



*Iowa City  
Historic Preservation Plan*



# IOWA CITY HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN



*Prepared for*  
*the City of Iowa City*  
*and*  
*the Iowa City Historic Preservation Commission*



February 2008



RESOLUTION NO. 08-60

**RESOLUTION AMENDING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO INCLUDE THE UPDATED HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN**

WHEREAS, the Comprehensive Plan is a statement of goals and policies of the community; and

WHEREAS, Iowa City adopted its first Historic Preservation Plan in 1992 to set policies to guide identification, protection and appropriate development of its historic resources; and

WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission with the assistance of Svendsen Tyler Inc. has updated the plan and set revised goals and objectives to address the communities historic resources; and

WHEREAS, recommendations in the plan are based on the studies and analysis of the changes that have occurred since 1992, case studies of historic preservation efforts in other communities in the nation, and public input gathered through neighborhood meetings as well as individual interviews with citizens, community leaders and officials; and

WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission and the Planning and Zoning Commission have reviewed said Plan and after due deliberation recommended that the Council adopt the Iowa City Historic Preservation Plan as an element of the Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that adoption of said Plan is in the public interest.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF IOWA CITY, IOWA, THAT: the updated Iowa City Historic Preservation Plan is hereby adopted as a part of the Comprehensive Plan.

Passed and approved this 4th day of March, 2008.

  
MAYOR

Approved by  
  
City Attorney's Office 1/31/08

ATTEST:   
CITY CLERK

It was moved by Wilburn and seconded by O'Donnell the Resolution be adopted, and upon roll call there were:

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSENT:

X  
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Bailey  
Champion  
Correia  
Hayek  
O'Donnell  
Wilburn  
Wright



# City of Iowa City

## *City Council*

**Regenia Bailey**, Mayor (District C)

**Mike O'Donnell**, Mayor Pro Tem (At-Large)

**Connie Champion**, (District B)

**Amy Correia**, (At-Large)

**Matt Hayek**, (At-Large)

**Ross Wilburn**, (District A)

**Mike Wright**, (At-Large)

**Dale Helling**, Interim City Manager

## *Iowa City Historic Preservation Commission*

Tim Weitzel, Chairperson

## *Planning and Community Development*

Jeff Davidson, Director

Robert Miklo, Senior Planner

Sunil Terdalkar, Associate Planner

## *Consultants*

**SVENDSEN TYLER, INC.**

Sarona, Wisconsin

**Clarion Associates LLC**

Denver, Colorado

Preparation of the *Iowa City Historic Preservation Plan* was funded by the City of Iowa City and a Historic Resource Development Program grant from Iowa's Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) Program and administered by the State Historical Society of Iowa.



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## ***I. Introduction***

The purpose of the *Iowa City Historic Preservation Plan 2007* is to review and revise the first *Iowa City Historic Preservation Plan* prepared and adopted in 1992. In the 15 years since, its goals and objectives have served as a road map for a wide range of public and private historic preservation activities. Recommendations in the original plan ranged from how and where to identify historic properties and neighborhoods to legislative initiatives and economic methods for protecting historic resources to ideas for stimulating preservation education programs and private support for preservation undertakings. Under the direction of the Iowa City Historic Preservation Commission, regular reviews of the plan's recommendations have been conducted and steady progress has been made in achieving the plan's ten principal goals and more than 100 city-wide and neighborhood-based objectives.

The overall purpose for the 1992 *Iowa City Historic Preservation Plan* stated in the introduction was simply put, “**to conserve old buildings makes a good community better.**” The validity and importance of these few words still rings true in 2007. They were affirmed in neighborhood meetings, group discussions, and dozens of individual interviews conducted during the spring and summer of 2006. A review of annual preservation awards and an inspection of individual neighborhoods throughout the community revealed dozens of successful private and public historic preservation projects. An invigorated, private non-profit organization, Friends of Historic Preservation (Friends), is now professionally staffed and responsible for a range of education and financial incentive programs.

An expanded historic preservation ordinance covering individual landmarks as well as additional historic and conservation districts offers protection to 1,100 properties with free technical assistance provided to property owners through more than 100 design reviews undertaken annually. More than 60 people have served on the Iowa City Historic Preservation Commission during its 25 years. Some went on to hold a position on the Planning and Zoning Commission, be elected as a City Councilor, or direct major historic building preservation efforts.

The historic preservation goals and objectives recommended here are intended to be comprehensive. They are built on a foundation of preservation success over more than three decades. Although this plan was prepared for the City, its success will depend on leaders at all levels of government, from the University of Iowa, and from private organizations such as Friends and various neighborhood associations. Individual property owners will continue to be at the center of preservation efforts, saving important buildings and historic neighborhoods one building at a time. The diverse base of support for preservation in Iowa City's past suggests that it will be an even more important community improvement strategy in the future.

This new edition of the Historic Preservation Plan will provide a road map for preservation policies and activities for the next 10 to 15 years. Being intended for such a long time frame, the plan contains a lengthy set of goals and objectives that may initially appear daunting. However, the plan's policies and its interrelated goals and objectives can be stated in a few basic themes.

1. **Tell the good news:** Because it involves applying rules and regulations to property, designation of historic and conservation districts and local landmarks sometimes becomes controversial and creates conflict within the community. This should not be allowed to overshadow the many positive benefits that preservation has brought to Iowa City. A good example is the amazing recovery of Iowa Avenue and nearby historic neighborhoods from the April 13, 2006 tornado. The day after the storm much of the eastern portion of Iowa Avenue appeared to be so devastated that it was thought that several historic buildings were beyond repair. There was uncertainty as to what would replace them. Property owners, the preservation community, the City, and private organizations such as Friends rallied to address both the human and physical needs to achieve recovery. As a result, what could have been a scar across the heart of the city has been restored to a condition better than before the storm. This restoration effort shows the value of the preservation ethic and practice to all of Iowa City. Through the many educational programs and initiatives detailed in this plan the City and preservation proponents such as Friends should strive to tell the good news about the positive benefits that preservation brings to the community and local economy.



*Iowa Avenue tornado damage, April 2006*



*Iowa Avenue recovers from the damage*

2. **Streamline the process:** Some of the conflict that arises around preservation matters comes from the length of the design review process. The plan identifies a number of areas where the review process can be streamlined and handled administratively, rather than requiring that the Commission review every aspect of a project. Streamlining the process should not only make the review process more user-friendly, but it should also free up Commission and staff time to devote to preservation activities other than regulations, such as education and promotional activities. Given budget constraints, the efficiencies advocated in the plan will be necessary to achieve the plan's other goals and objectives.
3. **Neighborhood preservation:** In some of the public meetings citizens were concerned about issues like zoning violations, poor property maintenance, trash and litter, vandalism

and parking congestion, that negatively affect the quality of life in some neighborhoods. In addition to historic preservation programs, this plan advocates the use of tools, such as targeted code enforcement and home ownership programs to preserve the quality of life in older neighborhoods. This multipronged approach may be necessary to maintain the value and stability of older neighborhoods so that they remain a viable option in an expanding housing market.

4. **Tap the economic development potential of the City's historic resources:** The first step is to measure the full economic impact of preservation and to identify impediments. The plan recommends bolstering the marketing of Downtown by promoting its historic resources; promoting the use of Federal and State tax incentives as a means of encouraging rehabilitation projects, and developing local incentive programs to support preservation.
5. **Learn from ourselves.** The planning update process included a comprehensive review of what had been accomplished since the 1992 plan was adopted. Our progress has been substantial whether measured in the number of neighborhoods studied, buildings protected, or citizens involved in the process. Creative solutions for problems in one area are likely to work elsewhere or at a later date. Good communications between neighborhoods and districts, training newcomers to preservation, educating the general public, and learning from ourselves will be key to creating even greater success in the future. Both public entities such as the Historic Preservation Commission and private organizations such as Friends of Historic Preservation will play leadership roles.



## ***II. Overview of Local Historic Preservation Movement***

### **A. Historic Preservation Movement Prior to 1992**

The 1992 *Iowa City Historic Preservation Plan* contains an overview of the history of the historic preservation movement at the national, state, and local levels. The description of local activities spanned the period from the 1960s through the early 1990s. Separate sections discussed the following:<sup>1</sup>

- i. Early preservation awareness efforts (1960s and 1970s)
- ii. Zoning changes designed to stabilize and preserve residential neighborhoods (1958–1961); Cooperative neighborhood planning effort between the City of Iowa City and the University of Iowa’s Institute of Urban and Regional Planning (1976–1978)
- iii. Downtown urban renewal (1960–late 1970s)
- iv. Historic preservation campaigns to save Old Brick (1970–1977) and Old Capitol (1971–1976)
- v. Early historical surveys, National Register of Historic Places nominations, and important historic rehabilitation projects during the 1970s
- vi. Continued historical surveys in North Side, South Side, College Hill and Goosetown neighborhoods during the 1980s
- vii. Unsuccessful efforts to list the North Side historic districts on the National Register of Historic Places (1981–1987)
- viii. *North Side Neighborhood Preservation Study* completed (1981)
- ix. Historic Preservation Task Force formed to draft a historic preservation ordinance (1982)
- x. Adoption and revisions to the Iowa City Historic Preservation Ordinance (1982–1989)
- xi. Designation of local historic districts: successful listing of South Summit Street and Woodlawn (1983–1984); unsuccessful listing of North Side 1983–1987)
- xii. Leadership for the Iowa City Historic Preservation Commission (1980s)
- xiii. Public awareness and education efforts (1984–1991)
- xiv. Continued historical surveys and unsuccessful nominations to the National Register of Historic Places for College Hill and Goosetown historic districts (1985–1990)
- xv. Historic Preservation Commission designated a Certified Local Government (1987) and responsibilities expand
- xvi. Historic Preservation Commission became an issues forum (1980s)
- xvii. Friends of Old Brick becomes Friends of Historic Preservation and expands mission (1989) in Iowa City and Johnson County
- xviii. Private historic rehabilitation projects grow in number (1980s)

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<sup>1</sup>Marlys A. Svendsen, Svendsen Tyler, Inc., *Iowa City Historic Preservation Plan*, (Iowa City, Iowa: City of Iowa City and the Iowa City Historic Preservation Commission), October 1992, pp. 6-34.

**B. Adoption of Iowa City Historic Preservation Plan in 1992**

The Iowa City Historic Preservation Commission began a major new chapter in the community’s preservation efforts with completion of a 10-month long strategic planning process in 1992 designed to develop a comprehensive historic preservation plan for the community. With the assistance of a Historic Resources Development Program Grant from the State of Iowa, Iowa City was able to retain Svendsen Tyler, Inc. of Davenport as the planning consultant for the project. In December 1992, the City Council unanimously adopted the *Iowa City Historic Preservation Plan*.<sup>2</sup>

The 1992 *Iowa City Historic Preservation Plan* established a mission statement, goals and a work plan containing objectives designed to guide future historic preservation activities undertaken by the City and its citizens.

**MISSION: Iowa City and its citizens seek to identify, protect, and preserve the community’s historic resources in order to enhance the quality of life and economic well-being of current and future generations.**

- Goal 1:* Identify historic resources significant to Iowa City’s past.
- Goal 2:* Make protection of historic resources a municipal policy and implement this policy through effective and efficient legislation and regulatory measures.
- Goal 3:* Establish economic incentives to encourage the preservation of historic buildings and neighborhoods.
- Goal 4:* Provide the technical assistance necessary to preserve and improve historic properties.
- Goal 5:* Heighten public awareness of historic preservation in the community and improve preservation education efforts for various audiences.
- Goal 6:* Maintain and strengthen preservation partnerships between municipal government, state government, and federal agencies.
- Goal 7:* Maintain and strengthen private support for historic preservation from individuals, not-for-profit preservation groups, neighborhood organizations, and downtown interests.
- Goal 8:* Establish and support heritage tourism efforts appropriate to Iowa City’s historic resources and community needs.
- Goal 9:* Conduct regular review and evaluation of historic preservation initiatives by the historic preservation community.

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<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*

*Goal 10:* Adopt strategies to conserve historic neighborhoods which reflect their organic development, historical roles and traditions, modern needs, and economic health and stability.

### **C. Progress on 1992 Goals and Objectives**

The first step in completing the current update of the 1992 *Iowa City Historic Preservation Plan* (Plan) was to compile a record of the progress made during the past 15 years. This review shows that nearly every goal and most objectives set in 1992 have seen achievement. A chronological overview of the historic preservation movement in Iowa City from 1957 through mid-2006 appears in Appendix A. A summary of preservation activities, successes, and shortfalls during the past 15 years for each of the ten goals and related objectives follows.

#### ***Goal 1: Identify historic resources significant to Iowa City's past.***

Five objectives were established for completing work under this goal. Historic resources include buildings, structures, sites, districts, and objects which reflect the city's cultural, social, economic, political, and architectural history. Individual historic resources or districts are generally a minimum of fifty years old. The criteria used to identify and evaluate significance for historic resources are those of the National Register of Historic Places administered by the National Park Service and the State Historical Society of Iowa.

The 1992 Plan included completion of a comprehensive overview of the city's historic resources designed to help the Historic Preservation Commission and individual property owners identify and evaluate historic resources. This overview document was prepared using the format established by the National Register program known as the "Multiple Property Documentation (MPD) Form." The overview document was titled "Historic Resources of Iowa City, Iowa" and covered the years 1839 to 1940. The document was organized into five themes or "historic contexts" including:

- "Territorial and Early Statehood Era Buildings, 1839–1857"
- "Railroad Era Buildings, 1856–1900"
- "Town and Gown Era, 1900–1940"
- "The Development of the University of Iowa, 1855–1940"
- "Iowa City Neighborhoods: Town and Country, 1840–1940"

The Historic Resources of Iowa City MPD was approved for National Register listing in 1994 and continues to provide a framework for the nomination of individual historic resources and historic district nominations. A complete list of National Register properties, including ten individual resources and eight historic districts added between 1992 and 2005, appears in Appendix B. Several updates of the Iowa City MPD itself were also completed and listed in the National Register following intensive level survey work in several neighborhoods. They include:

- "The Small Homes of Howard F. Moffitt in Iowa City and Coralville, Iowa, 1924–1943" (completed by Tallgrass Historians, 1992)—listed on National Register 5/4/1993

- “Architectural and Historic Resources of the Longfellow Neighborhood Area, ca. 1860–ca. 1946” (completed by Molly Nauman, Phase I—1996 & Phase II—1998)— listed on National Register 9/12/2002
- “Architectural and Historical Resources of Original Town Plat Neighborhood—Phase II, 1845–1945” (completed by Svendsen Tyler, 1999)— listed on National Register 5/11/2000
- “Melrose Neighborhood Survey” (sponsored by the Melrose Neighborhood Association and completed by Svendsen Tyler, 2004)—Melrose Historic District listed on National Register 12/6/2004

Other neighborhood surveys produced MPDs that have not been listed. The decision not to proceed with listing of an MPD was generally made because the National Register program requires that either an individual resource or a historic district must accompany an MPD nomination for the MPD to be reviewed. The cases below did not include such nominations and, as a result, the MPDs were not formally reviewed:

- “Historic and Architectural Resources in College Hill, 1839–1944” (completed by Tallgrass Historians, 1994)
- “Architectural and Historical Resources of the Dubuque/Linn Street Corridor, 1839–ca.1940” (completed by Molly Nauman, 1996)
- “Historic Folk Housing of Iowa City, 1839–ca.1910 MPD,” prepared as part of the Survey of a Portion of the Original Town Plat of Iowa City—Phase I (completed by Tallgrass Historians, 1997)
- “Architectural and Historical Resources of Goosetown Neighborhood—Phase III, 1855–1945 MPD” (completed by Svendsen Tyler, 2000)
- “Architectural and Historical Resources of Iowa City Central Business District, 1855–1950” (completed by Svendsen Tyler, 2001)

The National Register nominations completed between 1992 and 2005 represented a significant body of survey and evaluation work handled by the Iowa City Historic Preservation Commission together with several privately funded individual nominations and one historic district. This research constituted major progress towards Goal 1 of the 1992 Plan.

At the local level, many of the National Register listings were protected by the City’s Zoning Code as local Historic and Conservation Districts. Provisions for designating historic districts existed since the Historic Preservation Ordinance was drafted but provisions for designating conservation districts and landmarks were not added until 1995. A total of 37 landmarks, six historic districts and four conservation districts were designated between 1996 and 2005.

Since 1992, no systematic identification of archeological resources within Iowa City’s corporate limits has been undertaken by the Commission. Instead, limited work has been done as part of Section 106 compliance projects such as the investigation of the 1838–era Napoleon town site in present day Napoleon Park completed during the late 1990s. Adoption of the Sensitive Areas Ordinance in ca. 1996 attempted to promote greater coordination of information about previously identified archeological resources in areas subject to new development. However, no

archeological sites have been nominated to the National Register or have been designated as local landmarks or districts between 1992 and 2005. This may be due to no significant sites having been found in developing areas.

**Goal 2: Make protection of historic resources a municipal policy and implement this policy through effective and efficient legislation and regulatory measures.**

Integration of historic preservation into public policy involves the adoption of various planning objectives and practices which make retention of, and investment in, historic resources the rule rather than the exception. Five objectives were laid out in the 1992 plan for accomplishing this goal, and major progress has been made in achieving these objectives. Since 1992, the City's comprehensive planning process has integrated preservation objectives into each of the neighborhood plans prepared by Urban Planning staff. In addition the City has sought to strengthen regulatory provisions to protect and preserve historic resources. These measures have included: extension of the designation and design review process to both landmarks and conservation districts, addition of an economic hardship provision in the ordinance, and establishment of a demolition by neglect provision. Major steps have also been taken in improving the design review process, including establishment of design review guidelines for historic and conservation districts in specific neighborhoods. Measures not yet enacted include more meaningful penalties for ordinance violators.



*A. W. Pratt House, a local landmark and a National Register property, located at 503 Melrose Avenue.*

Improvements in the capacity and effectiveness of the Historic Preservation Commission related to planning, communication, operations, training, and staffing constituted a major set of recommendations. Accomplishments included the publication of an annual report for the HPC; holding work plan sessions on a nearly annual basis; improving the quality of the agenda and support materials circulated to the HPC; and increasing of staffing for the HPC from a quarter-time to a half-time staff person in 2001. Areas where plan objectives have been less successful include: regular communication with the City Council and other boards and commissions; improved operations of HPC meetings; commissioner recruitment; and improved orientation and training for HPC members.

**Goal 3: Establish economic incentives to encourage the preservation of historic buildings and neighborhoods.**

The development of economic incentives by private sources and units of government was identified as a strategy for preserving historic resources in the 1992 plan. Only minimal progress



*451 Rundell Street; moved from  
203 Bowery Street.*

on the five objectives has been made. The State of Iowa's incentive programs for historic tax credits and property tax abatement have had few projects undertaken in Iowa City. An effort to establish a special-taxing district for the downtown to finance area-wide improvements, which could have included enhancement of its historic character, failed when first attempted in 2005.

No progress has been achieved in having private lenders, for instance, act independently or in cooperation with not-for-profit organizations or units of government to provide essential financial resources, even if only as seed money, for financing pools or revolving loan funds to encourage historic rehabilitations. The program established in 1994 by Friends was the only source of

small grants designed to encourage historic rehabilitation efforts. Efforts by the City to work with property owners and Friends in the moving of historic buildings had limited success when a threatened house was moved from 703 Bowery Street to 451 Rundell Street in 1992. Another house move attempt in 2006 was halted when the April tornado destroyed the building before it had a chance to be moved.

A more recent example of a successful program that could serve as a model for future programs occurred during the summer of 2006. In the wake of the April tornado that damaged a number of historic districts and individual historic buildings, members of the Historic Preservation Commission and City Staff worked with Friends of Historic Preservation to secure a special appropriation from the State of Iowa to fund damage not covered by insurance claims. The funding was handled through the Historic Resource Development Program administered by the State Historical Society of Iowa. Friends assisted grant applicants and provided professional design assistance. The program brought \$250,000 of funding to the recovery process. Though such an appropriation would not likely be triggered again without an emergency situation, the coordinated effort demonstrates the capacity of the public and private groups involved to advance a common agenda in an efficient and effective manner.

**Goal 4: Provide the technical assistance necessary to preserve and improve historic properties.**

Technical assistance refers to providing information to property owners and the public in general for rehabilitation, reconstruction, restoration, stabilization and documentation of historic resources. In 1992 when the *Iowa City Historic Preservation Plan* was adopted, the emphasis for providing technical assistance was on individual counseling, training programs, and publications.

During the 1990s and early 2000s, efforts to provide technical assistance ranged from the continued operation of the Salvage Barn and accompanying training programs by the Friends of Historic Preservation to the establishment of a website for the Historic Preservation Commission. Guest speakers on various historic rehabilitation subjects were sponsored by both Friends and the HPC. Provision of individual counseling was offered by the City through its historic preservation staff members. As design review cases increased during the 1990s and early 2000s, counseling opportunities also increased.

No staffed outreach programs were established by the City or any private group to provide design assistance to owners of historic buildings including those in the downtown or individual residential neighborhoods. Most design assistance occurred through the design review process handled through the HPC. Preservation workshop sessions for homeowners, commercial property owners, or contractors were not established as a priority with only a handful of such sessions offered. The Who to Book, a guide to skilled historic rehabilitation designers and contractors, was transferred to the Friends website. The most significant technical assistance accomplishment of the past decade was the establishment of the Salvage Barn by Friends of Historic Preservation. Weekly operation of the Barn has provided opportunities for people to not only browse changing salvage inventory but to discuss restoration projects with one another gaining valuable hands-on technical assistance. The Salvage Barn has also played a regional role in stimulating restoration and salvage projects in nearby communities.

**Goal 5: Strengthen historic preservation education efforts and develop private support and commitment for preservation undertakings.**



*Salvage Barn*

The five objectives for historic preservation education in Iowa City focused on expanding general awareness of preservation issues through development of education campaigns using the media, special publications, events, and other communication tools. Emphasis was put on establishing private leadership and support for preservation projects through not-for-profit preservation groups, neighborhood organizations, and groups representing downtown.

Since 1992 programs such as the Historic Preservation Awards co-sponsored by the Commission and Friends have made annual awards to more than 250 exemplary preservation projects. Other programs such as the Irving Weber Day(s) celebration coordinated by the Iowa City Public Library have heightened interest in local history. Walking tours and neighborhood house tours have been offered as special fundraising events but to date, none have been established as regular

or annual events. General awareness of preservation publications once the purview of local book stores and public library collections, has now been expanded by outreach offered through the Friends website that contains links to other good on-line preservation information sources.

