of a neighborhood. Some of the neighborhoods interested in pursuing this designation are currently listed on the National Register. Others are not eligible for the National Register but meet the criteria for a historic zoning overlay.

Not every resident supports the idea, however. Some are wary of the regulations in an overlay; others are opposed because they perceive the designation as a threat to their property rights. Adequate communication between the neighborhood organization espousing the overlay and the affected residents may allay some fears. Assistance from the MHC throughout the process aids the education efforts. Satisfying the concerns of individuals who oppose the proposed designation on the grounds that it violates their rights, however, may not be possible.

Once a district is established, other concerns arise. Among them is the potential for adverse impacts of adjacent development (both in type and intensity) on a historic district. In addition, the use of residential streets for cut-throughs is viewed as affecting the cohesiveness of a neighborhood. Other issues are the placement of utilities above ground and the fact that older schools in historic overlay districts do not have to comply with the established design standards.

MHC staff holds quarterly meetings with the presidents of neighborhood associations for historic overlay and National Register Districts to discuss such topics. Communication and policy agreements (e.g. memorandums of understanding) between Metro agencies like Public Works and Schools can help address many of these concerns.

The Players as a Team

Metro has a number of "players", all of which to varying degrees have good intentions with respect to historic

preservation. But the level of coordination between the MHC/MHZA and the others is not as strong as it should be if historic preservation is to be adequately addressed in Nashville-Davidson County. Differing missions, conflicting policy, and the absence of procedure relating to preservation matters are issues that hinder the MHC/MHZA's attempts to effectively work with other groups to preserve Nashville's heritage.

An important first step has already been taken. This is evident in the willingness of these groups to meet and discuss historic preservation for the purpose of the Historic Preservation Functional Plan; a dialogue has been established with the "players" in the development of this plan. The next step is to establish this dialogue as an ongoing process. This is reflected in the plan policies in Chapter 4.

Chapter Four-

Policy Recommendations

Adopted in 1992, Concept 2010: A General Plan, provides the long-range vision for Nashville-Davidson County. This vision represents the residents' twenty-year plan to guide development in the area. As such, one of the issues addressed is the preservation of historic resources. The General Plan provides a directive to develop a Historic Preservation Functional Plan as well as the following goal and objectives:

GOAL: Preserve and enhance historically, archaeologically and/or architecturally significant structures and areas.

Objective 1: Continue to identify, document and protect historic resources in the county, including individual structures, districts, features and landscapes.

Objective 2: Focus on the preservation of cohesive districts so that the functional relationships among the structures may be retained.

Objective 3: Coordinate preservation efforts among the appropriate agencies.

Objective 4: Seek incentives which encourage the preservation and/or reuse of historic structures.

The Historic Preservation Functional Plan is a five year policy document providing comprehensive policies that contribute to the implementation of Concept 2010's goals and objectives. These policies address current processes and procedures, Chapters Two and Three highlighting those that do not promote the General Plan vision. The following policies will move Nashville-Davidson County closer to this overall vision. The Planning Commission will be briefed by staff on the status of the functional plan's implementation, based on the timeframes that are established for each policy, on an annual basis.

Objective: Coordinate preservation efforts among the appropriate agencies.

Policy	Completion Date	Groups Involved
G. MPC		
1. Establish a formal review process when considering the impacts of zoning requests and subdivision applications on historic properties.	1999	MPC, MHC
2. Designate a staff member to act as a liaison between the MPC and other Metro agencies, who shall be responsible for addressing preservation-related matters.	1999	MPC
3. Develop a historic overlay district for the protection of historic landscapes, features, and archaeological sites to be amended into the zoning ordinance.	1999	MPC, MHC/MHZA, State Archaeologist
H. Codes		
1. Formalize the committee currently used by the Codes Department for reviewing requests to waive code requirements for historic structures that would otherwise face demolition due to the prohibitive costs of meeting those requirements. A seat should be established for a representative from the MHC.	2000	Codes, Fire, MHC
I. Schools		
1. Schools and the MHC should jointly review alterations and improvements to schools listed as National Register, National Register Eligible, and Worthy of Conservation. The MHC should provide technical advice to minimize adverse impacts and to maintain the historical integrity of the structures.	2002	Schools, MHC
2. Schools and the MHC should cooperatively establish alternative uses for buildings no longer utilized by Schools.	2002	Schools, MHC
J. Public Works		
1. Public Works should contact the State Archaeologist, or a designated contact at the Metro level, upon discovery of archaeological resources on Metro project sites.	2002	Public Works, State Archaeologist
2. Public Works should contact the MHC when potential conflicts with historic resources are identified during the initial survey process for a Metro project.	2000	Public Works, MHC

Objective: Seek incentives which encourage the preservation an/or reuse of historic structures.

Policy	Completion Date	Groups Involved
K. Financial Incentives		
1. Establish a task force to identify, promote, and maximize local, State, Federal and private funding mechanisms for the maintenance, rehabilitation, re-use and preservation of historic structures. Financial incentives will be used to encourage the existing regulatory tools, in particular historic zoning.	2000	MHC, MPC, MDHA, THC, Historic Nashville
L. Development Incentives		
1. Amend the zoning ordinance to include incentives for the re-use and/or preservation of historic structures and the preservation and/or incorporation of historic features and landscapes and archaeological sites into development proposals. Incentives to be considered include density bonuses, minimum lot size reduction, reduction in pavement width for roads, transfer of development rights, etc.	2000	MPC, MHC, State Archaeologist

