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METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY

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STAFF RECOMMENDATION
Hillview Heights-Inverness NCZO
December 21, 2016

Application: Neighborhood Conservation Zoning Overlay for Hillview Heights-Inverness

Council District: 17

Applicant: Councilmember Sledge

Project Lead: Robin Zeigler, robin.zeigler@nashville.gov

Description of Project: Councilmember Sledge requests a Neighborhood Conservation Zoning Overlay for the Hillview Heights-Inverness neighborhood.

Recommendation Summary: Finding that the neighborhood meets section 3 of the ordinance 17.36.120, staff advises the Commission to recommend approval of the proposed Hillview Heights-Inverness Neighborhood Conservation Overlay to the Metro Council and to adopt the design guidelines for the district.

Attachments

A: Partial
Architectural Resource
Survey
C: Draft Design
Guidelines

Applicable Ordinance:

Article III. Historic Overlay Districts

17.36.120 Historic Districts Defined. B. Historic Landmark. An historic landmark is defined as a building, structure, site or object, its appurtenances and the property it is located on, of high historical, cultural, architectural or archaeological importance; whose demolition or destruction would constitute an irreplaceable loss to the quality and character of Nashville and Davidson County; and that meets one or more of the following criteria:

1. The historic landmark is associated with an event that has made a significant contribution to local, state or national history;
2. It is associated with the lives of persons significant in local, state or national history;
3. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, or that represents the work of a master, or that possesses high artistic value;
4. It has yielded or may be likely to yielded archaeological information important in history or prehistory; or
5. It is listed or is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Background:

The Waverly-Belmont neighborhood has discussed the possibility of a neighborhood conservation zoning overlay for several years, and a large portion was designated in January of 2016 as part of the Waverly-Belmont Neighborhood Conservation Zoning Overlay. Although the Hillview Heights-Inverness neighborhood is a part of the greater Waverly-Belmont neighborhood with similar development pattern and character, it was not included in the 2016 Waverly-Belmont Neighborhood Conservation Zoning Overlay.

During the designation of the Waverly-Belmont NCZO designation, property owners in the Hillview-Heights area expressed interest in an overlay. A public informational meeting was hosted by Councilmember Sledge on November 22, 2016 at the Midtown Precinct to discuss a conservation overlay for the Hillview Heights area.

Analysis and Findings:

The land in the greater Waverly-Belmont neighborhood was a part of large estates prior to being subdivided, beginning in the 1890s. The Hillview Heights-Inverness portion of the neighborhood is made up of multiple subdivisions platted primarily between 1925 and 1936, although a few homes were in place prior to the plats being filed. (Hillview Heights was previously Woods Avenue, and Inverness Avenue was previously Thornton Avenue.)

The architecture of the proposed district predominately includes typical early- to mid-century buildings forms and styles, similar to what was designated in the Waverly-Belmont Neighborhood Conservation Zoning Overlay. The Hillview Heights-Inverness area includes two general eras of development, 1900-1945 and 1950-1965.

The majority of homes in the Hillview Heights-Inverness area were constructed in the 1930s and are typical of modestly scaled, middle class houses of the era. Their development is part of a larger, national trend of the era to build low-cost, quality housing for Americans. Specifically, the houses in the proposed overlay are good representatives of both the “Better Homes and the Small House Movement, 1919 to 1945” and “The Efficient Low-Cost Home, 1931-1948.”

Small House Revival Styles of the 1930s

Following World War I, improving the quality of American domestic life became a primary focus among architects, developers, builders, social reformers, manufacturers, and public officials to encourage home ownership, standardized home building practices, and neighborhood improvements. Among the predominant house types that came about from this movement was the American Small House. The Small House Architects' Service Bureau (Bureau) was established in 1919, and its ultimate goal was to provide architect-designed plans and technical specifications to builders of small houses, typically houses with no more than six rooms. The Bureau promoted efforts to design small homes in a variety of popular forms and styles; home builders could order drawings and plans from catalogs.

During the 1920s, the small house appeared in a variety of forms and period revival styles, the most popular being drawn from the English Tudor Revival and numerous American Colonial influences such as Dutch, English, French, and Spanish. “The movement resulted in a great diversity of architectural styles and types nationwide as regional forms and the work of regional architects attracted the interest of an increasingly educated audience of prospective home owners.” The Small House Movement did not result in a defined new house form, or type. Rather, from the movement emerged smaller, more compact houses to which revival stylistic elements were most commonly applied. In the Hillview Heights-Inverness area, the small houses are represented in the Tudor Revival, English Cottage Revival, Colonial Revival and Craftsman styles.