**Goal 6: Maintain and strengthen preservation partnerships between municipal government, state government, and federal agencies.**

Iowa City has maintained active partnerships at the state level in the Certified Local Government Program. Since 1992 it has taken a leadership role in the establishment of an annual work plan. Surveys of historic neighborhoods have identified areas eligible for National Register listing. Nominations undertaken by the HPC and private individuals have resulted in the successful listing of hundreds of buildings including 10 individual resources and eight historic districts between 1992 and 2005:<sup>3</sup>

- Rose Hill, 1415 E. Davenport St., 4/28/1992
- Muscatine Avenue Moffitt Cottage Historic District, 1322–1330 Muscatine Ave., 5/4/1993
- Schindhelm–Drews House, 410 N. Lucas St., 1/28/1994
- Brown Street Historic District, roughly Brown St. from west of Linn St. to Governor St. and adjacent parts of intersecting streets, 9/23/1994—*HPC sponsor*
- Cannon, Wilbur D. and Hattie, House, 320 Melrose Ave., 10/7/1994
- St. Mary’s Rectory, 610 E. Jefferson St., 7/7/1995
- Bostick, William, House, 115 N. Gilbert St., 3/28/1996
- Clark House, 829 Kirkwood Ave., 5/16/1996
- College Green Historic District, roughly bounded by Burlington, Summit, Washington, and Van Buren Sts., 7/9/1997—*HPC sponsor*
- East College Street Historic District, roughly bounded by Muscatine Ave., Summit, Washington, and Burlington Sts., 7/9/1997—*HPC sponsor*
- Emma J. Harvat and Mary E. Stach House, 332 E. Davenport St., 5/11/2000—*HPC sponsor*
- Bethel AME Church, 411 S. Governor St., 9/27/2000
- Ned Ashton House, 820 Park Rd., 1/26/2001
- Englert Theatre, 221 E. Washington St., 8/30/2001
- Longfellow Historic District, roughly bounded by Court, Rundell, Sheridan, and west boundary of Longfellow School, 9/12/2002—*HPC sponsor*
- Brown Street Historic District (boundary increase), 500-800 blocks of E. Ronalds St., 9/29/2004—*HPC sponsor*
- Jefferson Street Historic District, Portions of 100–400 blocks of E. Jefferson St., 9/29/2004—*HPC sponsor*
- Melrose Historic District, Portions of Melrose Ave., Melrose Ct., Melrose Circle, Brookland Park Dr., Brookland Place, and Myrtle Ave., 12/6/2004
- Gilbert–Linn Street Historic District, Portions of 300-600 blocks of N. Gilbert and N. Linn Sts., 4/21/2005—*HPC sponsor*

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<sup>3</sup>Nominations sponsored by the Iowa City Historic Preservation Commission listed as “*HPC sponsor*.”

Participation by members of the Commission in statewide CLG training sessions has been sporadic with increased attendance by the chairperson in recent years at both Main Street and CLG conferences. The HPC, with the support of staff, has continued to have a good track record in applying for, receiving, and completing both CLG grants and Historic Resource Development Program grants (ten separate projects since 1992).



*The Englert Theatre, 221 E. Washington Street*

Examples of other government partnerships include work carried out on Section 106 cases where environmental review involved historic resources for projects involving federal funding. Iowa City's new waterworks included an agreement to invest in mothballing the Montgomery-Butler House and to complete a feasibility study for reuse of the building while work on a sewer project in the vicinity of Napoleon Park involved completion of archeological work at the 1838-era town site and prehistoric village. Both projects involved sections of municipal government not regularly involved with historic resources and the Section 106 process. In the early 1990s, the HPC was involved with many design reviews of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) rehabilitation projects. In more recent years, these have diminished significantly. Attempts to achieve a Memorandum of Agreement with the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the State Historical Society of Iowa have not progressed to completion. In other instances, the City has played a significant role in preservation initiatives. One involved the investment of over \$250,000 in the restoration of the Englert Theatre and a second saw the cooperation of the City with Friends to allow a condemned house in the 900 block of Washington Street to be rehabilitated and returned to the active housing market. A third saw the City support the establishment the Old Capitol Cultural and Entertainment District.

**Goal 7: Establish and implement historic preservation objectives for the University of Iowa campus and surrounding neighborhoods.**

The University of Iowa's history has paralleled the development of the community, and since the middle of the nineteenth century, the University has been the largest single factor to shape Iowa City's economy, social fabric, and nearby built environment. Because of the strong separation between the state-empowered activities of the University and the municipality, little shared historic preservation planning has occurred between the City and the University before or since adoption of the 1992 *Iowa City Historic Preservation Plan*. Nevertheless, progress on several of the six objectives related to the University of Iowa has been achieved since 1992.

Though no inventory of historic resources owned by the University has been conducted, efforts have been made to retain and reuse several historic resources. Examples include the rehabilitation



*Built in 1916, this building was originally used for the SUI Isolation Hospital. After the construction of the new hospital complex in 1928 it became the Music Building, and in 1972 was converted into art studios. The building is located at 325 E. Jefferson Street. Photo date: c. 1918.*

and adaptive reuse of the former Hall of Anatomy as the Biological Sciences Library, in 2000, and the historic rehabilitation of the Medical Laboratory Building (Zoology Building/Old Biology Building), in 2001. Both buildings were subsequently listed on the National Register as part of the Jefferson Street Historic District in 2004. The most significant historic rehabilitation project completed by the University in recent years was the 2003 restoration of Old Capitol's dome and related fire damage. Other efforts include the historic rehabilitation of the Shambaugh House, completed in 1996, and the building's relocation to a nearby property several years later.

Efforts to secure support from the University in solving neighborhood problems and addressing preservation issues in areas surrounding its campus have had mixed success. The University took a positive position on historic preservation when approached by residents in the Northside Neighborhood to support local designation of the Gilbert–Linn Street Historic District. The project was supported by the Office of the President. The University made no objections when several properties held by the University were included in the Jefferson Street Historic District but did express concern when the Melrose Historic District was nominated.

Inclusion of historic preservation as a guiding principle in the University of Iowa Campus Master Plan in 2006 (available online at: <http://masterplan.facilities.uiowa.edu/Docs/UniversityIowaCampusMasterPlan.pdf>; accessed 12/2006) was an important step for the University. The plan acknowledged the importance of key features such as Old Capitol while extending a philosophy of preservation to the entire Pentacrest and other heritage resources (National Register-listed) on the University campus. Language in Section 4.5.3 identifies the following principle related to campus form and character: "Protect the campus' historic landscape and architectural resources that positively contribute to its unique identity. Recognize and protect the Pentacrest as the most significant character-defining feature of the campus plan." The announcement in late 2006 of preservation plans for the former Isolation Hospital Building in the Jefferson Street Historic District is an example of how the master plan's historic preservation principle can have a positive impact on University policy.

**Goal 8: Establish and support heritage tourism efforts appropriate to Iowa City’s historic resources and community needs.**



*The House America Was Waiting for;  
Longfellow Historic Marker  
on Clark Street*

The development of a heritage tourism initiative integrating historic preservation into the community goals of tourism and economic development has seen steady progress since 1992 on most of the six objectives identified. Promotion of authentic and quality heritage offerings for local residents and visitors has tended to focus on resources associated with the University such as Old Capitol or operated by the Johnson County Historical Society such as the Coralville School and Plum Grove. Developing visitor experiences in the growing number of historic districts through special events, walking tours, and signage programs is having success. Historic signage and walking tour programs include the effort completed in the Longfellow Historic District and the signage project planned for the Melrose Historic District. The Longfellow neighborhood walking tour is posted on the City website. The establishment of the Irving Weber Days annual celebration has offered an opportunity to focus on local history topics though not necessarily historic preservation topics. One of the goals of the establishment of the Old Capitol Cultural and Entertainment District has been to foster tourism and creation of a historic downtown walking tour is nearing completion.

**Goal 9: Conduct regular review and evaluation of historic preservation initiatives by the historic preservation community.**

Following adoption of the *Iowa City Historic Preservation Plan* in 1992, the Iowa City Historic Preservation Commission conducted annual reviews of the plan’s ten basic goals and the work plan to achieve them. The results were reported each year in progress reports submitted for Iowa’s Certified Local Government program. This annual review process has helped the HPC achieve steady progress. It has also helped make Iowa City one of the most successful state grant recipients. As predicted, these regular evaluations have had the effect of making the plan into an ongoing process.

**Goal 10: Adopt strategies to conserve historic neighborhoods which reflect their organic development, historical roles and traditions, modern needs, and economic health and stability.**

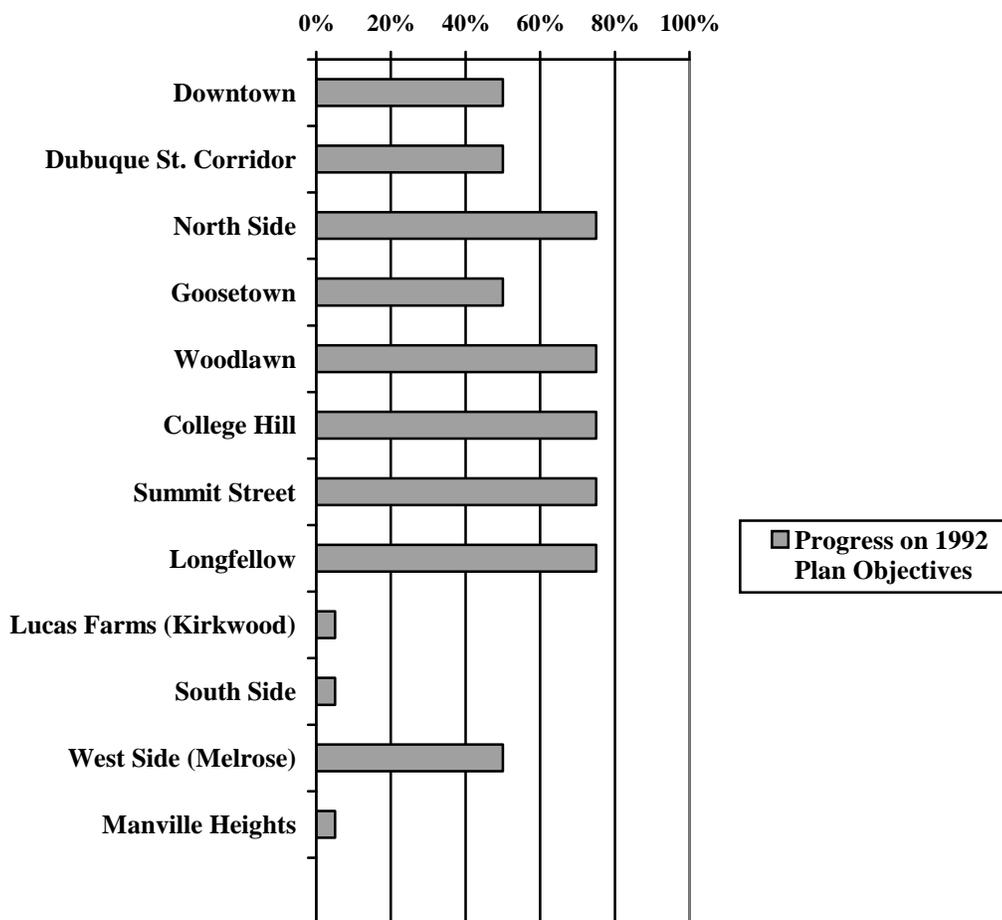
When the 1992 plan was prepared, one of Iowa City’s strengths was identified as the variety and health of its older residential and commercial neighborhoods. The importance of adopting strategies that value neighborhood differences was stressed in the nearly 60 recommendations made for the twelve distinct neighborhoods identified in the 1992 plan. As the plan said, “what may be good for one neighborhood may not be wholly appropriate for another.” Since adoption of the plan, most neighborhoods have achieved 50 to 75 percent of the historic preservation objectives initially identified. Several neighborhoods have seen little or no progress in the specific

objectives but have still experienced a heightened sense of their historic value and the importance of historic preservation. The chart that appears on the following page summarizes approximate progress on 1992 Historic Preservation Plan objectives by neighborhood.

#### D. Summary of Progress

A review of local historic preservation activities shows progress in both the public and private sectors during the past 15 years. Primary success has been achieved in the identification and protection of historic resources on both the national and local levels. The history of Iowa City revealed in its buildings and neighborhoods has been documented, many more historic building owners appreciate the value of the properties, and historic preservation is now part of the ongoing agenda of strategies for community improvement. A table appears on the following page that depicts the estimated progress in various neighborhoods since adoption of the 1992 Plan.

**Estimated Progress on 1992 Iowa City  
Historic Preservation Neighborhood Strategies Objectives**



### ***III. Public Opinions and Perceptions of Historic Preservation***

#### **A. Opinions Sought**

A second step in completing the update of the 1992 plan involved assessing public attitudes and concerns. This was done in several settings by soliciting opinions about progress made and work yet to be completed. Four public meetings were held in April and June 2006 and a fifth one was held in January 2007. The first two meetings were held just one week after the April tornado struck in Iowa City and as a result the tone of the meetings reflected concerns arising due to storm damage. The other three forums were held for the North Side and Goosetown neighborhoods, the Manville Heights and Melrose neighborhoods, and the Downtown (two meetings). Approximately 40 residents attended each of the first three meetings with less than a dozen at each of the Downtown sessions. The sessions included a presentation by Marlys Svendsen, lead consultant for the project, summarizing the 1992 Historic Preservation Plan. Participants were asked to offer their opinions regarding successes and short-comings of the 1992 plan's goals and objectives. They were also encouraged to share concerns to be addressed in the plan update. Comments received at the five sessions are summarized in Appendix C.

Solicitation of opinions continued through a series of one-on-one interviews with representative opinion holders and key decision makers. Consultants Matt Goebel and Bohdy Hedgecock with Clarion Associates joined Svendsen during three days of interviews in late June. Svendsen conducted additional interviews in January, March, and April 2006 and January 2007. Interviews were held with representatives of the Historic Preservation Commission and Planning and Zoning Commission; City planning, housing, economic development, and legal staff; and the City manager and two City Council members. Both proponents and opponents of preservation from the community were interviewed including representatives of Friends, neighborhood organizations, the University, realtors, developers, bankers, Downtown retailers and Downtown Association organizers, contractors, and architects.

#### **B. Summary of Public Input**

During the course of conducting interviews, subjects were encouraged to be frank and specific knowing that their remarks might be shared during the report process but not attributed. This information along with comments received during public forums became important in ascertaining how the current preservation effort in the community is working. Is the work of the Historic Preservation Commission effective and well-targeted? Are other parts of municipal government fulfilling their historic preservation obligations? Is the community as a whole behind the stated historic preservation goals of Iowa City's Comprehensive Plan? Are their additional public and private preservation efforts needed in Iowa City?

The overall assessment of the consultants is that Iowa City's historic preservation effort is a broad-based, community-supported undertaking. It has progressed considerably during the past 15 years involving many more residents and property owners while garnering the support of decision makers in many levels of government. Comments made during the public meetings and interview process generally fell under eight broad categories listed on the following pages.

## **1. Operation, Staffing, Efficiency, and Effectiveness of the Historic Preservation Commission**

From the onset of the Historic Preservation Plan update project, it was understood that considerable effort should be spent on evaluating the work of the Historic Preservation Commission and means for improving it. As a result, many of the questions in the interviews conducted by the consultants focused on the HPC's general operation, its staffing, its efficiency, and its effectiveness.

## **2. The relationship between the City Council and the Historic Preservation Commission**

Maintaining a good working relationship between elected and appointed officials is a goal for good government. Several good suggestions were offered to help the HPC and the City Council establish a better working relationship.

## **3. Historic District and Conservation District Issues**

The interview process was an important tool used to solicit opinions about the operation of historic districts and conservation districts and their success as a means of protecting Iowa City's historic resources.

## **4. Improving the Design Review Process**

Viewpoints offered regarding the success of the design review process since it was established nearly 20 years ago depended on a number of factors including whether a person owned a property within a regulated district and had direct experience with the process. In 2006, there are more than 1,100 properties for which certain construction work is regulated. Design review cases comprise a substantial share of the work load for the HPC and the half-time staff person responsible for handling inquiries for certificates of appropriateness, formal applications, HPC agendas, and compliance issues.

## **5. Downtown Preservation and Improvement**

Opinions about Iowa City's central business district were sought from all individuals interviewed regardless of whether or not they were downtown stakeholders. Good insight was provided by a wide range of people interviewed.

## **6. Historic Preservation Incentives**

As historic preservation efforts have become more sophisticated in recent years, the concept of incentives has grown to include not only traditional financial programs but also regulatory incentives. Comments received during the interview process included suggestions for both financial incentives originating in the private and non-profit sector and regulatory incentives from local government.

## 7. Historic Preservation and the University of Iowa

Most of the comments received regarding preservation and the University related to issues on the edges of the campus or the University's impact in the community as a whole. Few were received about the need for preservation on-campus.

## 8. Historic Preservation Advocacy and Education

Throughout the interview process, many people volunteered general observations about attitudes in the community towards historic preservation and its proponents. The overall success of historic preservation in the community was acknowledged by most people interviewed.

**Summary:** Appendix D contains an example of the general format used for interview questions along with both a summary and list of specific responses organized by general topic. A list of individuals interviewed is provided at the end of Appendix D. Many of the comments received and summarized in Appendix D form the basis for recommendations that appear elsewhere in this plan.



## ***IV. Updated Goals and Objectives for the Historic Preservation Plan 2007***

The review of local historic preservation efforts since 1992 shows major progress in both public and private activities. Good communication has been at the center of the best cases of progress while minimal or ineffective communication has characterized preservation missteps or failures. The common theme incorporated into the recommendations that follow is thoughtful, clear, and audience-appropriate communication. Whether this takes the form of official reports, shared strategy sessions, targeted publications, web-based information gathering and dispersal, or direct communication with historic property owners, good communication will be key to advancing the comprehensive preservation agenda and strategies recommended below.<sup>4</sup>

### ***Goal 1: Identify historic resources significant to Iowa City's past.***

*Objective 1:* Continue to research and evaluate historic resources through the systematic and prioritized completion of neighborhood and thematic-based historical and architectural surveys.

Following adoption of the *Iowa City Historic Preservation Plan*, the HPC assumed the leadership role for completing comprehensive studies of Iowa City's built environment by carrying out historical and architectural surveys based on the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places survey model. Work began in 1992 with preparation of a Multiple Property Documentation (MPD) form titled "Iowa City Historic Resources" to serve as a broad outline for future survey and nomination work.

Since 1992 the HPC has undertaken an orderly process for completing nearly a dozen neighborhood-based surveys. That process has included securing Certified Local Government grants and Historic Resource Development Program grants through the State Historical Society of Iowa that were matched by City resources including both cash and in-kind labor. The HPC systematically worked its way through a prioritized list of neighborhood survey projects established in the plan's work program completing approximately 75 percent of the proposed survey areas by 2005. In most cases, intensive level surveys were undertaken by historic preservation professionals with Iowa Site Inventory Forms completed for all properties within proscribed blocks. An exception was a section of the College Hill Neighborhood, where work was carried out directly by the HPC under the direction of a professionally experienced member of the HPC.

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<sup>4</sup>To maintain continuity with the 1992 Historic Preservation Plan, recommendations are presented according to the original ten goals adopted. Where appropriate, the language of the goals and the accompanying objectives has been changed or expanded. In several cases emphasis has been shifted to account for completed tasks and newly identified needs or opportunities. In other cases, entirely new initiatives are incorporated as additional objectives. A major change is the expansion and refinement of the neighborhoods designated for study and preservation. Underlining is used to emphasize new or expanded recommendations throughout IV. Updated Goals and Objectives.

The “Iowa City Historic Resources” MPD was approved in 1994 for listing in the National Register and subsequent amendments to the MPD have been completed in the years since as a part of the completion of survey work. To continue an organized approach, it is recommended that the broad outline contained in “Iowa City Historic Resources” MPD be updated (see Appendix E) through the addition of historic contexts and an extended time period through ca. 1960. Future decisions for what districts to study and to regulate as well as special protection needed for the more recent past flow from this important appendix. The priorities set for neighborhood survey work are listed in the Neighborhood Strategies Summary table under Goal 10 below.

*Objective 2:* Enlist the financial and volunteer support of private sponsors to undertake survey work.

The ongoing leadership responsibility for this task rests with the HPC but emphasis should be put on enlisting private sponsors and volunteers to carryout survey work when neighborhood support is available. Successful examples for such efforts in the past 15 years include sponsorship and funding of National Register of Historic Places nominations by Friends for properties such as the African Methodist Episcopal Church or the Emma Harvat House and the historical and architectural survey work completed by the Melrose Neighborhood Association to which Friends also contributed. In the latter project, the use of local volunteers allowed survey work to proceed at a faster pace when neighborhood residents handled historical research for 85 properties. Such an effort also provided training for neighborhood residents, giving them the skills to complete future research tasks on their own. Private efforts such as those sponsored by Friends and the Melrose Neighborhood Association demonstrate a growing support for historic preservation activities in the community.

*Objective 3:* Set designation priorities for historic districts and landmarks that emphasize the most important or threatened resources first.

Use of a neighborhood-based historical and architectural survey effort to identify and prioritize eligible historic districts and landmarks continues to make the most sense in Iowa City. However, it is recommended that future efforts use both reconnaissance and intensive level survey formats in order to complete work more efficiently and with greater speed. Such an effort would mean first completing a reconnaissance level survey to focus energy and funding on historic districts and scattered properties that are individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Once National Register eligibility has been established, local designation efforts should proceed.

*Objective 4:* Extend the period for neighborhoods to study through ca. 1960.

The federally-supported Certified Local Government Program that Iowa City participates in requires that the historical and architectural survey process focus evaluation efforts on historic resources and neighborhoods that are at least 50 years old. When the *Historic Preservation Plan* was completed in 1992 its recommendations focused on historic resources built between Iowa City's founding in 1839 through the 1930s. With the passing of time, the 50-year cut-off period for research efforts has moved forward to include buildings and neighborhoods built after World War II. It is now recommended that the list of neighborhoods to study be expanded to include historic resources from the 1930s through ca. 1960. The progress, priorities, and period of significance of the historic resources and neighborhoods to survey should be re-assessed after five to seven years.

A new work plan for survey efforts is incorporated into the Neighborhood Strategies Summary Table on page 109. It tracks progress on the survey plan laid out in 1992 through 2005 as well as suggesting a priority for future neighborhood and thematic-based survey efforts. This new priority for surveys should be used to guide future grant writing and volunteer recruitment.

*Objective 5:* Continue to nominate individual properties and historic districts to the National Register of Historic Places. When appropriate, pursue local designation as landmarks and historic districts for National Register properties.

The best means for identifying the historical and architectural significance of properties is to list them on the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register acknowledges historic resources including buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts that are significant in the fields of history, architecture, and archaeology. Since 1992, Iowa City has had 10 individual resources and eight historic districts listed on the National Register. Many other resources have been identified as eligible for listing but the research and documentation has not been completed.

