

Dinkytown Commercial Historic District Design Guidelines
Community Engagement Meeting #1 – Nov. 2, 2023
6 pm at Arvonne Fraser Library

11 attendees, 3 staff

Preserve Historic Dinkytown recorded most of the meeting

Staff gave a presentation and provided copies of resolution and draft design guidelines.

Questions and staff answers are below. Answers may be paraphrased.

1. Who goes into the effort of finding ghost signs and wall murals?
 - a. City staff are unclear if there are any ghost signs that date to the period of significance.
2. So it would be to the building owner to pay for the cost of restoring a ghost sign?
 - a. City has to be reactionary, can't force a property owner to do something, unless they propose to do something and then we can review it, City can't fund the restoration.
3. What happens if someone paints over a mural?
 - a. City would need to give approval, unless they do it without approval. Some actions don't require a permit. Then City has enforcement tools. Example of garage in another historic district getting demolished without approval.
4. Why is 412 14th Ave noncontributing since it was built in 1929? (This the Blarney)
 - a. This is because available records show that there have been too many alterations to be considered contributing anymore. Staff did a lot of extra research to review this. Wanted to make sure whatever we were recommending was supportable. Was never staff's intent to designate a district with so many noncontributing buildings.
 - b. Public comment that this sounds similar to the Varsity Theater. Staff answer: that is correct because changes were made outside the period of significance. Can also have individual landmarks within districts that have their own status independent of the district.
5. How can a small noncontributing property be modified without modifying the 1929 buildings? Thinking about the 1984 building that is next to contributing buildings on either side.
 - a. Same guidelines for existing buildings. Depends on what property owner would want to do.
 - b. Follow-up question: so what would staff be looking for? Materials? Compatibility? Staff answer: yes.
6. My building is non-contributing. Can I please remove it from the district? (Added to question that they wouldn't want to put something 1920s on a 1980s building, for example, and staff agreed)
 - a. Talked through example of replacing a roof, pretty common, generally an administrative review. Depends on what they would propose.
 - b. Not possible to remove something from a district, it's designated in perpetuity.
7. Could the City Council change the period of significance if they were so inclined?
 - a. Not sure if this has happened before. Would probably have to restart the nomination process. There are five entities who can nominate a property (Mayor, Council Member,

- HPC commissioner, CPED Director, person with legal/financial interest – this last one doesn't work in the case of a district)
- b. Could also be kicked off through a demo of historic resource process. If the demo is denied, it automatically kicks off a designation study
 - c. Example of Warehouse Historic District getting revised in 2009 after it was first designated in the 1970s. Boundary was expanded.
8. Why did City Council limit historic district designation to streetcar era?
- a. Staff doesn't know. Sometimes falls on a Council Member for certain decision. Council Members have a lot of power in process because they make the final decision on designation, HPC only makes a recommendation.
9. Why is the streetcar period until 1929 when there were streetcars until 1954?
- a. Good question, also a mystery to staff. Staff can only speculate. Maybe research didn't focus as much on this era since staff had proposed a longer period of significance.
 - b. Public comment suggested that the Great Depression may have stopped development in Dinkytown and that was the reason.
10. What would be the criteria for demolishing a non-contributing building? (Staff suggested expanding question to include contributing buildings)
- a. For both contributing and non-contributing buildings, a Certificate of Appropriateness application is required and also a public hearing before HPC. Have to meet certain findings. Is the property unsafe or dangerous and what proof do you have? Do you have new information about the property's significance, integrity, alterations? Feasibility to do rehabilitation work? Would this property need to be studied for another era of history? It's not a slam dunk every time, have to evaluate the set of conditions. Keep in mind that the HPC decision can be appealed to City Council.
11. Please explain the difference between how a property is studied and evaluated as an individual resource vs. a district.
- a. A lot of similarities, one difference for a district is that we're evaluating how the alteration impacts the whole district. Most districts have design guidelines, most landmarks don't and are evaluated with Secretary of the Interior's standards only.
 - b. Same significance criteria for evaluating the individual landmark vs. district.
12. How does a district qualify for tax credits?
- a. This is a local district, so it doesn't apply. Federal tax credits only apply to properties in the National Register. Several other qualifications have to be met. There is no local tax credit program. State tax credit program exists but not for locally designated districts.
13. The federal guidelines have 4 different opportunities to historic treatments – is rehabilitation the only one that applies to Dinkytown?
- a. We use rehabilitation because they are flexible and most widely used. We also are required to use this treatment for Certified Local Government status. Rare situation where reconstruction would be warranted, for example.
14. Comment/question: not sure if there is much about these draft design guidelines that can be changeable? Can we provide comment about specifics?
- a. Staff wanted to have this first meeting to share information, clarify questions that community members have raised, and see how the community wants to proceed. We

can devote the next meeting to diving into those details. Let us know what concerns you have as a resident, property owner, business owner.

15. Do you expect much change to these guidelines or is it pretty set because of federal and other regulations?
 - a. A bit of both, we can explain if anything can or can't be changed.
16. Question about the 2019 guidelines and what happened?
 - a. They did not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. They were sent to SHPO who provided a lot of comments. HPC also had a lot of comments. Decided they were not viable as design guidelines.
17. Could you clarify if and how to receive written comments?
 - a. Possibility of doing an online comment form, can discuss comments at next meeting, staff will regroup and get back to folks via email about how to approach this. Participants can also send feedback and ideas to staff. Staff will also send link to project website, where the guidelines draft is posted.