

JOHN COOPER
MAYOR



METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY

Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission
Sunnyside in Sevier Park
3000 Granny White Pike
Nashville, Tennessee 37204
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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION
2001 Lebanon Pike, Cole House
February 19, 2020**

Application: Historic Landmark Recommendations for the Cole House, 2001 Lebanon Pike

Map and Parcel Numbers: 09509004700

Council Districts: 15

Applicant: Roy Dale

Project Lead: Robin Zeigler, robin.zeigler@nashville.gov, 615-862-7970

Description of Project: The applicant is requesting a Historic Landmark for the Cole House.

Recommendation Summary: Staff suggests that the Metro Historic Zoning Commission recommend approval of the historic landmark to the Planning Commission and Metro Council and the adoption of the existing Historic Landmark Design Guidelines to apply to exterior alterations. Staff finds that the building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and therefore meets the qualification requirements of 17.36.120.B.5.

Attachments
A: Photographs
B: Additional Historical Information

Metro Map



Aerial



Applicable Ordinances:

17.40.410 Powers and duties.

A. Creation of Historic Overlay Districts. The historic zoning commission shall review applications calling for the designation of historic overlay districts according to the standards contained in Chapter 17.36, Article III, referring written recommendations to the metropolitan council. Establishment of an historic overlay district on the official zoning map shall be in accordance with Section 18.02 of the Metropolitan Charter and Article III of this chapter.

B. Establishment of Design Review Guidelines. The historic zoning commission shall adopt design guidelines for each historic overlay district and apply those guidelines when considering preservation permit applications. Design guidelines relating to the construction, alteration, addition and repair to, and relocation and demolition of structures and other improvements shall be consistent with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended. A public hearing following the applicable public notice requirements of Article XV of this chapter shall precede the adoption of all design review guidelines by the historic zoning commission. Testimony and evidence material to the type of historic overlay under consideration may be considered by the commission in its deliberations.

17.36.110 Historic overlay districts established.

The following classifications of historic overlay districts are made a part of this title, each classification having separate and unique regulations and guidelines established according to the provisions of Chapter 17.40, Article IX.

C. Historic Landmark (HL) District. The boundaries shall be shown on the zoning map or on special overlays thereto that are made a part of this zoning code and noted by name on such maps, in which no structure shall be constructed, altered, repaired, relocated or demolished in whole or in part unless the action complies with the requirements set forth in this title.

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 yield 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 original portion of the Cole House, shown on Wilbur Foster's 1871 Map of Davidson County, is reputed to have been constructed c.1859. According to local legend and family tradition, Edmund Cole constructed the front portions of this structure for his first wife who died in 1869. The house is significant as an example of



Figure 1: Property assessor photo of 2001 Lebanon Pike.

early Tennessee vernacular architecture and is the only one of three Cole residence remaining. Cole served as president of the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad and had extensive interests in iron and coal mines in Alabama as well as large land holdings in the Nashville area. The National Register nomination states that the house “stands as the only remaining residence of this noteworthy couple [Edmund W. “King” and Anna Russell] who contributed both culturally and monetarily to the advancement of Nashville” and that it is “one of the few remaining structures built by the early leaders of our state.” (Additional information available in the Cole House National Register of Historic Places nomination.)

Analysis and Findings:

The property was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1974. The building retains historic integrity and there are no planned alterations; therefore staff finds that the property meets section 17.36.120.B.5.

The property includes a 1-story outbuilding that has been converted into a garage. The date is unknown.

Recommendation:

Staff suggests that the Metro Historic Zoning Commission recommend approval of the historic landmark to the Planning Commission and Metro Council and the adoption of the existing Historic Landmark Design Guidelines to apply to exterior alterations. Staff finds that the building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and therefore meets the qualification requirements of 17.36.120.B.5.

PHOTOGRAPHS











ADDITIONAL HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Edmund W. “King” Cole, entry in the Tennessee Encyclopedia by Don H. Doyle, <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/edmund-w-cole/>

Edmund “King” Cole, a leading late nineteenth-century railroad entrepreneur, financier, and philanthropist, was born in Giles County, a descendent of a prominent Virginia family. Cole's father died when he was three months old, leaving his mother with a large family to support. Cole worked on the family farm until he was eighteen and had little schooling and few advantages. In 1845 he left the farm for Nashville, where his life became a Tennessee version of the Horatio Alger story of rags to riches. Cole worked as a store clerk and attended night school. In 1851 he became a bookkeeper for the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad; by 1868 he was the company's president.

Over the next decade, “King” Cole transformed this dilapidated railroad into a formidable contender among the rail systems of the central South, linking Nashville to St. Louis to the north and Atlanta and Savannah to the southeast. Cole envisioned Nashville as the gateway connecting the growing Midwest commerce in grain and meat to the cotton-producing South. In 1879-80 Cole moved to implement his scheme to build a grand trunk line linking the Midwest to the Southeast and a line of transatlantic steamers. As he was putting his plan into place, the rival Louisville and Nashville (L&N) system secretly organized a coup and took over Cole's railroad, which by then was known as the Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis (NC&St.L). The merger, one of several that established L&N's regional dominance, ended competition for railroad service to Nashville, except for a brief and futile challenge by Jere Baxter and the Tennessee Central.

Cole resigned from the NC&St.L following the takeover, and for the next two years he served as president of the East Tennessee, Virginia and Georgia Railroad, which also controlled the Memphis and Charleston Railroad. Cole resigned in 1882 and channeled his business energies into Nashville banking and real estate, becoming a major property owner and developer. He financed the construction of downtown office buildings, including the Cole Block at Union and Cherry (now Fourth Avenue). Much of his entrepreneurial energy and capital also went into the founding of several different Nashville banking institutions. During the 1880s, when the city laid its foundations as a regional financial center, Cole was among the leading financial architects. Chief among his banking enterprises was the American National Bank, which he founded in 1883.

Cole became a prominent philanthropist in the late 1880s, a southern version of the many American capitalists of the Gilded Age who supplemented and offset their reputation for acquisitive fortune building with public-spirited charities. A civic-minded man, Cole served on the State Board of Health and was active in the Tennessee Historical Society. A devout Methodist, he donated his time and fortune to the promotion of Methodist missionary and educational work. He was an important donor to the Methodists' Vanderbilt University; among other contributions, he endowed a lecture series which continues to bear his name. In honor of his late son, Cole also donated to the State of

Tennessee property for the Randall Cole Industrial School, designed to educate orphaned and wayward boys. Established in 1885, it was renamed the Tennessee Industrial School in 1887. In an 1890 autobiographical sketch, Cole depicted his life as an American parable of success which owed much to his strict Methodist mother and her lessons of hard work and self-denial, in particular abstinence from drink, tobacco, gambling, and dancing. These values guided Cole's philanthropy as well.

Cole married twice, first to Louise McGavock Lytle of Williamson County, who died in 1869, and in 1872 to Anna V. Russell of Augusta, Georgia. Among Cole's survivors was his son, Whitford R. Cole, who continued in his father's footsteps as a successful railroad magnate with the L&N and a leading supporter of Vanderbilt University.