Listing on the National Register is often the first step in heightening public awareness about a property or neighborhood. The same criteria are used to establish the eligibility of a property for local designation and protection. Since 1996, the Iowa City HPC has successfully pursued a strategy of nominating National Register listed individual properties as local landmarks. Currently, this strategy has resulted in the designation of 36 National Register listed properties for local landmark protection. In the case of several properties including the A.W. Pratt House at 503 Melrose Avenue and the College Block Building at 125 E. College Street, local landmark designation has been key to their long-term preservation. The strategy of coupling landmark designation to National Register listing should continue to be encouraged by the HPC.

*Objective 6:* Nominate properties of national level significance as National Historic Landmarks.

This new objective focuses attention on historic resources with national level significance and high levels of integrity. Old Capitol is a well-known National Historic Landmark that demonstrates both national level significance and a high level of physical integrity. Other examples likely include Plum Grove at 1030 Carroll Avenue, the residence of Iowa's first territorial governor; the Iowa Hydraulics Laboratory/ Iowa Institute of Hydraulic Research on the campus of the University; the Oakes-Wood House at 1142 E. Court Street, the residence of Grant Wood while he resided in Iowa City; and a property associated with the life and career of Dr. James Van Allen, internationally renowned astronomer and physicist.



*Oakes-Wood House, 1142 E. Court St., residence of Grant Wood while he resided in Iowa City.*

A strategy for evaluating and promoting NHL designations would be to work with potential co-sponsors for NHL eligible properties such as the University or private owners, the State Historical Society of Iowa, and the National Park Service's Midwest Regional Office, Cultural Resources Division in Omaha. An appreciation of the presence of national level resources will give Iowa Citians a heightened sense of the importance of such resources for the entire country.

***Goal 2:* Continue municipal policy of protection of historic resources and implement this policy through effective and efficient legislation and regulatory measures.**

*Objective 1:* Incorporate an updated 2007 *Iowa City Historic Preservation Plan* into the Iowa City Comprehensive Plan.

As with the 1992 preservation plan, the updated 2007 *Historic Preservation Plan* should be incorporated into the Iowa City Comprehensive Plan. Those involved in the updated plan at neighborhood sessions and interviews should be invited to participate in the adoption process.

*Objective 2:* Most of the specific recommendations made in 1992 to amend the City's historic preservation ordinance have been completed. These included successfully establishing individual landmark designation, conservation district designation, a certificate of economic hardship provision, and demolition prevention powers for the HPC. Following discussions with City staff, community interviews,

and an examination of the Iowa City Zoning Code, consultants from Clarion Associates prepared a review of the historic preservation ordinance to identify potential future updates to the ordinance. Comparisons with historic preservation ordinances from comparable cities and national best-practices were also made. A full discussion of Clarion Associates' historic preservation ordinance review is included in section II of Appendix F. The most important recommendations are called out as new objectives beginning with Objective 7 below.

*Objective 3:* Evaluate the need for zoning changes in historic and conservation districts as a neighborhood stabilization measure.

Designation of a neighborhood as a historic or conservation district is not intended to satisfy all of the stabilization needs of a neighborhood. Evaluation of the applicability of the underlying zoning designation should be undertaken as a parallel activity. An example of how this was undertaken successfully took place in a portion of the Longfellow Neighborhood in 2000 when down-zoning was considered for Governor and Lucas Streets south of Burlington. Continuation of the existing multifamily residential zoning designation was reviewed to determine if it was encouraging the demolition of older residences and construction of new apartment buildings, and if so, whether the results were greater density and parking congestion that were incompatible with a stable neighborhood. Following completion of the down-zoning by the P&Z Commission, the area was evaluated to determine if the neighborhood qualified as a historic or conservation district. In 2001 the Governor–Lucas Conservation District was enacted. Together the land-use changes and design review requirements of the down-zoning and the conservation district designation have served as compatible neighborhood stabilization strategies.

Efforts should be made to make it understood that land use change involves a separate and distinct set of issues to be evaluated by the P&Z Commission and that design review issues are carried out by the HPC based on historic or conservation district designation based on an evaluation of neighborhood character and the application of design review standards. The HPCs' work does not involve non-visual issues such as property usage, density, parking requirements, etc. so long as these issues do not affect the appearance of a building covered by design review. The coupling of discussions involving zoning change by the P&Z Commission and decisions regarding historic or conservation district designation by the HPC should be undertaken carefully so that the members of the public as well as the commissioners themselves understand which issues are addressed by which public body.

*Objective 4:* Revise Building Code requirements for historic districts.

In 1992, this objective related to the need to establish more flexible building code provisions for buildings located in historic districts. Limited progress has been

made on this objective. The capacity of Housing and Inspections Services staff to identify buildings in historic districts and conservation districts that require design review has improved, however, despite the fact that more than 1,100 buildings now included. In light of the newly adopted *International Existing Building Code* and the State of Iowa's *Historic Building Code*, opportunities now exist for using building codes more suited to historic resources to guide their improvement. It is recommended that the *International Existing Building Code* and the State's *Historic Building Code* be adopted to provide for safe structures, preserve historic features, and assure the highest economic impact from reusing existing historic buildings.

*Objective 5:* Amend portions of the Iowa City Zoning Code relating to Conservation District Overlay Zones to emphasize differences from historic districts by:

- a) Clarifying goals for these areas based on additional community input and incorporating these goals into a revised purpose statement for conservation districts;
- b) Reinforcing the distinction between historic and conservation districts with a focus on issues related to mass, scale, and general compatibility in reviews of conservation district properties; and
- c) Requiring periodic resurveys of conservation districts (every five to ten years) to determine if areas may have improved to the point that historic district designation may be appropriate or buildings may have changed their designations as contributing and noncontributing. Such resurveys could also be used to reassess appropriate boundaries.

*Objective 6:* Improve enforcement of the Historic Preservation Ordinance by establishing remedies for noncompliance, maintenance, and demolition by neglect standards, and administration changes.

- a) Strengthen remedies for noncompliance – fines, injunctive relief and compliance orders, forcing reconstruction, and loss of further entitlement.
- b) Use provisions of the International Building Code to promote maintenance and upkeep of historic properties.
- c) Consider administrative changes to improve enforcement of historic preservation design review including: working closer with Housing and Inspection Services and the City Attorney's Office to establish procedures that ensure uniform and efficient enforcement of the preservation ordinance; establishing a designated staff person within HIS to handle preservation enforcement issues in order to ensure that alterations are carried out in conformance with the HPC approval; and reviewing the "Definitions" section in the Historic Preservation Ordinance to make sure language is concise

and not open to court interpretation. For example, prior to regulation of commercially used properties, a review should be completed to determine all of the elements subject to, or excluded from, design review (e.g. signs, awnings, decorative lighting, etc).

*Objective 7:* Make changes in the design review process to improve efficiency and add predictability. Some recommended changes in the design review process are based on the lessons learned in the post-April 2006 tornado period.

- a) HPC should give reasons (or “findings of fact”) for its decisions on applications for a Certificate of Appropriateness.
- b) Continue to use a tiered system (“Major,” Intermediate” and “Minor” reviews) for completing design review in conservation districts but more clearly define what types of alterations fall within each category.
- c) Use “Minor” and “Intermediate” reviews in conservation districts for standards more tailored to the key issues related to those districts rather than the more detailed standards of historic districts.
- d) Allow the tiered system of review to be used for minor and intermediate level reviews in historic districts by delegating administrative authority to professional staff with concurrence of the HPC chairperson. Operate this system in the same manner that the Certificate of No Material Effect is handled in order to speed the design review process and reduce design review agenda size. If a measure cannot be approved administratively, an application should be automatically forwarded to the full HPC. In other words, do not give staff/ chairperson power to disapprove.
- e) Delegate to staff the ability to grant minor modifications to certain standards in order to streamline ordinance administration. To do this, a more specific authorization for modifications based on historic status should be established. Staff decisions should be subject to appeal to the HPC. As a part of this step, regular staff reports should be prepared for the HPC by staff based on a menu of basic, pre-approved items (i.e., hand railings, doors, foundation treatments, siding options that are pre-approved if a set of conditions are met.).
- f) Maintain clear design review standards that result in predictable decisions by staff and the HPC and that limit administrative discretion.
- g) Modify the design guidelines sections of the *Iowa City Historic Preservation Handbook* (Sections 4.0 through 7.0) by either removing the distinction between *Disallowed and Not Recommended* approaches, or by refining the exceptions criteria in Section 3.2 of the design guidelines to better define when the HPC may allow more flexibility in applying the guidelines.

- h) In order to speed the processing of design review applications, stress the need for complete answers to all questions including plans and drawings that clearly show existing condition and proposed changes. Allow staff to determine if applications are sufficient and reject incomplete applications.
- i) In conservation districts, develop clear and specific standards that address frequent design review issues. For example, what level of deterioration determines whether windows should be replaced rather than repaired?
- j) In order to improve design guidelines and process applications more expeditiously, identify in advance the details on buildings that are the most important to preserve. When surveys are done, identify these features on site inventory forms and photos. Include evaluations of garages as contributing or noncontributing resources on site forms for all properties.
- k) Allow the HPC to give “conditional approval” by clearly stating conditions in COA applications and delegating to staff the power to oversee implementation of the conditions in order to speed the process.
- l) Encourage cooperative arrangements with Friends to provide assistance to owners in complying with design review process including sponsorship of professional design assistance, joint workshops held by the HPC and Friends, and promotion of use of the Salvage Barn materials where appropriate to solve design review issues.
- m) Establish a regular training program for the HPC including design review orientation for new members and periodic refresher training for the entire HPC.

*Objective 8:* The *Historic Preservation Handbook* should be revised by adding a new section that lists the sections of *Title 14: Iowa City Zoning Code* that relate to historic preservation procedures, standards, regulations, guidelines, incentives, definitions, and noncompliance violations.

*Objective 9:* Revise design guidelines to better address key issues and presentation format.

- a) Reexamine guidelines and/or recommendations for new construction; garages and outbuildings, including garage doors; determining when materials are too deteriorated to repair; and windows (should they be repaired or replaced).
- b) Develop a design manual that includes illustrations or photographs of appropriate designs for common building elements such as porch balustrades, porch skirting, hand rails, garage doors, etc. Alterations consistent with those pre-approved designs would potentially be eligible for administrative approval.

- c) Eliminate inconsistencies between the historic preservation ordinance and the *Historic Preservation Handbook*. Examples of inconsistencies include the following: the *Handbook* does not reflect recent changes regarding multifamily design standards and review procedures; the trigger for when a Certificate of Appropriateness is required is described differently in the ordinance and the *Handbook*; and the *Handbook* does not accurately describe setback averaging as defined by the Zoning Code.
- d) Consider alternative paving materials for establishing required parking areas in conservation and historic districts. Comments at one of the public meetings expressed concern about the impact of hardscape paving in rear yards. Though this is not an element reviewed by the HPC, it is recommended that the City consider the use of alternatives to impervious materials for parking spaces in historic and conservation districts (examples of trademarked porous paving materials include Grasscrete, Grasspave2, Geoblock, Grasroad Pavers8, Tuff Track, Grassy Paver, Grass-Cel, and Checker Block).
- e) Consider revisions to the design guidelines to allow more flexibility in using alternative/substitute materials for common alteration projects such as door and windows replacement based on specific criteria such as historic status of the structure, properties of the substitute materials, etc.

*Objective 10:* Advocate changes in state enabling legislation for historic preservation commissions to allow communities greater flexibility in establishing the make-up of their commission. When a number of commission appointment issues were discussed with the State Historical Society staff, they were open to the idea of changing HPC membership requirements in the Iowa Code. Consideration should be given to changes that do the following:

- a) Establish a fixed size for the HPC. Currently there are ten members on the HPC with six representing districts and four serving as at-large appointees. Should another historic district be established, the HPC would grow to eleven appointees, etc. There is currently no limit on the potential commission size. The commissioners serve rotating three-year terms. The flexible size and shorter terms of the HPC differs from other commissions staffed by the Planning and Community Development Department. The Planning and Zoning Commission has seven members serving five-year terms and the Board of Adjustment has five members each serving five-year terms. To provide stability for the HPC, it is recommended that its size be established at a fixed number that approximates the current size. Consideration should also be given to lengthening the term of commissioners from three to four years.
- b) Eliminate the representative basis for appointments currently in place for a portion of the HPC's total membership. The Iowa Code requires that a commissioner be appointed from each locally designated *historic* district. As more historic districts are designated, the size of an HPC grows without regard to the size of a district or the practicality of an HPC's size. Pursue amendment of the State Code to provide more flexibility in the composition of the Commission.

- c) Strengthen technical expertise of commissioners appointed to the HPC. There are currently minimal requirements in the Iowa Code for technical expertise of historic preservation commission appointees.<sup>5</sup> Federal Certified Local Government program requirements specify that at least two commissioners be “preservation professionals”<sup>6</sup> and suggests these should be an architect and an architectural historian. To improve the design review efficiency of the HPC, it is recommended that two or more members be appointed based on their technical expertise or skills.
- d) To strengthen the HPC and make its actions more effective and efficient, an HPC by-laws change is recommended that would fix the size of the commission at nine members in order provide a tie-breaking vote with four at-large members and five from a mix of historic and conservation districts. This number allows for broad representation while keeping voting control in the hands of district residents. Two of the at-large members would be required to have demonstrated experience or skills in historic preservation or related fields such as architecture, contracting, real estate, development, etc. An ongoing effort should be maintained to provide diversity for commissioners, including residential distribution within designated districts.

*Objective 11: Strengthen relationship between HPC and Planning and Zoning Commission.*

- a) In advance of decisions regarding the designation of potential historic districts or conservation districts, an invitation should be extended by chairperson of the HPC to the P&Z Commission to have a member of P&Z to attend the HPC meeting(s).
- b) Conduct an annual joint meeting between the P&Z and the HPC to establish common goals and discuss areas of concern. Invite members of the City Council to attend and offer agenda items.

*Objective 12: Strengthen language of the Sensitive Areas Ordinance.*

- a) In paragraph Section 14-5I-12(F)(2) regarding development in instances where

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<sup>5</sup>The Code of Iowa (Section 303.34 et seq.) states that members of a historic preservation commission “shall be appointed with due regard to proper representation of residents and property owners of the city and their relevant fields of knowledge including but not limited to history, urban planning, architecture, archeology, law, and sociology.” (from Certified Local Government Handbook, State Historical Society of Iowa; available online at: [http://www.state.ia.us/government/dca/shsi/preservation/clg\\_program/clg\\_manual.html](http://www.state.ia.us/government/dca/shsi/preservation/clg_program/clg_manual.html), accessed 11/18/06.)

<sup>6</sup> “Historic preservation professionals are persons who meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Professional Qualification Standards. The Standards call for an advanced degree (M.A. or Ph.D.) and professional, work experience in one of the following fields: history, architectural history, prehistoric or historic archaeology or licensed/certified architects with training/experience in historical architecture rehabilitation. In addition, individuals with degrees and work experience in urban or rural planning, American Studies, American Civilization, Cultural Geography, Cultural Anthropology, Folklore, Curation, (building) Conservation, and landscape architecture are also recognized as preservation professionals, although Professional Qualification Standards have yet to be promulgated.” (For source, see Footnote 5.)

significant archaeological sites are identified, the City’s authority to require retention of an archeological site as private or public open space through a mandated design of the site plan, planned development or subdivision should be stated more clearly and affirmatively. In this paragraph the word “require” should be used rather than “attempt.” Like all land use regulations, care must be taken to avoid any “takings” claims. Barring that requirement, however, it is certainly within the power of the City to deny an application that impacts such resources.

- b) Paragraph 14-5I-12(G) establishes the ability of the City to limit development in the area of burial sites and to require designation as public or private open space. This is an appropriate standard, however, care must be taken when dealing with some types of burial sites, particularly those falling under the standards of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, to avoid identifying the area as such in public records in order to maintain protection for these sites. Instead of prescribing a specific buffer size, it may be more appropriate to include a more general standard for site design that requires integrating the burial area and buffer into the overall site plan.

*Objective 13:* Re-examine City policy regarding brick streets to assure protection and funding are in place for conserving and restoring significant areas both inside and outside of historic and conservation districts.

*Objective 14:* The last resort for preserving a historic building is moving it. This complex issue should be examined by a group representing various parties responsible for such actions (HPC, P&Z, ZBA, HIS, Traffic Engineering, utility companies, moving companies, etc.) to determine if a new ordinance or revised set of policies should be adopted.

**Goal 3: Establish economic incentives to encourage the preservation of historic buildings and neighborhoods.**

*Objective 1:* Assess the economic impact of historic preservation on Iowa City by conducting a study based on section “V. Model for Evaluating Economic Impacts,” beginning on page 111. Examine the impact of historic rehabilitation expenditures, the roles preservation and district designation play in property values, and the value of heritage tourism. As a part of the assessment, identify current impediments—both public and private—to redevelopment.

*Objective 2:* Develop a comprehensive set of economic incentives aimed at resolving impediments to redevelopment. Although some issues were identified during the current planning process, others need to be more fully evaluated. Once the impediments have been fully identified, the preservation incentives developed in other communities and states that are outlined below should be considered.

*Objective 3:* Establish and market tax incentives for historic buildings.<sup>7</sup> Ongoing promotion of these incentives should be undertaken by the HPC as well as the staff for the City's Economic Development Division, Friends of Historic Preservation, the Downtown Association, and especially the Cultural and Entertainment District. A more complete discussion appears in Appendix K.

- a) Promote local property tax abatement through the City's Urban Revitalization Program for the CBD or the state-wide tax abatement program (Iowa's "Temporary Historic Property Tax Exemption") for properties outside of the Urban Revitalization Area.
- b) Along with the State Historical Society of Iowa staff, investigate the merits of establishing a statewide property tax abatement incentive such as a temporary property tax freeze linked to a non-rehabilitation measure such as local landmark or district designation.
- c) Promote use of the federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program for income-generating properties undergoing rehabilitation that are listed on the National Register or eligible for listing. The incentive creates a 20% federal investment tax credit for property owners completing qualifying rehabilitations.
- d) Promote the use of the Iowa State Historic Preservation Tax Incentive Program for income-generating properties undergoing rehabilitation that are listed on the National Register or eligible for listing. The incentive parallels the federal tax credit program and offers a 25% state investment tax credit for property owners completing qualifying rehabilitations. Because of current rules governing this program, properties located within Cultural and Entertainment Districts, such as in Downtown, have a competitive advantage for receiving credits.

*Objective 4:* Downtown: Consider combining a Self-Supporting Municipal Improvement District (SSMID) for the central business district with the Main Street program; promote use of the State Investment Tax Credits for historic buildings made available through the Cultural and Entertainment District program.

- a) When the SSMID objective was proposed in 1992 it was aimed at use in existing historic districts. Since that time, an effort has been made to establish an SSMID in the Downtown. Though unsuccessful in 2005, based on interviews with Downtown leaders it is believed that conditions may have changed in the central business district in terms of ownership support. A SSMID remains an opportunity for a regular source of funding to underwrite a façade improvement program, a revolving low-interest loan program, and/or

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<sup>7</sup>Even though some of these measures require action at the state level, they are offered here as guidance for all of the government agencies involved in their enactment.



*Downtown, historic buildings along South Clinton Street.*

full-time staff position for the Downtown. Downtown supporters of such a measure and the Downtown Association should take the leadership role in establishing a Downtown SSMID.

- b) It is also recommended that Downtown leaders look at combining a SSMID effort with the “Main Street Approach” for organizing its staff efforts. This approach seeks to integrate the goal of economic development within the context of historic preservation.

The Main Street Approach<sup>8</sup> has four overall concepts and a set of guiding principles:

- *Business Improvement* – This element involves diversifying the downtown economy by identifying potential market niches, finding new uses for vacant or underused spaces and improving business practices.
- *Design* – Utilizing appropriate design concepts, the visual quality of the downtown (buildings, signs, window displays, landscaping, and environment) is enhanced.
- *Organization* – The organizational element brings together the public sector, private groups and individual citizens, with coordination by a paid program manager, to work more effectively in the downtown.
- *Promotion* – By promoting the downtown in a positive manner, a community can begin to focus on downtown as a source of community pride, social activity and economic development potential.
- *Guiding Principles*
  - Incremental Process
  - Comprehensive Four Point Approach
  - Quality
  - Public and Private Partnership
  - Changing Attitudes
  - Focus on Existing Assets

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<sup>8</sup>“The Main Street Approach,” Iowa Department of Economic Development; available online at <http://www.iowalifechanging.com/community/mainstreetiowa/approach.html>; accessed 11/21/06.

- Self-Help Program
  - Implementation Oriented
- c) In 2004, local efforts were successful in having the Downtown designated as part of the Old Capitol Cultural and Entertainment District (CED). This State-designation identifies compact, mixed use areas of Iowa towns and cities where cultural facilities and services are concentrated. A primary advantage of this designation currently is access to the State tax credits to assist property owners in completing rehabilitations of historic buildings within CEDs as described in greater detail above. Downtown property owners should be encouraged to take advantage of the State income tax credit for historic rehabilitations of buildings in the Old Capitol Cultural and Entertainment District.
- d) Develop closer coordination between economic development staff, preservation planning staff, and HPC for Downtown projects.
- e) Develop a grant/loan program for Downtown business/property owners who participate in voluntary rehabilitation guidelines. (see *Objective 5* and *Objective 6* below)

*Objective 5:* Private Loan Program: Establish a private loan pool for rehabilitating historic buildings.

When this objective was identified in 1992, leadership for this effort was broadly directed at both public and private sectors with interest in historic preservation. Successful models for revolving loan pools and interest write-downs in other communities were suggested as examples. Since then, the only organization that has stepped forward to lead such an effort has been Friends. Their efforts have included modest rehabilitation grants to individual historic property owners and, in the wake of the 2006 tornado, a grant program coordinated with matching funds from the National Trust for Historic Preservation focusing on technical assistance.

Based on comments received at neighborhood meetings and in interviews, there is a continuing need for a private loan or grant pool for rehabilitating historic buildings. To better focus the establishment of such a program, it is recommended that future efforts couple a rehabilitation loan/grant program with other needs such as was done with the post-tornado program. These could include neighborhoods containing affordable housing such as Goosetown, properties transitioning from rental units to owner-occupied, buildings undergoing design review in both historic or conservation districts, buildings undertaking ADA improvements, etc. In all cases, the recipient building would also be an individually significant building or a contributing building in a conservation or historic district. Work funded through such a program should comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and/or the HPC's design guidelines.

*Objective 6:* Municipal Grant/Loan Program: Expand existing grant or loan programs using Community Development Block Grant funds or other municipal sources to underwrite the costs of sound rehabilitation work on buildings undergoing design review in historic and conservation districts.