Figures 1 and 2: 809 Hillview Heights and 2308 Cisco are architectural examples of the “Small House Movement” in the Hillview Heights-Inverness neighborhood.

Minimal Traditionals

During and immediately following the Great Depression, the collapse of the home building industry and the rising rate of mortgage foreclosures resulted in a renewed push to further improve the design and efficiency of the American home while lowering its

cost. Among the efforts made during this period was the national program of the Federal Housing Authority (FHA) to regulate home building practices. The FHA published house designs in a variety of periodicals that “addressed issues of prefabrication methods and materials, housing standards, and principles of design.”

By the 1940s, the FHA introduced a “dramatically different, flexible system of house design based on the principles of expandability, standardization, and variability.” The simple, one-story house plan was minimal, yet allowed for a number of variations as rooms were added or extended to increase interior space, often forming an L-shaped plan. Modifications to the base exterior design could be incorporated such as projecting gables, porches, materials, windows, and roof types. The house type which evolved during this period was a reduced “small house,” efficient, cost effective, and flexible in design. This house style is most often referred to as “Minimal Traditional.”

The Hillview Heights-Inverness neighborhood exhibits approximately five examples of the Minimal Traditional form.



Figures 3 and 4: 2312 Cisco Street and 812 Inverness are examples in the neighborhood of the Minimal Traditional form.

1935-1975 Ranch Homes

The majority of the proposed district is in a dense grid pattern with lot sizes similar to the average lot in the greater Waverly-Belmont district. However, a portion of the southern end exhibits good examples of a second period of development. Although originally platted in 1925, the R.A. Coleman subdivision (941-949 Inverness Avenue), has large lots and Ranch style homes from 1950-1965.

Following World War II, a lack of new housing, continued population growth, and six million returning veterans eager to start families resulted in the largest building boom in the nation's history. This building boom was made possible by large-scale production, prefabrication methods and materials, and streamlined assembly methods. Large-scale developers applied these methods to the development of massive suburban neighborhoods along the periphery of cities and small towns throughout the United States. While pre-war small houses continued to be mass produced, the emergence of the Ranch House (popular between c.1935-1975) in high numbers was evident by the 1950s. The ranch houses reflected modern consumer preferences, growing incomes, and an increasing American middle class.

The typical Ranch House has a low, horizontal silhouette and a rambling floor plan. Moderate or wide overhanging eaves are common, as are private outdoor living areas to the rear of the house. The latter element being a “direct contrast to the large front and side porches of most late 19- and early-20th century styles.” The popularity of the Ranch House was due in part to the nation’s increasing dependence on the automobile in the decades following World War II. Compact houses on small lots were replaced with the sprawling design of Ranch Houses on larger lots with integral garages. Further, the house type reflected the nation’s changing functional needs of families offering private spaces and the separation of living areas from active family spaces.

In Waverly-Belmont, there was a brief surge of postwar construction the 1950s and into the 1960s. At the same time, the neighborhood was phasing out of the street cars in favor of more auto-centric development. The focus of the neighborhood shifted from the old Tenth Avenue street car line to the emerging corridor along old Granny White Pike/Twelfth Avenue South. Inverness Avenue, in the Hillview Heights-Inverness neighborhood, represents this later, more auto-dependent development with large lots and wide homes in the Ranch style. While these homes lack the architectural detailing found in the neighborhood’s earlier houses, they do fit into the historic rhythm and are a part of the story of the evolution of the neighborhood.



Figure 5: This map shows how the southern side of Inverness differs from the smaller lot development seen on the northern side of Inverness.



Figure 6 and 7: 943 Inverness Avenue and 945 Inverness Avenue are two of the three Ranch style homes in the district.

Summary of Hillview Heights-Inverness Historic Character

The Hillview Heights-Inverness district is historically and architecturally significant as a part of Nashville's early to mid-century residential growth and development. It is characterized by a clear integrity of location, design, setting, materials, feeling, workmanship, and association. There are few modern intrusions. There is only one historic building that has undergone significant changes that would undermine its historic integrity. Approximately 68% of the area is contributing.

Character-defining features of the area are consistent and evident throughout the neighborhood. The neighborhood retains the vast majority of its original spatial organization as laid out in the various subdivision designs and evolving from small lot development to large lots. The architectural forms and styles within the Hillview Heights-Inverness district clearly reflect both the local and national trends of residential design, house construction and development in its period of significance (c.1900-1965).

The Hillview Heights-Inverness district survives as an excellent representation of the evolving movements in suburban development, from development associated with streetcar to the automobile. The proposed district meets section 17.36.120.3 as it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction.

