MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
EDINA HERITAGE PRESERVATION BOARD
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2007, AT 7:00 P.M.
EDINA CITY HALL – COMMUNITY ROOM
4801 WEST 50TH STREET

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob Kojetin, Lou Blemaster, Laura Benson, Connie Fukuda, Jean Rehkamp Larson, Nancy Sherer, and Sara Rubin

MEMBERS ABSENT: Karen Ferrara, and Chris Rofidal

STAFF PRESENT: Joyce Repya, Associate Planner

OTHERS PRESENT: Robert Vogel, Preservation Consultant
Robert Sykes, 4512 Casco Avenue
Kitty O'Dea, 4610 Bruce Avenue

I. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: November 13, 2007

Member Blemaster moved approval of the Minutes from the November 13, 2007 meeting. Member Rubin seconded the motion. All voted aye. The motion carried.

II. COUNTRY CLUB DISTRICT:

A. Survey Progress Report – November

Consultant Vogel reported that the survey activities continued to focus on the visual inspection of heritage resources in the district (about 90% complete at the end of the month). Descriptions of the physical appearance of houses made in the field were checked against photographs and documentary evidence contained in the assessor records and previous surveys. A number of mistakes, inconsistencies, and inaccuracies in the 1980 National Register form are being corrected. Maps and aerial photographs are being used to verify the locations of historic landscape features, which had been left out of the 1980 survey. The information that is being recorded on each property will be used to determine the number of contributing and noncontributing resources in the district.

Organization and review of the survey data has been ongoing with the field survey. The updated inventory of heritage resources in the district, as well as the district plan of treatment, are being reviewed for content, clarity, and accuracy.

Mr. Vogel explained that the district plan of treatment and design review guidelines were revised to reflect the comments and suggestions made by the HPB at the November 5 workshop and November 13 regular meeting.

Following a brief discussion regarding the changes that have been made to the plan of treatment thus far, Board members asked Mr. Vogel to prepare a copy of the most up to date plan of treatment for review at the January meeting. Vogel agreed to have a draft copy of the plan of treatment reflecting the proposed changes for the January meeting.

B. Design Review Guidelines – Garages

Consultant Vogel presented the following revised plan of treatment design review guidelines for garages: (Note - the new language underlined)

- No detached garage should be taller, longer, or wider than the house on the same lot.
- No new detached garage should have a roofline taller that that of adjacent homes.
- <u>The design and materials of any new detached garage should compliment the architectural style and character of the house on the same lot.</u>
- Undecorated side walls longer than 16 feet should be avoided whenever possible <u>on elevations visible from the street or adjacent properties</u>.
- New detached garages should be differentiated from historic homes and clearly identifiable as contemporary works.

These guidelines generally follow the Secretary of the Interior's standards for preservation projects and the guidelines for rehabilitation.

C. Design Review Guidelines – Landscaping

Consultant Vogel proposed that Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) decisions by the HPB encompass landscape architecture to the extent that such projects will have an impact on prominent or distinctive landscape features (driveways, retaining walls, walkways, vegetation, outdoor furnishings, decorative details, etc.). Landscape architecture associated with houses may require protection or rehabilitation as part of demolition and/or new home construction work. Historic landscape resources will also need to be considered in planning for public works projects.

While historic landscape preservation involves a broad array of designed and vernacular features, COAs will only be required for work that requires a city permit. The recommended design review guidelines are as follows:

- New driveways should be compatible in size, scale, and material with historic driveways in the district. Driveways and off-street parking areas should be designed in such a manner that they do not radically change, obscure, or destroy the historic character-defining spatial organization of front yards and streetscapes. The 12-foot width requirement for new driveways is not appropriate in the Country Club District.

- Design and install new retaining walls, planters, steps, walkways, and fences to be physically and visually compatible with the historic character of the district in scale, form, and materials. Retaining walls should follow the grade of the property and blend with its setting. Plant material such as vines may also be used to help soften and screen retaining walls.

- Retain historic front yard terraces ("patios") that give historic houses (especially those built in the Italian Renaissance and Spanish Eclectic styles) their distinguishing character.

- Minimize the disturbance of terrain around historic houses to reduce the possibility of destroying important trees, shrubs, planting beds, walkways, and other landscape features.

- New plant materials, fencings, walkways, lights, signs, and street furniture should be compatible with the character of the neighborhood in size, scale, material, texture, and color.

- Boulevard and park trees should be replaced in kind. New plantings should convey the same visual appearance as those planted during the district's period of historical significance (1920s-1950s).