The City's federally-funded Community Development Block Grant and HOME Investment Partnership programs focuses efforts on providing financial assistance to low and moderate income homeowners wanting to make repairs and improvements to their homes. Since 1992 these efforts have shifted from older neighborhoods in the central city to outlying areas. This may be partially due to requirement for lead based paint testing and abatement.

In 2003 the City established the Targeted Area Rehabilitation Program (TARP) to compliment CDBG/HOME programs without the same income requirements of the federal programs. The purpose of TARP is to stabilize and revitalize targeted neighborhoods, which also include areas of the city containing several historic and conservation districts as well as a number of National Register properties. The program allows the City to offer low-interest loans that are repayable over a 20-year period, with the money awarded to qualified homeowners on a first-come, first-serve basis. There is potential for TARP to be marketed more effectively in historic conservation districts.

Low-interest loans and grant programs have been developed in a wide variety of communities nationally to help offset the costs of rehabilitating designated historic structures. In Cedar Rapids two popular and well-regarded programs have been established for designated historic districts. The City's Paint Rebate program provides exterior paint rebates for consumable painting materials up to a maximum of \$400 if the homeowner paints his or her home. This program will provide rebates up to 50% of labor costs or \$1,200, whichever is less, for a homeowner to hire a paint contractor. Though the dollar amounts are not significant, the effect of this program has been to develop good will in districts that prohibit installation of synthetic siding.

Other communities provide grants to property owners to hire a preservation architect or other professional to assist in preparing rehabilitation plans. A related form of incentive provides low- or no-interest loans to property owners to assist with project costs. All of these programs aim to encourage property owners to perform appropriate rehabilitations and to help offset the costs of maintaining historic properties. Establishment of a paint rebate program similar to the Cedar Rapids program targeted at buildings in conservation and historic districts should be considered. With modest annual funding to encourage painting for buildings, such a program can demonstrate good will and help property owners to realize that their preservation efforts are appreciated in the community.

Recognizing the traditionally strong real estate appreciation in the Iowa City market, tie any historic grant programs to a repayment plan that would obligate recipients to repay grants if a property is sold within five years. Repaid grants would be incorporated into a revolving fund available for new grants. As with a private grant/loan program, work funded should comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and/or the HPC's design guidelines.

*Objective 7:* Regulatory relief: Many communities allow designated historic buildings to qualify for exemptions or variances from building code and zoning standards such as parking requirements and setbacks. Iowa City has taken advantage of this approach and these provisions should be maintained in future building code and zoning revisions. Relief to parking requirements could be tied to use of specific surface materials (see Goal 2: Objective 9 d).

*Objective 8:* Non-local Grants: Establish a more coordinated approach to preparation of non-local grants by giving grant writing responsibility to City staff members including the half-time historic preservation planner and other Planning and Community Development staff. Through the HPC and City staff, the City of Iowa City has had considerable success in securing State grants since 1995 with eight grants received during the following decade through the State Historical Society's Historic Resource Development Program and Certified Local Grant Program. Despite this success rate, the effort has been uneven depending to some extent on the individual capacity of staff members or the interests of HPC members. To improve the number and amount of grant income to support HPC operations, greater effort should be made to secure grants through the timely preparation of grant requests. Also, federal grant opportunities through the National Park Service and private grant programs offered through such organizations as the National Trust for Historic Preservation should be considered for eligible projects.

*Objective 9:* Encourage private individuals and non-profit organizations to identify eligible projects for the State Historical Society's grant programs and assist in grant writing. State programs include the Historic Sites Preservation Program and the Historic Resource Development Program.

**Goal 4: Provide the technical assistance necessary to preserve and improve historic properties.**

*Objective 1:* In the 1992 *Historic Preservation Plan*, this objective focused on providing technical assistance to owners of historic buildings undergoing the design review process. If funding became available, the objective recommended establishing a new staff position with this responsibility. Since then both aspects of the objective have been accomplished. During the intervening years, the HPC's responsibility for design review cases has grown 8-fold from approximately a dozen per year to nearly 100. The response of the Planning and Community Development Department has been to change the qualifications of the staff planner responsible

for HPC support to include architectural design skills. Greater guidance during the application process has been provided to applicants. The historic preservation planning activity has also been increased following an increase from a quarter-time position to a half-time position.

The demand for design review assistance continues to grow. The design work completed during the post-tornado period during the summer of 2006 provided insight into the best methods for streamlining the design review process. Some of these methods involve delegating responsibility to the staff. This shift in the design review process combined with recommendations for continuing to survey and designate historic and conservation districts suggests that the workload for historic preservation activities will continue to grow in the future. An initial step for dealing with this growing workload should be to encourage operational efficiencies recommended in Goal 2, Objective 7. For the long term, consideration should be given to increasing the preservation position from half-time to three-quarters or full-time depending on the availability of funding.

*Objective 2:* Formulate and implement a Downtown design program and support neighborhood based programs; continue home improvement workshops.

The importance of having a comprehensive design program for the Downtown and other historic neighborhoods is stated in several sections of the *Historic Preservation Plan* update. What has changed for future years are the opportunities for delivering information, the specific audiences to be reached, and message content. The Internet now represents an important opportunity for conveying a wide range of historic rehabilitation information and design review topics customized by building type, architectural style, historic or conservation district character, and a constantly updated set of best-practices. Both the City's web portal and Friends websites provide opportunities to formulate aspects of an improved comprehensive design program.

Other measures to be taken to improve the delivery of technical assistance require a reassessment of content. Expansion of the *Historic Preservation Handbook* or creation of a new "user-friendly" update of the *Historic Preservation Guidelines* should be undertaken. During the interviews, a number of people suggested the need for compilation of a "design handbook" that contains graphics and specific examples for persons undertaking rehabilitation projects. A series of separate handouts for common repair items such as door replacements/repairs, garage door design, porch repairs, deck additions, and new garage designs could also be part of a design handbook.

*Objective 3:* Sponsor training sessions for topics designed to improve capacity of property owners to deal with design review process. Workshops could be recorded and broadcast on the Iowa City Public Library Channel and City Channel 4. Workshops or training session topics to be considered include:

- Historic period paint schemes
- Windows and doors: when to repair and when to replace?
- Do-it-yourself window repair
- Repair and restoration of wood siding
- Painting your own house: dos and don'ts, hiring a contractor
- Old house repairs: using alternative materials
- Historic landscaping
- Energy solutions for old houses
- Saving porches: foundations, skirting, decks, steps, balustrades, posts and pillars, ornamentation, roofs and painting
- How to reopen enclosed porches
- New garages for old houses

*Objective 4:* Continue and expand operation of the Salvage Barn as an undertaking of Friends of Historic Preservation with support from the City of Iowa City. Develop new strategies for recruiting volunteers. Consider developing a business plan for the operation that would include additional sources of operating income to help sustain a paid staff. Tie any major changes to plans for establishment of an expanded facility in 2010 at the Eastside recycling center. Build on the lessons learned by the Salvage Barn from the post-tornado experience in 2006 when it was used to stimulate restoration projects. Use the Friends website to highlight Salvage Barn inventory and promote sales.

*Objective 5:* Continue to have technical assistance for National Register nominations provided by the State Historical Society.

Since 1992 the role of the HPC in training the public in the preparation of National Register nominations has been virtually non-existent. Instead, the HPC has sponsored the professional preparation of both individual and district nominations. The role of training individuals has fallen to the State Historical Society of Iowa, the state agency responsible for administering the National Register program in Iowa. It is recommended that in the future, the HPC continue its sponsorship of nominations. Rather than carrying out the training efforts itself for individual nominations, the HPC should promote existing training opportunities provided by the State Historical Society.

**Goal 5: Heighten public awareness of historic preservation in the community and improve preservation education efforts for various audiences.**

*Objective 1:* Maintain a marketing approach for all education and promotion products and activities.

When proposed in 1992, this objective simply meant that an effort should be made to ask what people want and provide it, rather than give them what it is thought they need. The public input process in the current preservation plan update is

a good example. A periodic survey of the opinions of historic and conservation district property owners regarding their concerns about the design review process or the kinds of design aids they would like to see provided are other examples.

*Objective 2:* Create volunteer opportunities and special events.

Since 1992, numerous volunteer opportunities and special events have been staged on behalf of historic preservation efforts. Examples include the continuing work of Friends to preserve residences with the help of volunteers or to continue the efforts of the Salvage Barn. Other examples include Friends of the Englert, championing preservation of the historic Englert Theatre, or the Iowa City Public Library's efforts to coordinate volunteer activities for Irving B. Weber Days. This spotlight on local history has grown from a one day event to a month long series of activities. Such activities present the opportunity to incorporate an annual event focused on historic preservation education. Creating opportunities to take advantage of the skill and enthusiasm of volunteers should continue to be an outreach effort.

*Objective 3:* Establish and maintain preservation as an element in community improvement efforts.

This objective focuses efforts on integrating historic preservation into the wider agenda for community improvements. In some cases that may mean getting community support for a historic preservation effort such as the Englert Theatre but in other cases it may mean seeking to integrate a historic preservation activity into an existing agenda such as developing and promoting a historic walking tour for the Downtown Association's retail campaign. Other examples might include establishing historic preservation objectives for neighborhood associations. Several of the projects completed in the North Side, Longfellow, Goosetown, and Melrose neighborhoods using "Program for Improving Neighborhoods" (PIN) grants have demonstrated the value placed on heritage in these neighborhoods.

*Objective 4:* Continue to broaden and strengthen non-profit historic preservation groups.

Friends of Historic Preservation, established in 1975 to save Old Brick Presbyterian Church and reorganized in 1988 as a broader preservation group, underwent a self-examination and planning process in 1992 to establish a clearer set of objectives. In 1999 this strategic planning process was repeated. Important results have been projects focused on public education, technical assistance, and supporting historic



*Neighborhood street marker*

rehabilitation with hands-on projects. Retention of a part-time executive director has been critical to the higher profile gained for the organization. In future years, there will continue to be a need for a historic preservation advocacy and education group such as Friends. Its full-time, professional staffing, an expanding membership base, and higher community profile should be near and mid-term objectives. Efforts such as the Salvage Barn, National Historic Preservation Month and Weber Days activities, Historic Preservation Awards, and the newly inaugurated Parade of Historic Homes, should be encouraged.

*Objective 5:* Develop new education efforts aimed at the general public, local officials, owners of historic properties, and target audiences such as elementary students.

There was considerable discussion during interviews and at neighborhood sessions about the need to focus more resources on educating the general public, local officials, and owners of historic properties about the benefits of the Iowa City preservation program. While finding the time and money to make education and outreach a priority can be a struggle, the long-term benefit of taking a more proactive approach to these issues can be significant. Support for preservation from the public and local decision-makers is an essential element for success. To carry out the objectives below, a combination of City staff and contracted services will be necessary. Additional assistance from HPC commissioners and Friends of Historic Preservation will be needed. Funding sources for some efforts may require special grants. Recommendations for education and public awareness efforts include:

- a) Develop an annual or semi-annual “historic preservation report” that is both visual and statistical and distribute it to important audiences. Such a report should contain illustrative “before and after” photographs for representative rehabilitation projects. It should also contain relevant statistics such as the number of design review applications in each of the historic and conservation districts, length of time for processing applications, number of approvals versus denials, estimated value of rehabilitation work, etc. Target audiences for this report should be the City Council, the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Neighborhood Council and residents of historic and conservation districts. A copy of the report should be available online through the City’s website.
- b) Identify audience groups and develop targeted publications, training sessions, and special events. Approach these groups through existing membership organizations including contractors through the Remodeling Contractors Association, real estate agents through the Iowa City Area Association of Realtors, and landlords through the Apartment Owners Association. Training sessions and simple FAQ flyers should be developed for each group. In addition, specialized publications for real estate agents such as guides to Iowa City historic neighborhoods and architectural styles should be prepared. A “Parade of Restored Homes” could also be developed. Other organizations

such as neighborhood associations containing historic or conservation districts should be reached through newsletter articles or an HPC “history corner” column.

- c) Host an annual or bi-annual meeting or “District Forum” for leaders or representatives from historic and conservation districts. Consider this a prime opportunity to exchange information between the HPC and districts including information about regulatory changes, successful preservation initiatives, and suggestions for solving problems that cross district boundaries. Coordinate this effort with the Neighborhood Council and invite public officials.
- d) Promote heritage education efforts at local elementary schools (especially those in older neighborhoods such as Horace Mann, Longfellow, Lincoln, etc.) by supporting establishment of a local history education program that includes information, tours and events connected to historic districts.
- e) Continue efforts to identify historic properties and historic districts with plaques, street markers, walking tours, heritage paths, and other tools as a way of educating the community about historic resources. Annual award ceremonies, sponsored by the HPC and Friends should be continued as a tool for recognizing new landmarks and outstanding preservation projects. An annual “Mayor’s Award” should be added as a part of the awards program. The Annual Historic Preservation Awards program sponsored by Friends of Historic Preservation should make an effort to dispel views that historic preservation is an elitist activity by highlighting some of the best efforts for more modest historic buildings and for projects that entail smaller scale projects.



*King-Littrell-Palmer Chicken Hatchery  
Longfellow Historic Marker  
located near Rundell Park*

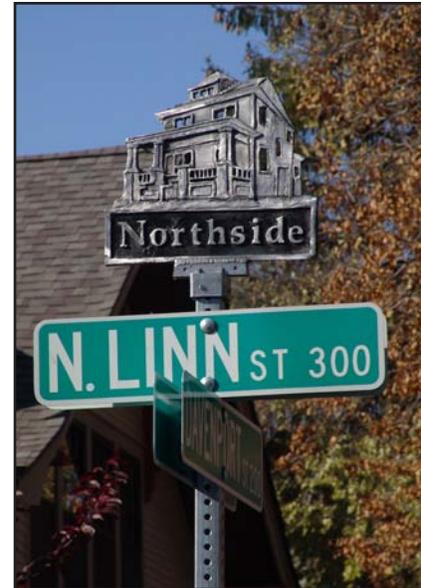
*Objective 6:* Consider participation in “Preserve America,” a White House initiative that encourages and supports community efforts to preserve and enjoy cultural and natural heritage resources. The initiative includes an awards program, Preserve America community designation, grant opportunities, educational outreach, and a Teacher of the Year award.<sup>9</sup>

*Objective 7:* Recognize the day-to-day administration of the preservation program of the HPC as an opportunity for outreach.

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<sup>9</sup>Program summarized at “The Preserve America Initiative,” <http://www.preserveamerica.gov/overview.html>.

Rather than a burden to development, it is possible to frame the design review process as an added benefit for property owners and an opportunity for education. In this sense, the design review component of the program can be promoted as an incentive to property owners. There was considerable discussion about the appropriate role for staff to play in this situation. Many interviewees felt that staff should be more pro-active in providing design recommendations to property owners to help them meet the design guidelines. While this approach needs to be monitored to ensure that staff or the HPC are not dictating specific design solutions, providing suggestions and examples of successful approaches to similar design problems is appropriate.



*Neighborhood street sign markers.*

**Goal 6: Maintain and strengthen preservation partnerships between municipal government, state government, and federal agencies.**

*Objective 1:* Maintain Iowa City’s status as a Certified Local Government (CLG).

Since 1987 Iowa City has participated in the National Park Service’s Certified Local Government Program and has obtained nearly a dozen grants to underwrite the costs of historical and architectural surveys, planning efforts, National Register nominations, and education programs. Continuance of Iowa City’s two-decade -long effort as a CLG is recommended.

*Objective 2:* Continue the role of Planning and Community Development Department staff in the Section 106 Review Process for City projects involving federal funding.

- a) At the time that the 1992 *Historic Preservation Plan* was completed, HPC played an active role in reviewing Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funded housing rehabilitation projects. In recent years, aspects of this federal program that is operated through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), has changed. In addition, the location of projects has shifted outside of historic neighborhoods partially due to issues associated with lead-based paint. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the state agency responsible for administering reviews of federally funded projects, is located in the State Historical Society of Iowa. In recent years the SHPO has encouraged the City of Iowa City to sign a programmatic agreement to cover steps for reviewing HUD funded projects, including CDBG housing rehabilitations. Such an agreement would require the City to maintain “certified staff” capable of completing in-house reviews. The City submitted a

programmatic agreement to SHPO in March 2003 and to date, the agreement has not been signed. The National Advisory Counsel postponed the decision due to the workload after Hurricane Katrina. If the City continues to spend CDBG and HOME funds in older neighborhoods, it is recommended that an agreement with HUD and the State Historical Society be signed.

- b) In order to meet its legal obligations under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the City should continue to work with the State Historic Preservation Office to complete reviews for all “federal undertakings.” This term refers to a range of federal activities including construction (e.g. federally funded sewer projects), rehabilitation (e.g. CDBG/HUD housing projects), and repair projects; licenses, permits (e.g. Corps of Engineers permits), loans, loan guarantees, and grants; leases; federal property transfers; and other types of federal involvement. As a courtesy, City departments should inform the HPC of federal undertakings that may involve historic resources.

*Objective 3:* Improve monitoring of state and federal legislation involving historic preservation.

In order to improve monitoring of legislative changes, it is recommended that the HPC assign one member the responsibility of reviewing legislative initiatives and budget levels. This can be accomplished by forwarding email messages and regular reports from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Preservation Action, or the Iowa Historic Preservation Alliance to the assigned HPC member for review. If issues surface at either the state or federal level that have importance for Iowa City, the HPC could then recommend that the mayor take a position on behalf of the city and communicate that position to the appropriate parties including the state delegation action network. The best location for monitoring ongoing federal legislation is the *Preservation Action* website: <http://www.preservationaction.org/>. State legislation can be monitored through the State Historical Society.

**Goal 7: Establish and implement historic preservation objectives for the University of Iowa campus and surrounding neighborhoods.**

*Objective 1:* Open communication lines between the State Historical Society, the University and the HPC with leadership for the effort to be placed with the State Historical Society.

No formal progress has been made on this objective since the 1992 *Historic Preservation Plan* was approved. The traditional relationship among these entities is not one of equal partners and, as a result, will require a disproportionate level of leadership from the strongest of the three. In this case, the University of Iowa. This objective of establishing communication lines regarding historic preservation between the State Historical Society, the University, and the Iowa City Historic Preservation Commission remains important in addressing all of the other issues identified below.

*Objective 2:* Complete an inventory of University-related historic resources.

Since the 1992 *Historic Preservation Plan* was completed, historical and architectural surveys have been completed along portions of the East Campus and West Campus of the University. These surveys have included the identification of individual historic resources and historic districts eligible to the National Register of Historic Places. In the case of the Downtown Survey completed in 2001, several blocks of the East Campus paralleling Iowa Avenue between Clinton and Gilbert streets were included. Other surveys including the Dubuque-Linn Street Corridor, the Original Town Plat Phase I and Phase II, and the Melrose Neighborhood surveys, included blocks adjacent to the University campus. In each of these surveys, the University's development, its workforce, and housing for its student population were identified as major historical factors. National Register historic district nominations listed since 2004 for the Jefferson Street Historic District, the Gilbert-Linn Street Historic District, and Melrose Historic District contain dozens of buildings linked to the University's history including nearly a dozen owned by the University. Together with the Old Capitol National Historic Landmark and the Pentacrest National Register of Historic Places Historic District, these on and off-campus resources are important in understanding the history of the University.

No historical and architectural survey has been completed of buildings and sites on the balance of the University's campus. Two important steps towards accomplishing *Objective 2* have been completed, however. The first involved publication of *The University of Iowa Guide to Campus Architecture* by John Beldon Scott and Rodney P. Lehnertz in 2006. It documents nearly 80 resources on the campus grouped by proximity and use. The primary criterion for their inclusion in the guide was architectural importance though historical associations were identified for some of the buildings. The "campus zones" laid out in the book



*University of Iowa historic building rehabilitations, old Zoology Building, 100 Bock of Iowa Avenue.*

could form the basis for a future survey. They include the Pentacrest, Iowa Avenue Campus, Main Campus North, Main Campus South, River Valley Campus, Arts Campus, Near West Campus, Medical Campus, University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics Campus, Athletics Campus, and Oakdale Research Campus. A second step was the adoption of *The University of Iowa 2006 Campus Master Plan - The Campus, the Buildings, and the Space Between*. The Plan identified a number of heritage resources



*Anatomy Hall, Old Biology Sciences Library, 2002, southwest corner Jefferson and Dubuquae*

on the campus to which special attention should be given for planning purposes. With the help of Beldon and Lehnertz's *UI Guide to Campus Architecture*, the University should be encouraged to inventory historic resources based on National Register criteria, including an analysis of historic associations and architectural significance remains an important objective as the University undertakes planning for its future campus needs. Support for such a measure should be sought from the State Historical Society.

*Objective 3:* Identify University physical plant needs which could be met by acquisition and reuse of historic resources.

Since 1992, the University has undertaken a number of noteworthy historic rehabilitation projects. Historic Preservation Awards were given by the HPC to the following buildings: 1996—President's House, 102 Church Street; 1997—Shambaugh House, 219 N. Clinton Street; 1998—507 N. Clinton Street; 2002—Hydraulics Lab; 2002—Old Biology Building; 2003—Calvin Hall, 2 West Jefferson Street; 2004—post-fire restoration of Old Capitol; and 2005—President's House, 102 Church Street. Other projects completed or underway included the reuse of Anatomy Hall as the Biological Sciences Library in 2000, several phases of work to upgrade and reuse Kinnick Stadium in the early 2000s, and work underway in 2006 at the Iowa Memorial Union. Care was given in each of these examples of historic rehabilitation to the architecturally significant features of the buildings and their historic role at the University.

Over the past few decades, the University's campus planning process has respected its historic landmarks and been sensitive to their design needs. The 2006 Master Plan involved planners in evaluating heritage properties on the campus and completing a review of their structural soundness and mechanical systems in order

to evaluate their feasibility for adaptive reuse. Where feasible, the plan calls for retention and updating heritage properties rather than their replacement.

In support of ongoing historic rehabilitation measures for historic properties on the University campus, an effort should be made to investigate the use of federal and state investment tax credits to subsidize their rehabilitation. The State Historical Society should support this measure.

*Objective 4:* Expand heritage tourism efforts for University-related historic resources.

This objective is currently being addressed through the efforts of staff at Old Capitol. Emphasis of the interpretive program is on Old Capitol itself, its restoration, and its role in territorial government, Iowa's early statehood, and the founding of the University. Over time, an effort should be made to widen the heritage promotion of Old Capitol staff through interpretation of other campus buildings of historic and architectural significance, important University contributions in science and the humanities, and nearby historic districts that have strong University connections such as the Melrose Historic District and the Jefferson Street Historic District. Strengthening the University's identity by emphasizing its association with its surrounding neighborhoods will benefit both groups. The efforts of the University to establish a "Writers Corridor" emphasizing the role of the Iowa Writer's Workshop should be encouraged by the City and the HPC.