Design Guidelines

The proposed design guidelines are very similar to the Waverly-Belmont Neighborhood Conservation Zoning overlay design guidelines and other local neighborhood design guidelines but more specific to the historic context of Hillview Heights-Inverness. A draft of the design guidelines has been available to the public at www.Nashville.gov. On December 13, 2016 there was a property owner request to allow for the addition of front dormers. Since that action meets the Secretary of Interior Standards, which state law requires the design guidelines be based, that change was made and is reflected in the attached draft of the design guidelines. The period of significance has also been revised based on research conducted after the draft was created.

Recommendation:

Finding that the neighborhood meets section 3 of the ordinance 17.36.120, staff advises the Commission to recommend approval of the proposed Hillview Heights-Inverness Neighborhood Conservation Overlay to the Metro Council and to adopt the design guidelines for the district.

PARTIAL ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY AS OF 12/12/16

This is a summary of a more comprehensive survey. The survey is on-going and incomplete. Information will change as additional information is available and be added as the survey process continues.

House #	Street	Contributory Status	Date of construction	Form	Style
2305	CISCO ST	C	c.1935	Bungalow	
2306	CISCO ST	C	c.1930	Bungalow	Craftsman
2307	CISCO ST	C	c.1935	Minimal Traditional	
2308	CISCO ST	C	c.1935	Bungalow	Tudor Revival
2309	CISCO ST	C	c.1935	Bungalow	Craftsman
2310	CISCO ST	C	c.1935	Minimal Traditional	
2311	CISCO ST	C	c.1943	Bungalow	English Cottage Revival
2312	CISCO ST	C	c.1930	Minimal traditional	
2313	CISCO ST	C	c.1935	Bungalow	English Cottage Revival
2314	CISCO ST	C	c.1940	Bungalow	English Cottage Revival
2400	CISCO ST	C	c.1936	Bungalow	English cottage Revival
2401	CISCO ST	C	c.1938	Bungalow	English Cottage Revival
2402	CISCO ST	C	c.1937	Bungalow	Tudor Revival
807	HILLVIEW HTS	C	c.1916	Bungalow	English Cottage Revival
809	HILLVIEW HTS	C	c.1935	Bungalow	English cottage revival
811	HILLVIEW HTS	C	c.1937	Bungalow	English Cottage Revival
813	HILLVIEW HTS	C	c.1916	Bungalow	English Cottage Revival
815	HILLVIEW HTS	C	c.1916	Bungalow	
817	HILLVIEW HTS	C	c.1916	Bungalow	
821	HILLVIEW HTS	C	c.1930		
823	HILLVIEW HTS	C	c.1931	Bungalow	Craftsman
825	HILLVIEW HTS	C	c.1931	Bungalow	English Cottage Revival
827	HILLVIEW HTS	NC	c.2015		
829	HILLVIEW HTS	NC	c.1987		
831	HILLVIEW HTS	C	c.1931	Bungalow	English cottage revival
913	HILLVIEW HTS	C	c.1930	Minimal traditional	none

917	HILLVIEW HTS	C	c.1930	Bungalow	English Cottage Revival
801	INVERNESS AVE	NC	c.1970		
803	INVERNESS AVE	C	c.1935	Bungalow	Craftsman
812	INVERNESS AVE	C	c.1939	Minimal Traditional	Colonial Revival
814	INVERNESS AVE	C	c.1935	Bungalow	English Cottage Revival
816	INVERNESS AVE	NC	c.1935		
818	INVERNESS AVE	NC	c.1987		
820	INVERNESS AVE	C	c.1935	Bungalow	English Cottage Revival
822	INVERNESS AVE	NC			
824	INVERNESS AVE	C	c.1935	Bungalow	
828	INVERNESS AVE	C	c.1935	Bungalow	Tudor Revival
830	INVERNESS AVE	C	c.1935	Bungalow	
832	INVERNESS AVE	NC	c.2015		
834	INVERNESS AVE	NC	c.2015		
836	INVERNESS AVE	C	c.1935	Bungalow	
838	INVERNESS AVE	C	c.1935	Bungalow	Tudor Revival
939	INVERNESS AVE	C	c.1935	Bungalow	Colonial Revival
941	INVERNESS AVE	C	c.1935	Bungalow	Craftsman
943	INVERNESS AVE	C	c.1952	Ranch	
945	INVERNESS AVE	C	c.1960	Ranch	
949	INVERNESS AVE	C	c.1960	Ranch	
953	INVERNESS AVE	C	c.1955		
2311	KNOWLES AVE	C	c.1925	Bungalow	