- Provide access for the handicapped without damaging the essential character of streets and sidewalks.

- Avoid new curb-cuts and driveways.

- Landscaping with materials, plants, and features from the district's period of historical significance (1920s-1950s) should be encouraged.

The plan of treatment generally follows the National Park Service's new Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes, which interpret the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

Preservation guidelines could provide opportunities for protecting and enhancing natural resources. For example, the city may wish to adopt a policy that would discourage construction of large areas of impervious surface for off-street parking in residential areas by promoting a return to the old-fashioned ribbon-type driveways in older neighborhoods. Permeable pavement systems and other "green" alternatives to solid concrete, brick or bituminous paving could also be explored.

Board members agreed that the proposed language for landscaping in the plan of treatment addresses some of the problems which have arisen in the past and will be a welcome addition.

Robert Sykes, 4625 Casco Avenue explained that he is a Professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Minnesota and has used the Country Club District as a case study for his classes. He suggested that the City carefully control the boulevard areas in the District. Requiring boulevard trees to be replaced with the new variety of disease resistant elms would ensure that the historic tree canopy unique to the District would be maintained. He recommended that the City maintain an inventory of desirable trees that could be made available to residents upon request.

Board members agreed with Mr. Sykes pointing out that the treescape is an important element to the historic context of the district.

Regarding driveways in the District, Member Rehkamp Larson agreed that a minimum12 foot width was not realistic. Furthermore, perhaps the Board could encourage ribbon strip driveways which would be much friendlier to the environment.

Member Scherer questioned how the plan of treatment would address shared driveways which are pretty prevalent in the District. The Board agreed that it would be wise to encourage those with shared driveways to provide a buffer between the two whenever possible.

Kitty O'Dea, 4510 Bruce Avenue observed that the new home abutting hers to the north (4508 Bruce Avenue) was required to have a 12 foot wide driveway, which is now just shy of 12 feet, and they need every inch. Ms. O'Dea opined that the new plan of treatment should encourage the maintenance of the 12 foot driveway width. Board members thanked Ms. O'Dea for her insight.

D. Thorpe Bros. Design Guidelines

Consultant Vogel pointed out that while revising the plan of treatment for the district, close attention was paid to the original Country Club design guidelines adopted by Thorpe Bros. as part of the original homeowner covenants from 1924-1944, which remained in effect until 1964. The original covenants included the following:

1) Houses were required to face the street; a house on a corner lot had to face the same street as the “inside” house next door.

2) Setbacks: 30 feet from the front lot line to the front foundation wall (excluding porches); 3 feet to the side lot line, 7 feet from the side of a corner house to the street.

3) No house, including any attached garage and porches, could exceed 60% of lot coverage, nor could it have a width greater than 80% of the distance between the side lot lines.

4) Front porches, balconies, etc. could not project more than 12 feet from the front of the house; on houses occupying corer lots, side porches could not extend father than 10 feet.

5) No bay window, dormer, stairway landing, cornice, or other projecting feature could extend more than 18 inches from the front and sides of a house.

6) All outbuildings were required to “correspond in style and architecture to the residence to which such buildings are appurtenant” and for houses on corner lots, detached garages had to be located within 30 feet of the side of the house farthest from the adjoining side street.

7) Detached garages and outbuildings could not occupy more than 60% of the width of the rear lot line.

8) Exterior fuel storage tanks, signs greater than 480 square inches, and “objectionable” trees and shrubs were prohibited.

9) Concrete ramps or ribbons from the street to the sidewalk were required for all driveways.

10) Maximum height for fences was 4 feet 6 inches from grade, with no walls over 3 feet above grade in front yards.

11) The height of house foundation walls could not exceed 3 feet 6 inches (measured from the elevation of the curb at the front lot line) unless the “natural grade” of the lot was greater (in which case the natural grade could be the finish grade).

12) Walls, steps, or other construction (excluding sidewalks) could not encroach on the boulevard.

Board members agreed that acknowledging Thorpe's design criteria will be an important step to insure that moving forward; decisions maintain the historic integrity of the district.

Member Rehkamp Larson suggested that the revised plan of treatment include an appendix with suggestions for interested parties to gain more information on a desired topic. Board members agreed that would be an important and helpful tool for the residents. Consultant Vogel added that such an appendix would also provide an education element which is one of the missions of the HPB.