*Objective 5:* Establish a fraternity and sorority house stewardship program.

Little progress has been made on this objective since 1992. Both fraternity and sorority houses remain threatened resources as they age. Within the next several decades, many of the landmark buildings associated with the University's Greek community will turn 100 years old. The buildings will need major rehabilitations at the same time that membership rates are fluctuating. It is recommended that the HPC work with the Office of Student Life for the University and the Interfraternity Conference, Panhellenic Council, National Pan-Hellenic Council to develop an inventory of historic resources associated with Greek community life. An outline for the "*University of Iowa Greek Community: Sorority and Fraternity Houses Historic Context, 1866–1940*" is included in Appendix E. Primary areas of Iowa City where buildings are include the North Side group in the 600–800 blocks along North Dubuque Street south of Park Road and along the 300–400 blocks of North Clinton Street; East College Street; East Burlington Street; and Riverside Drive and Ellis Street. Once the inventory is concluded, National Register nominations should be encouraged for eligible buildings and preservation strategies should be developed. Investigation of the use of federal tax incentives for investors should be undertaken.

*Objective 6:* Participate in a forum for discussing University-neighborhood issues related to historic preservation.



*Alpha Phi Sorority; 903 E. College Street.*

During the course of neighborhood meetings and interviews, most comments about the University related to issues arising from the proximity of the campus to nearby older residential areas. Some of the issues raised were not directly related to historic resources but specifically related to more general University-neighborhood concerns. Whether the issue is a positive one, such as cooperatively finding ways to promote historic character and neighborhood identities in its recruitment and retention efforts for both students and faculty, or providing opportunities for regular dialogue regarding problems related to student housing, the development of a forum for discussion is the first step.

Leadership for this effort should come from neighborhood associations that are affected by University-neighborhood issues. Some university and college communities create task forces for specific issues while others have regular committees or councils that cooperatively work on shared issues. If such a forum is developed in Iowa City, the HPC should monitor activities of shared interest involving historic preservation and offer input.

*Objective 7:* The University of Iowa should establish a policy that supports efforts to preserve historic residential neighborhoods adjacent to its campus.

Much of the campus is surrounded by residential districts dating from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Over the past two decades, historical and architectural survey work has identified dozens of individual historic properties and several historic districts in these neighborhoods. Property owners in many of these neighborhoods have completed historic rehabilitations continuing their use as owner-occupied residences, converting houses that had been divided into apartments back to single-family use, or continuing their use as multifamily buildings. Preservation of the historic character of these neighborhoods was encouraged in both interviews and at neighborhood meetings. In many cases, preservation strategies have contributed to neighborhood stabilization and enhanced property values. This pattern of neighborhood preservation in areas surrounding the campus should be encouraged by the University in its master plan. Future expansion of the University of Iowa campus, if any, into adjacent

residential areas should be undertaken in a manner that avoids negative impact on individual historic resources and historic districts.

*Objective 8:* Encourage the University to establish a housing subsidy program to encourage University faculty and administrators to reside in neighborhoods near the campus.

A creative idea suggested during interviews was for the University to model housing subsidy programs designed to recruit and retain faculty after ones available at several other universities. These programs provide interest rate buy-downs for faculty and staff who buy properties near their respective university. In the case of Iowa City, such a program could be extended to properties located in designated historic and conservation districts. Such a program would not only encourage owner-occupied real estate sales in nearby neighborhoods but also provide an incentive for these neighborhoods to be designated as a historic or conservation district.



*Moffitt Cottages  
Longfellow Historic Marker  
on Muscatine Avenue near  
Washington Street*

***Goal 8:* Establish and support heritage tourism efforts appropriate to Iowa City’s historic resources and community needs.**

The recommendations made in the 1992 *Historic Preservation Plan* regarding the development of a comprehensive heritage tourism program focused on integrating historic preservation into two community goals—tourism and economic development. As the plan said, “Successful heritage tourism requires the development of authentic and quality heritage offerings for local residents and visitors. Heritage tourism planning should recognize local priorities and capability as well as the need for creative and accurate education and interpretation. Iowa City’s heritage tourism efforts should be developed in tandem with other visitor interests and needs.” The plan went on to recommend that preservation and protection of historic attractions, including historic districts, should be a priority.

The plan laid out five objectives that remain valid in 2007. They are restated below, with expanded language where appropriate.

*Objective 1:* Develop a heritage tourism plan as a cooperative effort between the Iowa City/ Coralville Convention and Visitors Bureau, Johnson County Historical Society, University of Iowa, Friends of Historic Preservation, and Iowa City Historic Preservation Commission. Include information about local historic districts, conservation districts local landmarks, heritage trails, and neighborhood signage

programs at a common online location linked to websites of the City as well as the other sponsors.

*Objective 2:* Develop and promote heritage tourism packages for visitors to Iowa City.

*Objective 3:* Develop a heritage tour guide program.

The concept of developing a tour guide program consisting of trained heritage tourism specialists is not considered as meritorious today as it was in 1992. Trends in tourism have shifted away from the traditional tour bus group to a focus on developing individual opportunities. Though the concept of having trained heritage guides remains valid for some visitor groups the importance of such a program in future tourism efforts remains in doubt.

*Objective 4:* Expand heritage tourism potential for Old Capitol and Plum Grove.

Both Old Capitol and Plum Grove have undergone significant change and development as heritage tourism sites since 1992. In 2001, disaster struck Old Capitol when fire destroyed the building's golden dome. Since then, damage to the dome has been restored and work has been completed on phased restoration of the balance of the building's exterior. The stated mission for Old Capitol today is as "a living museum and educational resource dedicated to Iowa's cultural and environmental history, as well as government and civic life." Year-round visitors to Iowa City and the University campus regularly include a tour of the building and hear about the process of restoration as well as the historic roles served by Old Capitol.

Plum Grove is owned by the State Historical Society of Iowa and administered as a seasonal historic site by the Johnson County Historical Society. The property operates summer archeological field schools and guided tours interpret the restored



*Old Capitol Fire, 2001*



*After restoration*

1844 house June through October. Plum Grove is one of three historic properties staffed by the JCHS, which expanded its permanent collection into a new facility at Coralville’s River Landing District in 2006.

Both the Old Capitol Museum and Plum Grove have the opportunity to see their roles in a menu of heritage tourism opportunities expanded. The development of rotating exhibits, specialized tours (including tours of the post-fire restoration at Old Capitol and the archeological field schools at Plum Grove), and special events have the potential to increase visitorship and community support for these important Iowa City landmarks.

*Objective 5:* Develop heritage festivals.



*Irving Weber statue at Iowa Avenue and Linn Street.*

Since 1992, the main heritage festival to be introduced and maintained in Iowa City is the “Irving B. Weber Days.” It is held annually and coordinated by the Iowa City Public Library “to honor the life of Iowa City’s most beloved historian and to celebrate the rich history of this community.” Co-sponsors have included the Johnson County Historical Society, Friends of Historic Preservation, the Iowa City Historic Preservation Commission, the State Historical Society of Iowa, Friends of Old Brick, Iowa Project on Place Studies, and the Iowa City Noon Lions Club, which published Weber’s Iowa City history books. This event spotlighting local history has grown from a one day event to a month long series of activities. Weber Days presents the opportunity to incorporate historic preservation activities such as the Annual Historic Preservation Awards or tours of historic properties and historic districts. An example of an activity that could focus attention on both Weber’s life and historic preservation activities would be a historic tour of

his own neighborhood—the blocks surrounding his house at 421 Melrose Court in the Melrose Historic District.

*Objective 6:* Develop the heritage dimension of visitor experiences such as dining, shopping, and housing.

An effort should be made to encourage the development of visitor activities in historic properties when possible. Since 1992, Iowa City has added a number of successful bed and breakfast options for visitors. Several are located in historic districts and take advantage of their heritage in marketing efforts. Other visitor

services, including dining and shopping, have the potential to be supported in a similar manner. Historic buildings in Downtown and in the Gilbert-Linn Street Historic District have the potential to be marketed for both their retail opportunities and the historic locations they contain. Stressing the co-relationship of historic settings and visitor experiences should be a goal for heritage tourism in the future.

*Objective 7:* Establish “heritage trails” in Johnson County. Identify and promote Iowa City sites along such routes with interpretive signs. Work to identify funding sources and provide technical assistance for key resources along these routes.

*Objective 8:* The HPC and local preservation organizations should actively participate in the Iowa Cultural Corridor Alliance—an organization whose 100+ members represent a variety of arts and culture organizations in Iowa City and the adjacent communities of the Amanas, greater Cedar Rapids, Mount Vernon, North Liberty, West Branch, and West Liberty. The ICCA has the potential to be a good tool for promoting historic neighborhoods, historic retail districts, public historic sites, and other historic preservation objectives.

***Goal 9:* Conduct regular review and evaluation of historic preservation initiatives by the historic preservation community and integrate preservation objectives in related planning work undertaken by the City of Iowa City.**

*Objective 1:* Complete an annual review of historic preservation activity and confirm work plan objectives for the year. Prepare the annual Certified Local Government report for submittal to the State Historical Society of Iowa as an outcome from this process.

*Objective 2:* Prepare an annual “historic preservation report” for submittal to the City Council and other organizations as described in *Goal 5: Objective 5, a)* above.

*Objective 3:* Incorporate recommendations of the *Historic Preservation Plan 2007* in other neighborhood and community planning efforts; for example, integrate neighborhood strategies for relevant historic areas and landmarks in the ten planning districts included in the Comprehensive Plan’s ten district plans.



## V. *Neighborhood Strategies*

**Goal 10: Adopt strategies to preserve historic neighborhoods which reflect their organic development, historical roles and traditions, modern needs, and economic health and stability.**

In the mid 1990s, the City began a comprehensive planning update process that focused on the concept of “district planning.” Completed in 1996, the process incorporated recommendations of the *Iowa City: Beyond 2000* citizen task force. Ten geographic based planning districts were established and introductory studies were made for each district that included descriptive overviews, a summary of unique features, and an explanation of current public infrastructure elements. In 1997 the City Council adopted the *Iowa City Comprehensive Plan*, which incorporated the district planning concept. More detailed plans for several of the districts have been completed in the decade since then.

Historic preservation played a prominent role in the overall recommendations of the *Iowa City Comprehensive Plan* as well as the district plan strategies. Support of goals and objectives laid out in the 1992 *Historic Preservation Plan* was recommended. In areas of the city containing older neighborhoods – the Downtown, Central, North, Northwest, and Southwest planning districts – historic character was identified as an attribute to be protected.

As part of the 2007 update of the Plan, neighborhood strategies were expanded from 12 to 26 neighborhoods. In some cases, this reflects a division of earlier neighborhoods into distinct smaller districts based on completed survey work, the completion of historic and conservation district designations, and the need to evaluate newer neighborhoods that have reached or will reach the 50-year threshold in the near future.

Four “packages” of recommendations have been compiled that apply to more than one district or neighborhood. The first recommendations are grouped as *District Adoption Steps* and consist of a series of step-by-step measures to guide the local historic district or conservation district designation process. This package of measures was developed based on the successful experience in other neighborhoods and the lessons learned in the unsuccessful experience in others. Input from interviews was particularly useful in preparing the *District Adoption Steps* listed below.

### ***District Adoption Steps:***

1. Develop a clear understanding for why a historic or conservation district is being proposed; carefully evaluate the boundaries for the district.
2. Stress education about what historic district or conservation district designation means at the beginning of the discussion process.
3. Identify major concerns/questions and prepare answers before and during the discussion process.
4. Stress good case studies of rehabilitation projects in other neighborhoods.
5. Develop more options for design review issues that are problems—windows and siding, design for construction of new secondary buildings, what may be negotiable, etc.

6. Study real estate and economic impact of district designation on market values and tax assessments in other previously designated districts.
7. Confirm record of design review cases that have been problems versus those that were approved in other districts—cite specific numbers.
8. Stress good news about post-tornado stories as an example of the best and worst that can come from a natural disaster pushing a design review process “to-the max”; focus discussion on large issues while also responding to narrower concerns.

Common objectives relating to *Communication and Neighborhood Stabilization* apply to older residential neighborhoods throughout the community. They include recommendations for education programs to increase public awareness of historic resources and encourage resident involvement with preservation. They also include general neighborhood stabilization efforts designed to make aging neighborhoods attractive places to live.

***Communication and Neighborhood Stabilization Steps:***

1. Promote heritage education efforts at local elementary schools (especially those in older neighborhoods such as Horace Mann, Longfellow, Lincoln, etc.) by supporting establishment of a local history education program that includes information, tours and events connected to historic districts.
2. Recruit and train potential district residents to serve on the Iowa City Historic Preservation Commission.
3. Participate in an annual or bi-annual “District Forum” for historic and conservation district representatives hosted by the HPC. The District Forum’s agenda could vary but would regularly provide a setting for sharing information about regulatory changes, exchanging successful ideas among districts, and offering suggestions for solving problems that cross district boundaries.
4. Parking problems though not specifically a preservation concern, are important for the overall stabilization of neighborhoods. To address these concerns it is recommended that neighborhood associations and the City, explore alternative methods of managing parking. This might include a residential parking permit program in some areas, the use of angle parking to increase the supply of parking spaces where appropriate, and the use of “environmentally friendly” paving techniques when parking is added to back yards. When addressing parking solutions the conflicting issues of increasing supply while minimizing paving in a residential setting must be considered.
5. The City should remain vigilant in addressing complaints regarding issues such as zoning violations, removal of snow from sidewalks, weed removal and trash control that affect neighborhood quality of life. In some locations, targeted code enforcement may be appropriate to address perceived neighborhood decline.
6. In areas where housing condition surveys show the need for reinvestment, promote neighborhood stabilization through a *Homeownership Incentive Program* such as outlined below.
7. Establish a “user-friendly” technical assistance effort for property owners by implementing the *Technical Assistance Steps* also listed below.
8. Develop and fund a program to alleviate lead-based paint for residential landmarks and buildings in historic and conservation districts that is sensitive to their architectural character.

The increasing importance of establishing technical assistance as a “user-friendly effort” was identified as an important strategy for many neighborhoods, including those already established as historic or conservation districts, or in some cases, where designation efforts have not begun. The *Technical Assistance Steps* below and referred to by reference for specific neighborhoods and districts provide a menu of activities for the HPC, Friends, and neighborhood associations to use over time to help property owners who are planning improvements to their buildings—including work that is outside the scope of formal design review but important to overall up-keep and building preservation.

### ***Technical Assistance Steps:***

1. Develop a historic preservation technical assistance program as an on-going effort aimed at developing and maintaining the capacity of historic district property owners to maintain or restore their historic buildings.
2. Distribute an annual or semi-annual “historic preservation report” to property owners in districts that includes information regarding design review efforts.
3. Add a “history corner” column in the neighborhood association newsletters received by district residents with information on relevant subjects ranging from a do-it-yourself guide for re-glazing windows to where the neighborhood ghosts reside to why moisture trapped in exterior walls leads to peeling paint and dry rot. These columns could be collected at the City website, indexed, and/or printed annually for retention at the public library.
4. Develop special topic publications in response to resident suggestions and needs identified by the design review process.
5. Deliver technical assistance and public awareness information through neighborhood newsletters and website(s), and direct communications with district residents, including email.

A neighborhood strategy that crosses district and neighborhood boundaries involves the creation of a program to encourage owner-occupancy as a stabilizing measure. The need for such a program was identified in various neighborhood meetings and interviews. In communities around the country, such programs are usually targeted at populations that are at or below median income levels. Some of Iowa City’s most affordable single-family homes are in northeast Goosetown and parts of Longfellow. Potential funding sources for such a program might include Community Development Block Grant, HOME, and major employers. The basic components of a *Home Ownership Incentive Program* focusing on neighborhood stabilization are outlined below.

### ***Home Ownership Incentive Program***

1. Consider the primary goal for such program as neighborhood stabilization by encouraging an increase in owner-occupied properties where housing conditions indicate a need for reinvestment.
2. Establish the program through the cooperation of one or more lenders. Consider CDBG/HOME and funding from major employers to establish program.

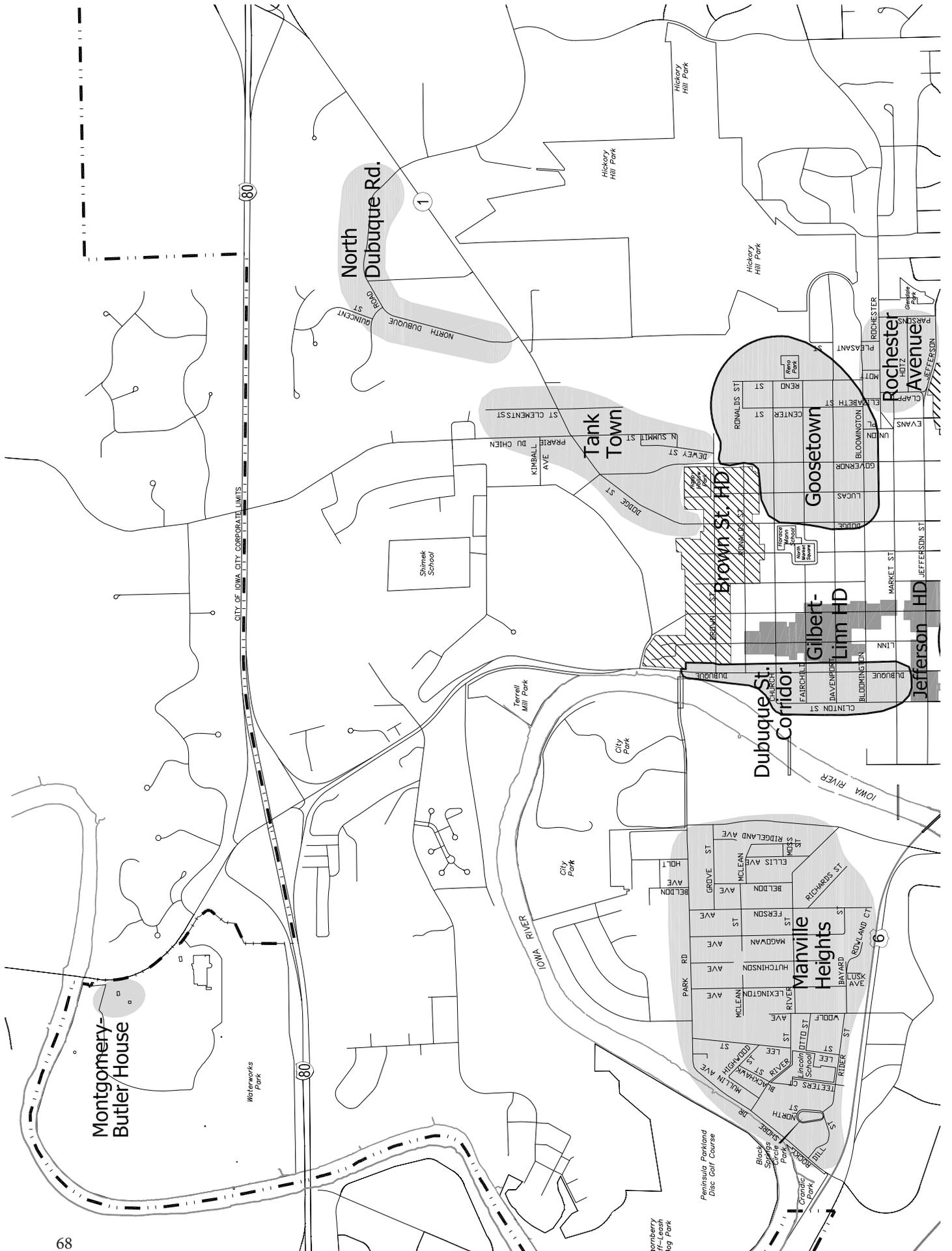
3. Target the program to neighborhoods where housing conditions indicate a need for re-investment, for areas where the percentage of owner-occupied dwellings are less than 50% and for areas that contain small affordable dwellings that are suitable for first time homebuyers.
4. Incentives could include interest rate reductions, free initial consultations from architects or engineers skilled in working with historic properties, cost savings at local retailers, etc.
5. This program could complement the University-sponsored program (Goal 7: Objective 8).
6. Support this program through code enforcement and educational programs, designed to stabilize neighborhoods making them more attractive for residents.

The update of preservation strategies for specific neighborhoods that follows is organized alphabetically within larger “Planning Districts” that were adopted by the City in 1997. The city has been divided into ten such Planning Districts including five containing historic areas discussed below. Within these Planning Districts, other terms are used to describe various neighborhood groups. The term “historic district” (HD) refers to a contiguous area that has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places, designated by local ordinance, and/or both. Historic districts are significant because of their architecture, historical associations, and other visual attributes. The term “conservation district” (CD) applies to a local designation for areas that share a common character, which may include both visual and historical qualities, but because of physical integrity concerns, does not qualify as a historic district. Both local historic districts and conservation districts are protected through a design review process administered through the Historic Preservation Commission.

The term “neighborhood” is used in several manners in the discussion that follows. When the word is capitalized, it refers to one of the areas of the city organized through the Office of Neighborhood Services in the Planning and Community Development Department. This City program supports and encourages neighborhood action and provides ideas and resources that can help shape the future of a neighborhood. Neighborhoods actively organized in the historic areas include the Northside, Goosetown, College Green, Longfellow, Melrose Avenue, Manville Heights, Oak Grove. Morningside/Glendale, and Shimek.

The terms “neighborhood” or “corridor” are used to describe areas that have been formally surveyed through the Historic Preservation Commission or are recommended for surveying to determine their eligibility as a local historic district, conservation district, and/or National Register district. A summary of the status for completed and future neighborhood objectives appears at the end of this section on page 109.





Blackberry Jiff-Leash Dog Park

Peninsula Parkland Disc Golf Course

Cranberry Park

Blackberry Jiff-Leash Dog Park

Blackberry Jiff-Leash Dog Park

Blackberry Jiff-Leash Dog Park

Blackberry Jiff-Leash Dog Park



## *Downtown Planning District:*

### **1. Downtown**

Located at the physical center of Iowa City, Downtown has a history of development and redevelopment extending back to the community's beginnings. In 2001, the Downtown Historical and Architectural Survey was completed for a 15-block area in the central business district that was summarized in "Architectural and Historical Resources of Iowa City Central Business District, 1855–ca. 1960." The study described the growth and development of the Downtown as well as the nearby University campus. It explained the patterns of development that produced building booms and redevelopment after major downtown fires. The rebuilding along South Dubuque Street in the 1870s and East Washington Street in the 1880s and 1910s was described, along with the stories of how Iowa Avenue became home to commercial laundries, East Washington Street became the financial district, civic and governmental buildings located along Linn Street and later Gilbert Street, hotels and restaurants were scattered throughout the downtown, and the downtown campus expanded to include three blocks north of Iowa Avenue.

The Downtown survey area contained 135 buildings, of which 43 were identified as individually eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places with eight buildings already listed. Another 55 appeared not to be individually eligible for listing and would be considered non-contributing structures in a potential historic or conservation district due to their recent dates of construction or historic integrity problems. The remaining 28 buildings are not individually eligible, but would be eligible for listing as contributing resources in a historic or conservation district.

A transitioning real estate market has property values stable or appreciating in the Downtown. Since 1992 municipal investments have included major new parking garages, a series of streetscape improvements along Iowa Avenue and the Pedestrian Mall, and a major addition to the Iowa City Public Library. The last urban renewal parcel has been developed with a high-rise residential and retail building. A historic rehabilitation has been completed for the former Carnegie library. Other market factors affecting the Downtown since 1992 include the reuse of a portion of Old Capitol Mall by the University, establishment of retail entrances to first floor businesses in the



*Downtown, Jefferson Hotel Building,  
125-31 E. Washington Street.*

mall along Clinton Street, and construction of the competing Coral Ridge Mall in Coralville. Unsuccessful efforts have been made to establish a Self-Supporting Municipal Improvement District in the central business district. No Main Street-type improvement and promotion effort has been undertaken. As in 1992, few of the Downtown's older buildings are promoted as "historic buildings" by owners or business operators. As a result, it is likely that few visitors currently identify the Downtown as a historic neighborhood. The potential for marketing the Downtown as a historic shopping district remains as a possibility.

*Objective 1:* Emphasize the improvement of key historic buildings in the Downtown such as:

- Dey Building (8 S. Clinton)
- Coast & Sons Building (10–14 S. Clinton)
- Moses Bloom Clothing Store (28–30 S. Clinton)
- Whetstone Building (32 S. Clinton)
- College Block Building (125 E. College St., post-tornado rehabilitation)
- Crescent Block (117–119 E. College St., post-tornado rehabilitation)
- Hohenschuh, W.P., Mortuary (13–15 S. Linn St)
- Arcade Building (128 E. Washington St.)
- Hotel Jefferson Building (125–31 E. Washington St.)
- IXL Block (220–224 E. Washington St.)
- Boerner-Fry Company/Davis Hotel (332 E. Washington St.)

*Objective 2:* Encourage facade improvements for intact, adjoining buildings especially those along S. Clinton and S. Dubuque streets between Iowa Avenue and Washington Street, and along Washington Street east of Clinton Street. Develop financial incentives (See Goal 3: *Objective 4 and Objective 5*)



*Downtown, South Dubuque Street between Iowa Avenue and Washington Street.*

- Objective 3:* In order to establish eligibility for federal and state investment tax credits for property owners completing historic rehabilitation projects, cooperate with property owners to nominate key individual buildings and a small Downtown historic district to the National Register of Historic Places based on the “Architectural and Historical Resources of Iowa City Central Business District, 1855–ca. 1960” MPD.
- Objective 4:* Designate a larger area of the Downtown as a conservation district and designate individually significant buildings as historic landmarks. Boundaries for the Downtown district would be roughly defined by Iowa Avenue and the alley south of Iowa Avenue between Linn and Gilbert streets on the north, Clinton Street on the west and Gilbert Street on the east. The southern boundary includes the alley south of College Street between Clinton and Linn Street and then east to Gilbert Street to include the old Iowa City Public Library and Trinity Episcopal Church.
- Objective 5:* Adopt design guidelines for Downtown commercial and institutional buildings. Conduct an ongoing training program for the HPC aimed at developing the capacity for conducting design review of commercial properties. Evaluate merits of making guidelines voluntary or mandatory and how they could be used to bring preservation sensitivity to changes in building regulations related to health and safety or handicapped access.
- Objective 6:* Establish a Main Street-style program for the Downtown using the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s “Main Street Approach” as the model. Support local efforts for a SSMID as a potential funding source and retention of a Downtown manager. Integrate these efforts with the Old Capitol Cultural and Entertainment District efforts.
- Objective 7:* To complement the public improvements along Iowa Avenue and the restoration of Old Capitol, encourage the historic rehabilitation of building façades principally in the block between Clinton and Dubuque streets.
- Objective 8:* Incorporate questions related to historic preservation and historic building stock in market studies completed for the Downtown in order to determine the likely impact of historic preservation measures on promotion efforts, special event planning, remote and onsite signage, and other related issues.
- Objective 9:* Prepare a separate historic preservation commercial plan for the Downtown. Begin by incorporating Downtown recommendations from Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, and 10. Incorporate findings from other downtown studies such as the “niche study” being prepared through the Planning and Community Development Department in 2007. Target the plan for Downtown property owners and business operators. Organize the plan into clear, easily understood recommendations, established priorities, and relevant incentives.

## 2. Near South Side Neighborhood

The Near South Side neighborhood includes the blocks south of Downtown and the University campus between Burlington Street and the Iowa Interstate Railroad. This area has seen considerable redevelopment since the 1970s and two blocks in the area sustained severe tornado damage in April 2006. The area has gradually shifted from a residential neighborhood with commercial uses on its fringes along the Rock Island Railroad, Iowa River, and Gilbert Street to a neighborhood of public institutions, offices, and large scale apartment buildings. Recent apartment complexes were developed with stricter design controls. No district containing a collection of contiguous historic or architecturally significant buildings remains. The area's two surviving older institutional buildings, the Johnson County Court House and the former Sabin School, are without immediate threat although their institutional occupants are considering growth needs.



*Near Southside Neighborhood,  
Johnson County Court House, 417 S. Clinton Street*

*Objective 1:* Complete a reconnaissance level survey of the Near South Side neighborhood and complete intensive level work for individually eligible historic resources.

*Objective 2:* Encourage retention of redeveloped historic commercial buildings in the Gilbert St-Maiden Lane corridor. Designate individually significant buildings as local historic landmarks and encourage private owners to complete National Register nominations by making survey results available. Priority landmark designations for the HPC should be the Johnson County Court House and Sabin School.

### **Central Planning District:**

3. **Brown Street Historic District** (includes Bella Vista Drive, sections of Ronalds Street, and other cross streets)

This historic district is located along the north edge of Iowa City's "North Side" neighborhood. Since the 1960s this area of Iowa City has been the subject of intense debate and neighborhood planning. During the 1980s, efforts were unsuccessful to designate a large mixed-use historic district in the North Side that included portions of Brown Street. After completion of the 1992 *Historic Preservation Plan*, the HPC made its first priority the designation of Brown Street and portions of adjacent side streets (Bella Vista, Linn, Gilbert, Van Buren, Johnson, Dodge and Governor) as a separate National Register and local ordinance historic district. These efforts were successfully completed with strong neighborhood support in 1994 following considerable debate, organizing, and promotion efforts led by the HPC. In 2004, the district boundaries were expanded to include a section of Ronalds Street. Since 1994, 94 design reviews have been conducted by the

HPC. These efforts have led to a generally positive view of the design review process as a means for protecting historic resources. Changing housing trends and the appeal of older houses as single-family residences have demonstrated the capacity of North Side neighborhoods such as Brown Street to rejuvenate and prosper.

*Objective 1:* Retain Brown Street Historic District designations (National Register and local district) for sections of Brown Street, Bella Vista, and Ronalds Street. Regularly provide information to new property owners about the responsibilities and advantages of owning property in a historic district.

*Objective 2:* The declining number of rental units in the Brown Street Historic District has led to fewer complaints related to over occupancy and associated issues. However, the City should remain vigilant in addressing complaints about zoning violations, removal of snow from sidewalks, weed removal and trash control.

*Objective 3:* Maintain and preserve existing stretches of brick-paved streets within the Brown Street Historic District. The Brown Street route is part of a continuous brick-paved route that leads to Oakland and St. Joseph's cemeteries from churches in the center of town.

*Objective 4:* Pursue the *Communication and Neighborhood Stabilization Steps* on page 64.



*Clark Street Conservation District, left: one of seven historic signs in Longfellow Neighborhood Art Project, SE corner of Seymour & Clark; top right: 500 block of Clark Street, looking north; bottom right: Lustron houses, 715 and 717 Clark Street, originally considered noncontributing resources in district.*

#### 4. Clark Street Conservation District <sup>10</sup>

The Clark Street Conservation District is an L-shaped neighborhood that includes facing blocks along Clark Street between Maple Street and the Iowa Interstate Railroad and adjoining blocks of Roosevelt Street and the west side of Maggard Street south of Sheridan Avenue. The district abuts the Summit Street Historic District on the west and the Longfellow Historic District and Longfellow School site to the east. The Clark Street Conservation District includes residences constructed as worker housing for the nearby Kelly Manufacturing Company and Oakes Brickworks during the late 19th and early 20th centuries as well as homes built for what became an early 20th-century commuter suburb. Modest one- to two-story houses in styles and vernacular house forms typical of the period characterize the district. Scattered examples of earlier domestic architectural styles and forms appear on the west edge adjacent to the Summit Street Historic District. Narrow, tree-lined streets contribute to the historic sense of time and place of this neighborhood. At the time the Clark Street Conservation District was designed in 2001, 57 of the district's 76 properties, approximately 75 percent, were considered to be contributing to the character of the conservation district. Two newer, pre-fabricated Lustron houses in the district were evaluated as non-contributing due to their age. Since 2001, 17 design reviews have been completed.

*Objective 1:* Retain the Clark Street Conservation District designation. Regularly provide information to new property owners about the responsibilities and advantages of owning property in a conservation district.

*Objective 2:* Re-evaluate the district periodically to determine if the passage of time or the rehabilitations completed have changed the status of the district from conservation to historic, or if individual buildings should be evaluated as contributing rather than non-contributing. This recommendation is especially important for aging resources such as the two rare examples of Lustron Houses (two of six known to have been built in Iowa City) at 705 and 709 Clark Street.

*Objective 3:* Pursue the *Communication and Neighborhood Stabilization Steps* on page 64.

#### 5. College Green Historic District

College Green was laid out midway between downtown and eastern limits of Iowa City in the original town plat in 1839. The block was the site for an unsuccessful effort to establish the "Iowa Female Collegiate Institute" college in the 1850s and reverted to park use thereafter. Substantial houses were built on the eminence surrounding the park, their styles typical of house forms and designs from the late 19th century and early 20th century. The neighborhood has a strong association with the development of the University with residences in the area having served as homes for faculty and staff as well as rooming houses. College Green Park serves as a neighborhood focal point. The College Green Historic District was one of two residential districts identified in the historical and architectural survey of the College Hill Neighborhood completed

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<sup>10</sup>Portions of neighborhood description taken from "Proposed Clark Street Conservation District Report," November 1, 2001.

in 1994. The district was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1997 and became a local historic district a short time later. Since then, 38 design reviews have been conducted, including 21 in 2006 in the wake of the April tornado. Mature landscape elements in and around College Green Park were also destroyed or damaged following the tornado.



*College Green Historic District, from College Green Park.*

*Objective 1:* Retain College Green Historic District designation (National Register and local district) for blocks surrounding park and extending east along E. College Street. Regularly provide information to new property owners about the responsibilities and advantages of owning property in a historic district.

*Objective 2:* Re-evaluate district boundaries after rehabilitation work is completed in post-tornado period; determine if district boundaries should be adjusted based on building damage/removal or restoration work completed. Also, determine if status as “contributing” or “noncontributing” needs to be adjusted. Consider joining College Green and East College St. historic districts if changes in building integrity merit it.

*Objective 3:* If new landscape plans for College Green are developed, an effort should be made to have those plans reflect the park’s history. In the wake of the 2006 tornado, the importance of this objective is increased. As a part of such a park plan, an effort should be made to investigate historic documents, plans, and photos in order to design a plan for College Green Park that reflects its history. Complete a historic archeology survey of portions of the west side of the park to determine the presence of artifacts associated with the construction of a ladies seminary on that site during the mid-1850s. This information should be used for developing passive green space in the plan and as the basis for construction or reconstruction of park features.

*Objective 4:* Promote sound rehabilitation of sorority and fraternity houses in the district as a part of a larger effort to encourage historically sensitive rehabilitation of Greek community properties. The intention for such a campaign would be to develop a sense of awareness and stewardship for the historic buildings owned by the Greek community (See Goal 7, Objective 5, page 57).

*Objective 5:* Pursue the *Communication and Neighborhood Stabilization Steps* on page 64.

## 6. College Hill Conservation District



*College Hill Conservation District, 103 S. Governor Street, above left: post-April 2006 tornado damage; above right: after Certificate of Appropriateness granted for repair and restoration work by owner.*

The College Hill Conservation District is an irregular shaped area that extends along portions of Iowa Avenue, Washington Street, College Street, and Burlington Streets between Johnson Street and Muscatine Avenue. The district adjoins three historic districts – College Green, East College Street, and Woodlawn. The neighborhood takes its name from the topographic rise in the center of the area occupied by College Green Park and the ladies seminary that was once located in the park. The neighborhood includes a mix of single-family and multifamily residential buildings dating from the late 19th through the early 20th century. The neighborhood traditionally had a strong association with the University, housing students in rooming houses, in scattered fraternity and sorority houses, and more recently, in apartment buildings. Private residences housed University faculty and staff as well as many business and civic leaders. Construction of apartment complexes and the unsympathetic renovations of other buildings have diminished the appearance of some of the streetscapes.

The College Hill Conservation District was evaluated in two separate surveys – the intensive level survey of the College Hill Neighborhood completed in 1994 and the reconnaissance level survey of Iowa Avenue in 2003. The district became a local conservation district in 2003. Since that time, 76 design reviews have been conducted, including 50 completed in 2006 in the wake of the April tornado. The College Hill Conservation District was one of the most seriously damaged neighborhoods in the tornado.

*Objective 1:* Retain the College Hill Conservation District designation. Regularly provide information to new property owners about the responsibilities and advantages of owning property in a conservation district.

*Objective 2:* Re-evaluate district boundaries after rehabilitation work is completed in post-tornado time frame to determine if boundaries should be changed based on building damage/removal or restoration work. Consider amending boundaries of the East College Street and College Green historic districts by adding blocks from the College Hill neighborhood if changes in building integrity merit it.

*Objective 3:* Encourage the development of an Iowa Avenue streetscape improvement plan in the blocks immediately west of the Woodlawn entrance. Include landscaping measures in the Iowa Avenue boulevard and parking areas as well as upgrades for sidewalks, curbs and gutters along Iowa Avenue. Use the implemented streetscape plan, positive post-tornado recovery efforts, and the stability of the nearby Woodlawn Historic District to attract continued investment along the Iowa Avenue blocks west of Woodlawn.

*Objective 4:* Promote sound rehabilitation of sorority and fraternity houses in the district as a part of a larger effort to encourage historically sensitive rehabilitation of Greek community properties. The intention for such a campaign would be to develop a sense of awareness and stewardship for the historic buildings owned by the Greek community (See Goal 7, *Objective 5*, page 47).

*Objective 5:* Pursue the *Communication and Neighborhood Stabilization Steps* on page 53.

## **7. East College Street Historic District**

The East College Street Historic District is a linear neighborhood located along the 1000 and 1100 blocks of East College Street three blocks east of College Green Park. Substantial houses were built along the street, primarily between 1880 and 1920, manifesting the architectural styles and vernacular house popular in Iowa City during those decades. Queen Anne and Craftsman influence and American Four-square house forms predominate in three-quarters of the district's 28 buildings. Several properties in the district have historical associations with early business leaders, while others were faculty members at the University. The East College Street Historic District was one of two districts identified in the historical and architectural survey of the College Hill Neighborhood completed in 1994. The district was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1997 and became a local historic district a short time later. Thirty design reviews have been completed. Several buildings and mature landscape elements along East College Street were damaged in the April 2006 tornado but most in the district avoided serious destruction.

*Objective 1:* Retain East College Street Historic District designation (National Register and local district) for 1000 and 1100 blocks along E. College Street. Regularly provide information to new property owners about the responsibilities and advantages of owning property in a historic district.

*Objective 2:* Re-evaluate district boundaries after rehabilitation work is completed in post-tornado time frame to determine if district boundaries should be changed based on building damage/removal or restoration work completed. Consider joining East College Street and College Green historic districts if changes in building integrity merit it.

*Objective 3:* Pursue the *Communication and Neighborhood Stabilization Steps* on page 64.

## 8. Dearborn Street Conservation District <sup>11</sup>

The Dearborn Street Conservation District is a J-shaped neighborhood that includes facing blocks along Dearborn Street and the west side of Seventh Avenue between Muscatine Avenue and the Iowa Interstate Railroad. It also includes facing blocks of Rundell Street between Sheridan Avenue and the railroad and the intersecting blocks of Center Avenue, Sheridan Avenue and Jackson Street. The area was surveyed in 1996. The district abuts the Longfellow Historic District to the west. For organizational purposes, the Dearborn Street Conservation District is within the Longfellow Neighborhood Association. The Dearborn Street area developed primarily during the 1930s and post-World War II years. A number of the district's houses are based on standardized small house plans popularized during the pre-World War II period. By this time the automobile was more common and many homes have small historic garages that are similar to the houses or are incorporated into the house structure. A number of the houses have been altered, diminishing the neighborhood's architectural integrity and eligibility for designation as a historic district. At the time the Dearborn Street Conservation District was designated in 2001, 105 of the district's 147 properties, approximately 75 percent, were considered to be contributing to the character of the conservation district. Since 2001, 16 design reviews have been completed.

Objective 1: Retain the Dearborn Street Conservation District designation. Regularly provide information to new property owners about the responsibilities and advantages of owning property in a conservation district.

Objective 2: Re-evaluate the district periodically to determine if the passage of time or the rehabilitations have changed the status of the district from conservation to historic, or if individual buildings should be evaluated as contributing rather than non-contributing. This recommendation is especially important for aging resources that reach the 50-year eligibility for contributing status.

Objective 3: Pursue the Communication and Neighborhood Stabilization Steps on page 64.

## 9. Dubuque Street Corridor <sup>12</sup>

Dubuque Street is one of the most attractive entrances into Iowa City because of both natural and human-made features – the expanse of the Iowa River, the setting of Hancher Auditorium in the river flats, the views of City Park, natural limestone outcroppings, the large scale and handsome designs of fraternity buildings, and mature landscaping. Since adoption of the 1992 Historic



*Dubuque Street Corridor, 700 & 800 blocks North Dubuque Street.*

<sup>11</sup>Portions of the neighborhood description taken from "Proposed Dearborn Street Conservation District Report," November 1, 2001.

<sup>12</sup>This neighborhood was referred to as the "Dubuque-Linn Street Corridor" in the 1992 Plan. Eastern blocks of this neighborhood are now included in the Gilbert-Linn Street Historic District, neighborhood #10 below.

Preservation Plan, Dubuque Street has undergone a transformation. Razing of several contiguous single-family dwellings and the construction of multistory apartment buildings occurred at the north end while further south, construction of the University's above-street skywalk connecting biology buildings interrupted the historic vista of the Downtown from the blocks north of Iowa Avenue. The City has played a role in the appearance of replacement buildings built at the north end through the Zoning Code's requirement for design review for newly constructed multifamily buildings. In the case of the skywalk project, considerable discussion between the City and the University took place, but in the end, it was determined that Dubuque Street's historic status as a state road precluded the City from controlling the project.

For construction of the new, multifamily buildings, design review has been completed by City staff based on Multi-Family Residential Design Standards in the Central Planning District. Changing ownership patterns in recent years suggests that some of the visually important buildings in fraternity row along the north end of Dubuque Street are likely to undergo reuse as rental apartments or residential condominiums. Proximity to the University campus suggests that this area will continue to be redeveloped. The area along portions of North Dubuque, North Linn, and North Clinton streets was surveyed in 1996. A section of the surveyed area was incorporated into the Gilbert-Linn Street Historic District discussed below. The balance of the neighborhood is not currently designated as either a historic or conservation district.

*Objective 1:* The Dubuque Street Corridor should be evaluated for eligibility as a local conservation district. Findings of the Dubuque/Linn Corridor Survey completed in 1996 and the recommendations of the North Side National Register project completed in 2003 should be updated with information regarding demolitions and newly constructed buildings. An evaluation should be made as to whether or not a portion of the neighborhood – sections of North Clinton and North Dubuque streets – meet the criteria for conservation district designation. Such an evaluation would also provide a list of individual buildings with historical or architectural significance eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. If it is determined that a conservation district should be pursued, follow the *District Adoption Steps* listed above on page 63.

*Objective 2:* Because of this area's proximity to the University, identify prospective sites for future redevelopment which will not adversely impact historic resources. Include properties containing buildings that are outside of a proposed conservation district or are not individually eligible for the National Register.

*Objective 3:* If a conservation district is established, develop design guidelines appropriate for this area which, like the design guidelines for the Downtown, acknowledge the specific requirements of dealing with fraternity house building types as well as appropriate scale, rhythm, mass and materials for new buildings. In addition, develop guidelines for site improvements for properties in this area including wall and fencing materials, signage, lighting, etc. The goal of such guidelines is to provide and maintain a quality entrance corridor into the city.

*Objective 4:* Pursue the Communication and Neighborhood Stabilization Steps on page 64.

*Objective 5:* Promote sound rehabilitation of sorority and fraternity houses in the district as a part of a larger effort to encourage historically sensitive rehabilitation of Greek community properties. The intention for such a campaign would be to develop a sense of awareness and stewardship for the historic buildings owned by the Greek community (See Goal 7, *Objective 5*, page 57).

## 10. Gilbert-Linn Street Historic District

The Gilbert-Linn Street Historic District makes up a mixed residential and commercial neighborhood at the west end of Iowa City's traditional North Side. Some of the city's oldest buildings are in this neighborhood. Residents and property owners in the area participate in the geographically larger Northside Neighborhood Association. The Gilbert-Linn Street Historic District has an irregularly shaped boundary that begins approximately four blocks north of the Downtown and the East Campus of the University and extends north approximately four blocks along N. Gilbert and N. Linn streets from E. Bloomington Street to Fairchild Street along the eastern edge and E. Ronalds Streets on the western edge. Mercy Hospital's campus is at the southeast corner of the District. Boundaries along the west and east edges generally extend only one or two lots west of Linn Street and east of Gilbert Street, respectively, depending on the integrity of buildings and the presence of parking lots or vacant parcels. Properties facing the intersecting streets of E. Davenport Street, E. Fairchild Street, and E. Church Street are also included.



*Northside Market Place retail district,  
200 block North Linn Street.*

Since the 1960s, this area of Iowa City has been the subject of intense debate and neighborhood planning. Following the completion of surveys of the neighborhood in the 1970s, unsuccessful efforts were made during the early 1980s to designate several larger North Side residential and commercial historic districts to the National Register. These efforts were closely tied to efforts to establish a local ordinance historic district as well. Following extensive debate, public hearings before the HPC and P&Z Commission, and boundary revisions, objection from owners in the southern blocks of the proposed district saw the effort tabled. Following adoption of the 1992 Historic Preservation Plan, the North Side blocks were resurveyed and new efforts were made to establish boundaries for smaller districts. The first such effort in 1994 saw the Brown Street Historic District successfully listed on the National Register and as a local district after an extensive public education campaign.