III. COMP PLAN: Draft Heritage Plan Review

Planner Repya explained that the Heritage Preservation Plan created by the HPB in 2005-2006 has been assimilated as a chapter into the City's Comprehensive Plan. The content of the HPB's plan remains unchanged; however it has been reformatted to compliment the other chapters of the Comp Plan.

Ms. Repya pointed out that in keeping with the other Comp Plan chapters; the following Implementation section was added to provide a schedule for the identified goals:

<u>Ongoing</u>

1. Carry out a comprehensive city-wide survey to identify and evaluate the preservation value of historic buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts.
2. Rezone historically, architecturally, archaeologically, and culturally significant properties as Edina Heritage Landmarks and Landmark Districts.
3. Increase the use of partnerships with other agencies, organizations, and individual property owners to ensure that significant heritage resources are preserved, protected, and used in a manner that is responsive to community values and consistent with appropriate preservation standards.

<u>Short Term</u>

4. Update the information in the heritage resources inventory and convert it to electronic form so that it can be manipulated, used, and retrieved quickly. In addition, the inventory should be made adaptable for Geographic Information System (GIS) users.

5. Use existing planning tools more effectively and create a better "tool box" to address emerging heritage preservation challenges.
6. Establish and allocate resources to development of a heritage resources disaster management plan.

7. Redirect the resources of the Heritage Preservation Board toward an increased emphasis on education and technical assistance programs.

8. Provide better public access to heritage preservation information through the media, outreach, and the Internet.

Medium-term

9. Develop an array of economic incentives for the preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction of significant, privately-owned heritage resources.
10. Develop innovative demonstration projects and disseminate information on the importance of heritage preservation in developing sustainable urban environments.

Board members thanked Planner Repya for the update. Member Scherer also announced to the Board that the Planning Commission will be holding the first public hearing for the Comp Plan on December 19th and she encouraged her fellow HPB members to attend. No formal action was taken.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS:

A. 2008 Meeting Schedule

Planner Repya provided the Board with a schedule of the monthly meeting dates for 2008. Included in the schedule were the monthly deadlines for the submittal of Certificate of Appropriateness requests. Board members thanked Ms. Repya for the information as it will be helpful for planning in the year ahead.

B. Boards and Commissions – City Council Decisions

Planner Repya presented the Board with a memorandum from Gordon Hughes, City Manager which outlined

V. CONCERN OF RESIDENTS:

Robert Sykes – 4512 Casco Avenue

Mr. Sykes advised the Board that he had the opportunity to review to review the proposed changes included in the upcoming Country Club District utility/street improvement project and he would like the Board to consider the following:

1. Incorporate elements of Thorpe's original deed restrictions into the criteria for evaluating changes in the District.

2. Encourage the strongest language possible regarding preserving the original design and planning of the boulevard and rights of way in the District. By allowing only grasses on the boulevard, as designed, the HPB would be setting an example for the residents.

3. The proposed roadway plan provides for mountable curbs to be used on the traffic islands. Although the rationale for the design is to provide for an easier turning radius for large trucks and buses; utilizing a wider curb top as seen around the Minneapolis park system also serves that purpose and is far more in keeping with the historic district. Planner Repya thanked Mr. Sykes for his observation and stated that she would share his concerns with City Engineer, Wayne Houle.

Addressing potential changes to the District's plan of treatment, Mr. Sykes encouraged the Board to consider that when Thorpe was designing the District, a system of non-symmetrical side yard setbacks was used. This practice is evident in the varying deed restrictions for each street in the neighborhood and provides a pattern on the streetscape in which the houses are not centered on the lot. These variations were intentional, creating an irregular rhythm, and defies the City's current zoning requirements of consistent side yard setbacks. He added that the variations are intentional, providing closer front doors, which is more neighborly.

Board members thanked Mr. Sykes for sharing his expertise on the District and welcomed his input in the future.

Kitty O'Dea – 4610 Bruce Avenue

Ms. O'Dea inquired about the schedule for a neighborhood meeting to address the proposed changes to the District's plan of treatment.

Planner Repya explained that the HPB will have a joint meeting with the City Council sometime in January, and a neighborhood meeting will tentatively take place in late February or early March. She noted that the scheduling of meetings must take into consideration the termination of the demolition moratorium in the District which is April 15th.

Board members added that notification of the neighborhood meeting will be mailed to residents in the District as well as posted in the Edina Sun Current.

VI. CORRESPONDENCE:

VII. NEXT MEETING DATE: January 8, 2008
January 15, 2008 – Joint Meeting with City Council

VIII. ADJOURNMENT 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Joyce Repya