*Gilbert-Linn Street Historic District, residences in the 600 block Linn Street*

In 2003, efforts returned to designation of a historic district in the west end of the North Side. A smaller, mixed-use residential and commercial area extending along Gilbert and Linn Streets was proposed for National Register designation. Public debate focused on potential restrictions to commercial development and expansion related to Mercy Hospital

in the south blocks if the same area were designated as a local ordinance district. Eventually, boundaries for the National Register area were reduced to the current district. Concurrent plans to designate the area as a local historic district failed when the City Council denied the district in 2004 by a narrow margin.

Meanwhile, a combination of market conditions along with changing zoning and building regulations have had a positive effect on the neighborhood. Changing housing trends and the growing appeal of older houses as single-family residences have demonstrated the capacity of North Side neighborhoods to survive and prosper. These market trends combined with adoption of the *Multi-Family Residential Design Standards in the Central Planning District* for new construction of apartment buildings along with a down zoning in the area have made the blocks contained in the Gilbert-Linn Street Historic District less threatened than in the 1970s.

Proximity to the University campus and Mercy Hospital (adjacent to the district to the southeast), however, suggests that this area will continue to be one of the front-lines for redevelopment pressures in the future. Future decisions outside of the district, including building trends south of the Downtown and hospital ownership or medical specialties, could greatly influence the rate of change in the residential and commercial blocks surrounding the district. Without design review in place for the historic district and/or a larger conservation district, the neighborhood is not likely to achieve its potential in terms of historic preservation objectives.

*Objective 1:* Retain the Gilbert-Linn Street Historic District designation (National Register). Regularly provide information to new property owners about the responsibilities and advantages of owning property in a historic district.

*Objective 2:* In the near term (one to two years), focus neighborhood historic preservation efforts on an education program to develop a clear understanding of what a local ordinance historic district means for a designated area. Address FAQs about the designation process, including questions about “urban myths” and genuine concerns voiced during the 2004 designation effort. Establish a “user-friendly” technical assistance effort for property owners by implementing the *Technical Assistance Steps* on page 65.

- Objective 3:* In the midterm (two to three years), encourage designation of the Gilbert-Linn Street Historic District as a local ordinance historic district. Follow the *District Adoption Steps* listed above on page 63.
- Objective 4:* Because of this area's proximity to the University, continue efforts to identify prospective sites for future redevelopment which will not adversely impact historic resources. Include properties containing buildings that are outside of a proposed historic or conservation district or are not individually eligible for the National Register.
- Objective 5:* Maintain and preserve existing stretches of brick-paved streets within the Gilbert-Linn Street Historic District, including portions of Fairchild Street and several blocks of Linn that are part of the brick-paved route that leads to Oakland and St. Joseph's cemeteries from churches in the center of town.
- Objective 6:* Incorporate historic preservation efforts in planning for the Northside Market Place retail district (intersecting blocks at Market, Linn, Gilbert and Bloomington streets). Stress the significance of the neighborhood's history as an industrial and commercial enclave of 19th century breweries and markets. Encourage efforts to tell the story of its early development (stone and brick buildings) as well as its turn of the century buildings (O.H. Carpenter designed houses). Emphasize the story of its diversity (German and Bohemian working class residents and merchant families). Promote preservation of the architectural elements of both landmarks such as the Slezak Building-National Hall (Pagliai's Pizza ) at 302 E. Bloomington and vernacular commercial buildings such as the Hamburg Inn at 214 N. Linn. Relate the story of the neighborhood's buildings of literary significance such as 402 E. Market through the development of walking tours or special celebrations. Encourage public improvements that are consistent with the neighborhood's historic character and private redevelopment measures that complement surviving landmarks such as the Union Brewery at 127-131 N. Linn Street and the home of its owner, Conrad Graf, at 319 East Bloomington Street or the Jacob Wentz House at 219 N. Gilbert Street.
- Objective 7:* Pursue the *Communication and Neighborhood Stabilization Steps* on page 64.

## **11. Goosetown**

The Goosetown neighborhood encompasses the blocks at the east end of the North Side and is discussed as a separate neighborhood because of its distinct ethnic origins and building stock. It is roughly bounded by Oakland Cemetery on the north, Rochester Avenue and the alley south of Bloomington Street on the south, North Dodge/North Lucas-Governor Street on the west, and Reno Street on the east. Originally developed in the mid to late 19th century, this area was populated largely by working class Bohemian or Czech immigrants with a smaller number of German immigrants.

Once characterized by small houses situated amidst semi-agrarian blocks, Goosetown grew both internally and on its edges in the decades immediately following 1900. The commercial and civic center for Goosetown lay to the west in the blocks along North Johnson and North Dodge streets. Around North Market square, several churches, successive public schools, and a Czecho-Slovakian fraternal hall were built. Over time, large lots in Goosetown were sometimes subdivided and houses were occasionally moved or more often replaced when circumstances required it.



Goosetown. Left: Chensky-Klema House, 1013 East Bloomington Street

Through the years, the Goosetown neighborhood remained a neighborhood of closely-knit Bohemian and German families. For the men, work life might include a job at a local brewery or in one of the building trades if you were lucky. For those less fortunate, low-paying jobs changed frequently. For the women, work outside the home included jobs as laundresses and domestics or, if you were fortunate, clerking in a store downtown or working at a printing company or the local glove factory. As the University of Iowa grew after 1900, employment opportunities gave stable jobs to dozens of Goosetown residents.

Through two World Wars and the Great Depression, Goosetown remained a close-knit neighborhood of working class families whose children attended the same school and attended the same churches. They maintained pride in their former Bohemian homeland while they took new pride in their Iowa City neighborhood, their well-kept homes, and productive gardens.

Public awareness of the history and location of Goosetown has grown since 1992, especially following publication of Marybeth Slonneger's Goosetown social history, *Small But Ours*, in 1999. Goosetown's identity as a distinct neighborhood has grown with pride in the modest design and scale of the neighborhood's housing stock. A parallel recognition has developed of the area's "affordable housing."

In 2003, in response to a neighborhood-based petition to consider designation of a Goosetown conservation district, the HPC held a public information meeting. Concern of some neighbors regarding an obligation for property owners to undergo design review was strongly expressed. Since 1992, the historic character of the neighborhood has changed as the result of carefully planned historic rehabilitation projects for some buildings and modernizations of others. In the latter cases, buildings have seen the installation of synthetic siding, loss of wood porch detailing, resizing of windows, construction of out-of-scale additions and garages, and other new construction work that has diluted the character of the neighborhood. No concerted technical assistance or preservation education program has been undertaken.

As efforts are undertaken for Goosetown's preservation in the future, the neighborhood's dual images—a picturesque historic district and a low-cost residential neighborhood—will likely be argued by some as conflicting. However, neighborhood preservation efforts in other communities show that the two can be compatible. Factors such as small lot size, modest house square footage, the presence of a substantial number of one and one-and-a-half-story houses, and the simple vernacular designs of Goosetown dwellings are more likely to be important factors in maintaining their affordability. Since these factors are also part of their historic character, any design review process that preserves Goosetown's modest-scale dwellings by not allowing inappropriately-sized additions or front porch enclosures is likely to assist in keeping the area affordable.

Other concerns, including issues relating to siding (installing synthetic siding versus maintaining painted wood finishes) and window replacement (opting for repairing and replacing selected wood sash rather than total window replacement) have been debated in other communities. Careful evaluations have demonstrated that in assessing the long-term effect, the historic rehabilitation approach is about the same cost or less expensive and has the benefit of often contributing to a historic house's appreciation. The HPC has demonstrated the flexibility of conservation district regulations in practice. The best example was the operation of the HPC during the post-tornado months of 2006. A record number of design reviews for buildings in blocks damaged by the storm were reviewed and rehabilitated by their owners. Some received technical assistance during the process that enabled them to save historic features their insurance companies might not have considered worth paying for as part of a tornado loss. Success of the design review process under even the most adverse circumstances demonstrates the community benefits of historic preservation regulation.

**Objective 1:** Develop and submit a Multiple Property Documentation form to the National Register of Historic Places for "Iowa City's Bohemian History, 1855–1945" for scattered resources found throughout the North Side and Goosetown; base the MPD on survey work of the Phase I and Phase II Original Town Plat surveys (1997, 2000) and the Phase III Goosetown survey (2000). Identify four to six individually eligible properties for preparation of individual National Register nominations to include with submittal of the MPD.

**Objective 2:** Begin the process of designating a Goosetown conservation district with a strong education effort that develops a clear understanding of what a local ordinance conservation district means for a designated area. Include dissemination of "history corner" columns in the neighborhood association newsletter addressing FAQs, including questions about "urban myths" and genuine concerns about the designation effort. Develop other special topic publications based on questions of property owners.

**Objective 3:** Follow-up on Objective 2 using the *District Adoption Steps* listed above on page 63.

*Objective 4:* Pursue the Communication and Neighborhood Stabilization Steps on page 64.

## 12. Governor-Lucas Conservation District <sup>13</sup>



*Governor-Lucas Conservation District, Bethel A.M.E. Church,  
411 S. Governor Street.*

The Governor-Lucas Conservation District was Iowa City's first conservation district. It is a rectangular-shaped neighborhood southeast of the central business district that includes properties along Governor and Lucas streets between Burlington Street and the Iowa Interstate Railroad as well as properties along Bowery Street between Lucas Street and the Summit Street Historic District. Measures to designate

the area for protection began with a reconnaissance survey of the neighborhood and blocks to the west completed in 1990. In 1996 and 1998, a smaller area was included in the intensive level survey completed for the Longfellow Neighborhood. Turn-of-the-century houses and tree-lined streets characterize the Governor-Lucas Conservation District with houses dating from the late 19th century through the 1930s. Governor Street's unusually wide lots and deep set-backs on the east side create a sense of spaciousness that is similar to portions of Summit Street and not found in most Iowa City residential districts. Examples of vernacular house forms and architectural styles from the 1860s through the 1930s are present, with many good examples of Craftsman Style, American Four-Squares and Bungalows intermixed with earlier Victorian styles.

The Governor-Lucas Conservation District includes 140 residential properties and one church, the Bethel AME Church (National Register). Unlike other historic and conservation districts in Iowa City, owner-occupants make up a minority of residents – slightly less than one-third. The neighborhood saw its transition to rental occupancy begin in 1961 when the majority of the district was rezoned for dense multifamily occupancy. In the wake of this rezoning, blocks to the west saw houses razed and new apartment buildings erected. In May 2000, owner-occupants and long-term renters, aware of the pressure to construct dormitory-style apartment buildings in the neighborhood, successfully petitioned the City Council to down-zone the neighborhood. Work on establishment of a conservation district paralleled the rezoning measure. Since 2001, 27 design reviews have been completed.

*Objective 1:* Retain the Governor-Lucas Conservation District designation. Regularly provide information to new property owners about the responsibilities and advantages of owning property in a conservation district.

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<sup>13</sup> Portions of the neighborhood description taken from "Proposed Lucas-Governor Conservation District Report," November 1, 2001. (Note: At an unidentified point in time, common usage saw the name of the district become "Governor-Lucas" perhaps reflecting the title and name of Governor Lucas, Iowa's territorial governor who resided in his retirement home, Plum Grove, located several blocks to the south.)

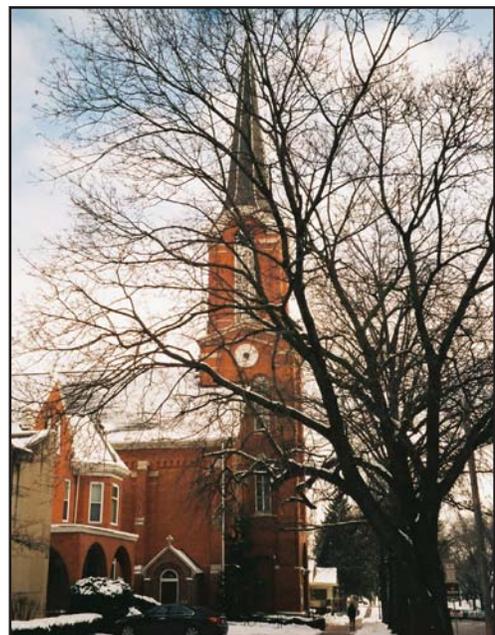
*Objective 2:* Re-evaluate the district periodically to determine if the passage of time or the rehabilitations completed have changed the status of the district from conservation to historic, or if individual buildings should be designated contributing rather than non-contributing.

*Objective 3:* Consider local landmark designation for eligible properties in the district such as Bethel AME Church. Given the important history of this church to Iowa City and Iowa, take special care in evaluating planned preservation and rehabilitation measures. Work with the church owner and non-profit groups to develop a master plan for reuse and rehabilitation. Identify a continued-use plan that preserves its original historic character by evaluating a long-term, wholistic plan for its use and building modifications that are sensitive to its historic character.

*Objective 4:* Pursue the *Communication and Neighborhood Stabilization Steps* on page 64.

### 13. Jefferson Street Historic District

The Jefferson Street Historic District is a linear neighborhood that extends along East Jefferson Street from Clinton to Van Buren streets. Properties facing the intersecting streets of Dubuque, Linn, Gilbert, and Van Buren are also included within the district. The district includes a mix of institutional buildings (religious and academic) and residential buildings that reflect its historical development along the edge of the downtown and the University campus. University-related resources include buildings originally used as a biological sciences classroom building, a medical school anatomy lecture hall, an isolation hospital, and sorority houses. Buildings used for religious purposes include four churches, a student center, a former convent, and a rectory. The balance of the district includes two large apartment buildings, a collection of medium- and large-sized single-family dwellings that date from the 1850s through the 1930s, and a variety of secondary structures erected during the early 20th century. The district contains a total of 38 primary resources with all but one considered contributing. Buildings in the Jefferson Street Historic District exhibit a range of late 19th and early 20th century architectural styles including excellent examples of eleven distinct styles and several vernacular residential forms.



*Jefferson Street Historic District,  
St. Mary's Catholic Church,  
220 E. Jefferson Street*

The most recent historical and architectural surveys of this area were completed in 1999 and 2001. In 2004, the Jefferson Street Historic District was listed on the National Register. No local historic district designation has been established for the area. East Jefferson Street currently serves as a one-way arterial street with significant vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Proximity to the University campus, suggests that this area will continue to be one of the front-lines for

redevelopment pressures. Future reuse for a key property in the district, the former University Isolation Hospital at the southwest corner of Gilbert and East Jefferson streets, will have a major impact on the district.<sup>14</sup>

*Objective 1:* Retain the Jefferson Street Historic District designation (National Register). Regularly provide information to new property owners about the responsibilities and advantages of owning property in a historic district.

*Objective 2:* In the near term (one to two years), focus neighborhood historic preservation efforts on an education program to develop a clear understanding of what a local ordinance historic district means for a designated area. Focus on FAQs regarding designation including questions about “urban myths” and genuine concerns. Establish a “user-friendly” technical assistance effort for property owners by implementing the *Technical Assistance Steps* on page 65.

*Objective 3:* In the mid term (two to three years), encourage designation of the Jefferson Street Historic District as a local ordinance historic district. Follow the *District Adoption Steps* listed above on page 63.

*Objective 4:* The *University of Iowa 2006 Campus Master Plan* identified National Register listed properties that the University owns as heritage properties that should be protected. (see Section 4.5.3: “Protect the campus’ historic landscape and architectural resources that positively contribute to its unique identity.”) This policy was established for historic resources within the current campus including buildings in National Register Historic Districts such as the Pentacrest and the Jefferson Street Historic District. As a result, an effort should be made to engage University representatives in discussions for specific historic resources in the district, such as the Isolation Hospital at the southwest corner of Jefferson and Gilbert streets.

To focus efforts for this property, a comprehensive assessment of reuse options should be undertaken. The University should consider potential use of federal investment tax credits to finance rehabilitation through the sale of the credits to for profit entities. Consider soliciting planning assistance from the Midwest Offices of the National Trust for Historic Preservation or engaging a group of specialized architects and planners experienced in academic campus reuse issues. A planning effort for the Isolation Hospital could serve as a model for future efforts to plan for historic resources with both a University and community interest.

*Objective 5:* Pursue the *Communication and Neighborhood Stabilization Steps* on page 64.

## **14. Longfellow Historic District**

The Longfellow Historic District includes portions of the original Rundell Addition, Oakes

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<sup>14</sup>In late 2006 near the conclusion of the Historic Preservation Plan update process, reuse of the Isolation Hospital for the University’s Urban Planning Graduate School was announced and is likely to have a positive impact on the building’s long-term preservation.

Addition and East Iowa City. The northern fringe of the Longfellow neighborhood was developed before World War I while the balance of the area extending south of Court St. and east of Clark St. was not fully developed until World War II. Longfellow Elementary School is an important landmark anchoring the neighborhood, which was originally conceived as a streetcar suburb. Facing blocks have a homogeneous scale of buildings with uniform setbacks. The neighborhood has a high level of physical integrity, including many historic garages. Good examples of vernacular house forms and architectural styles from before and after World War II survive throughout the neighborhood.



*Longfellow Historic District, above: 600 block of Oakland Avenue; below: 1100 block*



Since 1992, major progress has been made on historic preservation objectives. In 1996 and 1998, historical and architectural survey work was completed. Parallel designation tracks saw the Longfellow Historic District listed as a local ordinance historic district in 2001 and on the National Register the following year. The local Longfellow Historic District and Moffitt Cottage Historic District were combined into a single historic district in 2003. Since local designation, the district has had 56 design review cases. Fears of residents expressed in 1992 regarding incompatible exterior remodeling of pristine bungalows and period cottages has been replaced by deliberate planned historic rehabilitations. Removal of the district's small period garages has been slowed, and where replacement buildings have been erected the design review process has mitigated their loss by requiring more compatible design for new garages. The continuing loss of original garages remains a challenge for the neighborhood.

Good efforts on heightening public awareness of neighborhood history have been undertaken through projects sponsored by the Longfellow Neighborhood Association and the leadership of individual residents. One of the most successful to date has been the Longfellow Neighborhood Art Project financed with a City PIN grant. It features a series of large free-standing markers highlighting the stories of the Oakes Brickworks, the Muscatine Avenue Moffitt Cottages, the Civil War-era site for Camp Pope, the O.S. Kelly Factory, Rundell Park, and others. Regular columns appear in the Association's newsletters featuring local history and preservation topics.

*Objective 1:* Retain the Longfellow Historic District designation. Regularly provide information to new property owners about the responsibilities and advantages of owning property in a historic district.

- Objective 2:* Re-evaluate the district periodically to determine if the passage of time or the rehabilitations completed for buildings under design review have changed the boundaries for the district, or if individual buildings should be evaluated as contributing rather than non-contributing. This recommendation is especially important for aging resources that reach the 50-year eligibility for contributing status.
- Objective 3:* Support historic preservation efforts for the Longfellow School building as an important anchor in the historic district. Adopt strategies for preserving historic neighborhood schools promoted by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.<sup>15</sup> Encourage retention and celebration of the existing school building as a neighborhood value.
- Objective 4:* Develop and publish a Longfellow Neighborhood History keyed to the 2010 centennial anniversary of the Rundell Land and Improvement Company. Use the publication as an opportunity to solicit historic neighborhood photos and first hand accounts of the area's post-World War II changes from present and former residents. To broaden the appeal of the book, incorporate the stories of nearby neighborhoods.
- Objective 5:* Maintain up-to-date information regarding historic preservation at the Longfellow Neighborhood website. Once established, keeping information fresh and accurate a website is challenging. The Longfellow Neighborhood Association has an excellent site but the material regarding historic preservation was more than two years old when examined. Although some of it may still be accurate, it is critical that all of it be updated regularly or site users will discount its validity or be misled. Since the current newsletter is maintained through the City's website, it is important that the City make the maintenance process as straight forward as possible and cooperate in the updating effort.
- Objective 6:* Pursue the *Communication and Neighborhood Stabilization Steps* on page 64.

## **15. Muscatine Avenue Moffitt Cottage Historic District** (now, part of Longfellow Historic District)

This small National Register historic district contains five stone cottages located along the east side of the 1300 block of Muscatine Avenue. They were built during the 1920s and 1930s by Iowa City developer and contractor Howard F. Moffitt. Their distinct designs blended features of Tudor Revival and Craftsman Style dwellings in a variety of cottage forms. The Muscatine Avenue Moffitt Cottage Historic District was listed in the National Register in 1993 and locally designated a short time later. In 2003, the small district was incorporated into the adjoining Longfellow Historic District. Only one design review case was heard in the district before it was merged

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<sup>15</sup>“Focus On Historic Neighborhood Schools,” National Trust for Historic Preservation available at: [http://www.nationaltrust.org/issues/schools/neighborhood\\_school\\_preservation](http://www.nationaltrust.org/issues/schools/neighborhood_school_preservation); accessed 12/1/2006.

with Longfellow. All of the recommendations and strategies presented above for the Longfellow Historic District apply to this small enclave of buildings. The one objective listed below applies to these buildings separately.

*Objective 1:* Use research work completed on the Moffitt Cottages to develop a cross-district, citywide bicycle/driving tour highlighting Moffitt cottages, such as the Muscatine Avenue group. Publish information about the tour on-line and in the Longfellow neighborhood newsletter. Encourage preparation of a social history of Moffitt houses using the recollections of former owners.

## 16. Oak Grove-Kirkwood Avenue Corridor

The Oak Grove-Kirkwood Avenue Corridor neighborhood occupies an area in the southern blocks of the Central Planning District roughly bounded by the Iowa Interstate Railroad right-of-way on the north, Van Buren Street or Webster Street on the west, Lower Muscatine Road on the east, and Highland Avenue and De Forest avenues on the south. Subdivisions in the Oak Grove-Kirkwood Avenue Corridor prior to 1890 included the Page Addition, Borland Place Addition, and Block 2 of the Summit Hill Addition north of Kirkwood Avenue and the Lucas Addition south of Kirkwood Avenue.



*Oak Grove-Kirkwood Avenue Corridor,  
806 Kirkwood Avenue*

Between 1890 and World War I, the Wilson and Lantz Addition was added north of Kirkwood Avenue and the Switzer Subdivision, E.W. Lucas's Addition and Sunnyside Addition were added south of Kirkwood Avenue. Large undeveloped parcels were still held individually along Kirkwood Avenue through the Great Depression years. During the 1920s, the S.J. Kirkwood Homestead Addition and Kirkwood Place Addition were platted, the latter by Bert Manville. Additions made between 1935 and 1955 included Kirkwood Circle (1939), C.R. Regan Addition (1950), Highland Addition Part 3 (1955), and Plum Grove Part 3 (1955).

The Kirkwood Avenue corridor is made up of facing blocks along an east-west stretch of the avenue between Diana and Roosevelt streets. Originally named "Wyoming Road," it served as an important country road leading into Iowa City from the southeast. Prominent farmsteads and country homes built along and near Kirkwood Avenue before 1900 include Plum Grove (National Register, 1030 Carroll Street), the Governor Samuel Kirkwood House (local historic landmark, 1101 Kirkwood Avenue), the Clark House (National Register and local landmark, 829 Kirkwood Avenue), the Lovelace House (820 Kirkwood Avenue), and the Gotch House (1110 Kirkwood Avenue). Wide lots and deep set backs continue along much of the corridor. Plum Grove has been held as a state-owned property since the 1940s. It is operated as a house museum and memorial to the lives of Governor Lucas and his wife Friendly by the State Historical Society of Iowa

and administered by the Johnson County Historical Society. In 1992, the *Historic Preservation Plan* stated that though owned by the State of Iowa, “Plum Grove pales by comparison with the attention received by its sister landmark - Old Capitol.” This position continues reflecting the relative importance of the University in statewide affairs when compared with the Historical Society.

*Objective 1:* Complete a reconnaissance survey of the Oak Grove-Kirkwood Avenue Corridor Neighborhood in order to focus intensive level survey work on scattered individually eligible National Register properties and on multi-block areas such as the Kirkwood Avenue corridor.

*Objective 2:* Once reconnaissance survey work is completed, complete intensive level work for individually significant buildings and historic districts. If the Kirkwood Avenue corridor is determined eligible for National Register listing, pursue nomination.

*Objective 3:* Encourage local designation of a Kirkwood Avenue historic district. Follow the District Adoption Steps listed above on page 63.

*Objective 4:* Support the continued use of Plum Grove as state-owned, locally administered historic site. Make efforts to rotate exhibits, emphasize specialized tours such as evening “candle light tours” or archeological field school tours, and special events have the potential to increase visitorship and community support for this important historic property.

*Objective 5:* Coordinate efforts with the State Historical Society and the Johnson County Historical Society to evaluate Plum Grove for designation as a National Historic Landmark and seek designation as an Iowa City historic landmark.

*Objective 6:* Pursue the Communication and Neighborhood Stabilization Steps on page 64.

## **17. Lucas Farms Neighborhood – Ginter, Friendly, Highland, Pickard, and Yewell Streets**

As noted above, the Lucas Farms neighborhood occupies an area in the southern blocks of the Central Planning District extending south from Kirkwood Avenue to Highland Avenue and De Forest avenues and from Van Buren Street or Webster Street on the west to Lower Muscatine Road on the east. Subdivisions in the Lucas Farms Neighborhood were established during the 1920s and later focused on the blocks south of Kirkwood Avenue. They included the S.J. Kirkwood Homestead Addition (1924) and the Kirkwood Place Addition (1925), the latter platted by Iowa City developer Bert Manville. Additions made between 1935 and 1955 included Kirkwood Circle (1939), C.R. Regan Addition (1950), Highland Addition Part 3 (1955), and Plum Grove Part 3 (1955). The main blocks in this neighborhood of historic and architectural interest front on the intersecting blocks of Ginter, Friendly, Highland, Pickard, and Yewell streets and include good examples of suburban development in Iowa City during the 1920s–1930s.



The multi-block area along Ginter, Friendly, Highland, Pickard, and Yewell streets contains a dozen or more Moffitt stone cottages, most of which were identified as eligible for National Register listing in the in MPD form for “The Small Homes of Howard F. Moffitt in Iowa City and Coralville, Iowa, 1924-1943” listed on the National Register in 1993.

*Lucas Farms Neighborhood, Moffitt house, 1217 Friendly Street.*

- Objective 1:* A reconnaissance level survey of the Lucas Farms Neighborhood should be completed to focus intensive level survey work on scattered individually eligible National Register properties and on multi-block areas identified as containing a potential National Register eligible historic district or locally eligible conservation district.
- Objective 2:* Once reconnaissance survey work is completed, a second phase would focus intensive level work for individually significant buildings and historic districts. Buildings in a multi-block area with the potential for either historic district or conservation district eligibility should be surveyed intensively. If a historic district is identified as eligible for National Register listing, a district nomination should be pursued. If a district is not identified, individual nominations should be encouraged based on the “Small Houses of Howard F. Moffitt” MPD.
- Objective 3:* Once survey work is completed, encourage local designation of a historic or conservation district. Follow the *District Adoption Steps* listed above on page 63.
- Objective 4:* Use research work completed on the Moffitt houses in the Lucas Farms Neighborhood survey as an opportunity to develop a cross-district, citywide bicycle/driving tour highlighting specific Moffitt cottages and enclaves of houses such as those in the Lucas Farms Neighborhood. Publish information about the tour on-line and in the neighborhood newsletter. Encourage preparation of a social history of Moffitt houses that uses the recollections of former house owners.
- Objective 5:* Pursue the *Communication and Neighborhood Stabilization Steps* on page 64.

## **18. Morningside-City High Neighborhood**

The Morningside-City High Neighborhood is one of several neighborhoods newly included in the update of the Historic Preservation Plan. The neighborhood includes a series of irregular

shaped blocks between Muscatine Avenue and City High School campus. Court Street forms the south boundary and rear property line of houses facing the south side of Glendale Road forms the north boundary. The area is substantially different from blocks to the west due to the inclusion of diagonal and curving streets, cul-de-sacs, and blocks of various sizes and shapes to better fit the topography. The development of the neighborhood extended from the platting of the Morningside Addition in 1924 on the former fairgrounds site through the post-World War II period and early 1950s. The Morningside-City High neighborhood is directly north of East Iowa City, which was platted in 1898 as a subdivision for manufacturing sites and worker housing.



*Morningside—City High Neighborhood, above: 100-inch replica of Statue of Liberty at City High School, one of 200 copies placed by the Boy Scouts in the U.S., 1949 & 1957; below, 1700 block of College Street.*



The visual centerpiece of the neighborhood is City High School, built in 1938–1939 as a joint project of the Iowa City School District and the federal Public Works Administration. House building appears to have continued in the neighborhood at a slow pace during the Depression years, but World War II deterred development of new subdivisions until the end of the war. After the war, subdivisions in the neighborhood included College Court Place (1948), Wildman’s 1st Addition (1949), Adrian’s Addition (1950), West Bel Air Pt. 1 (1956), and Lafferty Subdivision (1960). The 1950s development in the neighborhood is symbolized by installation of a miniature Statue of Liberty at entrance to the City High campus in 1950. Its installation was part of a national campaign sponsored by the Boy Scouts of America to erect statues across the U.S. The construction of Herbert Hoover Elementary School in 1954 south of City High prompted the neighborhood’s last wave of residential development.

For many, the inclusion of a neighborhood made up of buildings dating from the decades immediately preceding and following World War II stretches the concept of “historic.” However, the passage of time requires historians, architectural historians, archeologists, and city planners to retain an arbitrary “look back” date of 50 years for evaluating potentially significant historic resources. This criterion has been central to the National Register of Historic Places since it was established in 1966. The “look back” date in those years extended only until World War I. Since then, there has been a gradual recognition of newer buildings as important historic resources in telling a community’s ever expanding—and more recent—history.

- Objective 1:* Complete a reconnaissance survey of the Morningside-City High Neighborhood in order to focus intensive level survey work on scattered individually eligible National Register properties and on multi-block areas that may be significant as historic district(s) or, more likely, potential conservation district(s).
- Objective 2:* Once reconnaissance survey work is completed, complete intensive level work for individually significant buildings and districts.
- Objective 3:* If a Morningside-City High historic or conservation district is recommended, Follow the *District Adoption Steps* listed above on page 63.
- Objective 4:* Develop a National Register of Historic Places nomination for the City High campus and the little “Miss Liberty” statue at its entrance. Use the nomination to draw attention to Iowa City’s involvement with national trends such as the Public Works Administration that sought to put people to work in the waning years of the Great Depression and the patriotic campaign waged by the Boy Scouts with the effort to put miniature Statues of Liberty in county seat towns across the nation.
- Objective 5:* Pursue the *Communication and Neighborhood Stabilization Steps* on page 64.

## 19. Rochester Avenue Neighborhood

The Rochester Avenue Neighborhood includes facing blocks along the avenue and blocks to the south from roughly Elizabeth Street on the west to Parsons Avenue or Ralston Creek on the east and from Bloomington Street on the north to Jefferson Street/Glendale Avenue on the south. This neighborhood includes the heavily tornado damaged-area along Hotz Street and Clapp Street. The neighborhood contains several additions platted from end of World War I through ca. 1960, including the Rose Hill Addition, J.W. Clark’s Addition, Raphael Placer Addition, Memler’s Addition (1951), Highland Addition Pt. 2 (1954), Wildwood Addition (1956), Streb’s 1st Addition (1958), and Mark Twain Addition (1959). The meandering course of the North Branch of Ralston Creek and Glendale Park are included.



*Rochester Avenue Neighborhood, 1300 block Rochester Avenue.*

The pre-urban history of Rochester Avenue saw farmsteads and acreages owned by Ruth Irish and O.S. Barnes on north side of Rochester Avenue and J.P. Memler, Peter Zach and O.S. Barnes on south side of Rochester Avenue. Housing stock in the neighborhood includes one- and two-story frame and masonry residences, a mix of vernacular house forms such as the American Four-Square, Front-Gable and Wing, and Suburban Cottage. The neighborhood also includes pre and post-World War I domestic architectural styles including variations of the Craftsman, Colonial Revival, and Bungalow styles.

- Objective 1:* Complete a reconnaissance survey of the Rochester Avenue Neighborhood in order to focus intensive level survey work on scattered individually eligible National Register properties and on multi-block areas that may be significant as historic district(s) or, more likely, potential conservation district(s).
- Objective 2:* Once reconnaissance survey work is completed, complete intensive level work for individually significant buildings and districts.
- Objective 3:* If a Rochester Avenue historic or conservation district is recommended, Follow the *District Adoption Steps* listed above on page 63.
- Objective 4:* Pursue the *Communication and Neighborhood Stabilization Steps* on page 64.

## 20. Summit Street Historic District

The Summit Street Historic District is a linear neighborhood composed of facing blocks along South Summit Street between Burlington Street and the Iowa Interstate Railroad. The neighborhood's three blocks include Iowa City's best collection of well-preserved Victorian-era and turn-of-the-century American Revival style residences. Houses are set well back on deep lots with many properties containing carriage houses, fences, carriage blocks, and historic landscaping features. Construction dates for the district's building stock primarily range from the 1860s-1910s.



*Summit Street Historic District, 513 S. Summit Street*

The Summit Street blocks were recognized through the years as having a sense of time and place. Individual houses were prominently featured in Margaret Keyes' early book on Iowa City architecture. Early threats to the neighborhood posed by apartment house construction were thwarted by neighborhood activism and subsequent down zoning and historic district protection. In 1973, residents sought and received a designation for the area as a National Register historic district – the first historic district established in Iowa City. A decade later, the district was also the first to be listed as a local historic district. Since local designation and the beginning of design review, the district has had 61 cases.

The health of Summit Street is evidence of the long term community benefits fostered by historic preservation. A neighborhood that was threatened with redevelopment in the 1960s is now a stable and well-regarded residential anchor for the near east part of the city. Buildings in the district have been rehabilitated at a rate commensurate with or ahead of other older neighborhoods in the city. Property values have kept pace with or exceeded appreciation in the balance of the community. Traffic increases are still perceived by current residents; and others, as the principle threat to the neighborhood.

For many, the Summit Street Historic District is an example of the idiom “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it!” The area has a well-recognized historic image in the community and the district’s addresses are sought after in spite of an increasingly competitive market for preserved historic residences. Regardless of the actual and perceived success of historic preservation along South Summit Street, owners change, buildings experience change, and strategies for continued success will be necessary.

*Objective 1:* Retain designation of the Summit Street Historic District. Provide information to new property owners about the responsibilities and advantages of owning property in a historic district through regular mailings and a visitation program conducted by residents.

*Objective 2:* Continue to identify and retain Summit Street’s unique neighborhood development features such as deep lots with spacious front yard setbacks, canopy landscaping with minimal low-level screening, etc. Do not add features to the neighborhood which provide a false sense of history, such as decorative street lights or undocumented fences and walls.

*Objective 3:* Consider establishing a regular event (annually or bi-annually) such as a “front porch festival” open to the public in order to invite neighbors and Iowa City residents to share the history of Summit Street—a rich heritage which belongs to the entire community. Such an event negates the mindset that historic preservation only makes sense for prestigious neighborhoods.

*Objective 4:* Pursue the *Communication and Neighborhood Stabilization Steps* on page 64.

## **21. Woodlawn Historic District**

Woodlawn is an enclave of 14 well-preserved late 19th and early 20th century residences located at the Y-shaped junction of Iowa Avenue, Evans Street, and Muscatine Avenue. “Governor’s Square” located southwest of Woodlawn, was originally planned as the location for the governor’s residence. After the capital relocated to Des Moines in 1857, these plans were abandoned and Governor’s Square was replatted for house lots. In 1889 S.M. Clark’s Sub-division, which contains Woodlawn, was platted east of the terminus of Iowa Avenue. Beginning in the 1880s houses were built along Woodlawn Avenue’s spacious lots featuring Gothic Revival, Italianate, Queen Anne, Stick/Eastlake, and Tudor Revival styles. Through the years, a Woodlawn address, like that of South Summit Street, connoted prestige. The Woodlawn Historic District was listed on the National Register in 1979 and became a local historic district in 1983. Since that time, 15 design reviews have been conducted. Several buildings and mature landscape elements on Woodlawn were seriously damaged in the April 2006 tornado.

*Objective 1:* Retain designation of Woodlawn as a historic district. Regularly provide information to new property owners about the responsibilities and advantages of owning property in a historic district.

*Objective 2:* Use Woodlawn as an anchor for encouraging the development of an Iowa Avenue streetscape improvement plan in the blocks immediately west of the Woodlawn entrance. Include landscaping measures in the Iowa Avenue boulevard and parking areas as well as upgrades for sidewalks, curbs and gutters along Iowa Avenue. Use the implemented streetscape plan, positive post-tornado recovery efforts, and the stability of the Woodlawn District to attract continued investment along the Iowa Avenue blocks west of Woodlawn.

*Objective 3:* Establish a “user-friendly” technical assistance effort for property owners by implementing the *Technical Assistance Steps* on page 65.

*Objective 4:* Consider establishing a regular event (annually or bi-annually) such as a “front porch festival” open to the public in order to invite neighbors and Iowa City residents to share the history of Woodlawn—a rich heritage which belongs to the entire community not just the current residents of the area.

*Objective 5:* Pursue the *Communication and Neighborhood Stabilization Steps* on page 64.

***North Planning District:***



*Montgomery-Butler House, North Dubuque Street*

The North Planning District includes the northern portions of Iowa City roughly bounded by the Iowa River, Interstate 80, North Dodge Street, and Iowa Highway 1. Several individual historic resources and large areas of undeveloped land are located along Dubuque Street in the western part of the district while the eastern blocks comprise a portion of what is known today as the Shimek Neighborhood and what was known historically as “Tank Town.” In 2000, the “North District Reconnaissance Survey” was completed for the North District Plan. Buildings

scattered throughout the North District were identified as potentially eligible for the National Register. They are clustered in three groups: the first includes scattered properties along Dubuque Street; the second includes a group of buildings in Tank Town, and the third includes a group of former rural properties extending along a one-mile stretch of Dubuque Road.

**22. North Dubuque Street/Montgomery-Butler House**

One of the most important historic resources along Dubuque Street is the Montgomery-Butler House site, a City-owned historic dwelling and the ruins of several outbuildings, that overlooks

the north edge of Waterworks Prairie Park. The house site was acquired by the City in 1995 as part of the property acquisition for the new municipal water treatment facility. During the environmental review process for the treatment facility project, the stone house was identified as a historic site that met the criteria for listing in the National Register. Stabilization measures to preserve the building were completed as part of an agreement between the City, the State Historical Society of Iowa, Corps of Engineers, and the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. The City set aside 4.28 acres within the future Waterworks Park, including the stone house, to be developed as a cultural resource. The house was “mothballed” in 1998 and a formal nomination for the property to the National Register was prepared through the HPC in 2001 but not finalized.

A feasibility study to evaluate reuse options for the Montgomery-Butler House was completed in 2001. A community planning workshop was facilitated by a consultant and attended by representatives of bicycle, open-space, historic preservation, and civic organizations as well as City staff. Of the options evaluated, the concept of reusing the Montgomery-Butler House as a historic site and interpretive center was determined to be the most feasible. Since submittal of the study, measures to further stabilize and monitor the property have continued. A paved bicycle access to the site from the park has been completed. No interpretative measures have been completed and a non-municipal sponsor or leader for the project has not been identified.<sup>16</sup>

*Objective 1:* Make completion of the final steps of the National Register nomination process for the Montgomery-Butler House a priority for the HPC.

*Objective 2:* Designate the Montgomery-Butler House as a local landmark. It is important to complete this process to provide design review authority for the HPC as a part of the evaluation of reuse options for the building in the future.

*Objective 3:* Now that Waterworks Prairie Park is completed and the new water purification facility is completed, Review the findings and recommendations of the Montgomery-Butler House Feasibility Study Report ( Svendsen Tyler, 2001) to determine if they remain valid. Update and prioritize the recommendations. Identify leadership to take the project to the next phase of completion.

### **23. Tank Town<sup>17</sup>**

Tank Town includes the eastern-most portion of the North Planning District. According to old timers, the Tank Town neighborhood included the hilltop blocks that surrounded the municipal water tower that was erected at 900 North Dodge Street at the turn of the 20th century, hence the name. Several grocery stores and a saloon were located nearby on Dodge Street. North School at 928 North Dodge Street was part of the north end enclave since it opened in the 1880s. Originally populated by Bohemian and German immigrants, Tank Town also included blocks that fronted on the route of the Military Road (currently State Highway 1) where it entered Iowa City from the northeast. Scattered dwellings and farmsteads were in place along this route before the Civil

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<sup>16</sup>Marlys Svendsen, Svendsen Tyler, Inc. Montgomery-Butler House Feasibility Study Report (Iowa City, IA: Department of Planning and Community Development, City of Iowa City), 2001.

<sup>17</sup>Marlys Svendsen, Svendsen Tyler, Inc., North District Reconnaissance Survey, Iowa City, Iowa, (Iowa City, IA: Department of Planning and Community Development, City of Iowa City), July 27, 2000.

War and within a few decades both immigrant groups were taking up residence in substantial numbers in the blocks north of Goosetown along the Military Road. In recognition of the area's strong Bohemian connections, North School was renamed "Shimek School" for Bohumil Shimek, a lifelong resident of Johnson County and the son of Bohemian immigrants, who went on to



*Tank Town, Old North School or Shimek School, 928 North Dodge Street.*

become a noted professor of botany at the State University of Iowa. The old Shimek School closed in 1917 when Horace Mann Elementary School opened. Shimek's local fame lives on in the name adopted for the modern day Shimek Elementary School at 1400 Grissel Place and the Shimek Neighborhood.

In 2000 the "North District Reconnaissance Survey" identified several buildings in the North District that were potentially eligible for the National Register including a potential historic district along Dubuque Road that is discussed below. A cluster of adjoining blocks of Tank Town along Dewey and North Summit streets south of Oakland Cemetery was also evaluated for historic district eligibility and was determined to not meet the level of physical integrity required.

*Objective 1:* Complete intensive level survey work on historic resources identified as potentially individually significant in Tank Town. Focus on properties that relate to the historic context recommended for "Iowa City's Bohemian History, 1855-1945" for scattered historic resources found throughout the North Side, Goosetown, and Tank Town that are linked to the story of immigrant Bohemian and German families. Identify four to six individually eligible properties for preparation of individual National Register nominations to include with submittal of the MPD.

*Objective 2:* Determine whether any parts of Tank Town should be included in a potential Goosetown conservation district. If so, incorporate measures for these Tank Town areas under 11. Goosetown, *Objective 2* above.

*Objective 3:* Maintain and preserve existing stretches of brick-paved streets within the North District. The most intact section is located in the 800 block of North Dewey Street. This block represents a continuation of the paved route along Brown Street that provided access to Oakland and St. Joseph's cemeteries from churches in the center of town.

## **24. Dubuque Road Neighborhood**

North of Tank Town and the settled portions of Iowa City, farmland and wooded areas dotted the country side during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. A number of the farms located

along the original route of the Military Road or present day “Dubuque Road” where it turns north off Highway 1, were operated as dairy farms with their herds furnishing a significant portion of Iowa City’s milk supply. A dozen large residences and barns along Dubuque Road date from ca. 1890 to the 1930s when the dairy industry in this rural neighborhood peaked. By the 1930s one of the larger local creameries in the area—the Swaner Farms Dairy—had relocated its business to 1103 North Dodge Street. The company processed milk for home delivery to consumers and manufactured butter, ice cream, cheese and other dairy products under the brand “Hometown.” In 1981, Swaner Farms Dairy became part of a group of dairies in Omaha, Des Moines, and Concordia known as Robert’s Dairy retaining its “HomeTown” brand until the mid 1990s. The dairy continues to process milk from its location along Dodge Street. Other north end dairy operations identified in the *North District Reconnaissance Survey Report* included the Queen Dairy Farm located at 1729 Dubuque Road and run by various members of the Ruppert family beginning in ca. 1912 and the Model Dairy, which operated from the intersection of North Dodge and Dubuque Road. These properties have potential for National Register or local landmark designation. The Robert’s Dairy merits closer evaluation once the principal buildings reach the 50-year time frame for National Register eligibility.

In the intervening years, residential construction along Dubuque Road has diminished the significance of this “country neighborhood.” The design and location of new dwellings now precludes National Register eligibility of this neighborhood but it still may meet the criteria for a conservation district.

*Objective 1:* Evaluate the properties along Dubuque Road for designation as a conservation district. This nearly one mile stretch of “country road” was originally built as part of the U.S. Military Road between Iowa City and Dubuque in 1839. Located within the corporate limits since before World War I, it continues to retain some of its rural quality. The significance of this route itself as well as the collection of residences and barns built along it from ca. 1860 make this an area that may merit protection. Recent new construction of large residences precludes its National Register eligibility and may have diminished its rural landscape qualities making it ineligible for a conservation district designation as well.

*Objective 2:* If a determination is made that the area is eligible for conservation district designation, maintain the remaining open space, deep set-backs and wide-spacing between remaining residences along Dubuque Road as part of the design review standards for the district.

*Objective 3:* The North District Reconnaissance Survey identified several important secondary structures for former farms and active farm properties along Dubuque Road including two large barns. In order to provide alternative uses for these properties to support their preservation, consider providing zoning incentives and property tax abatement.

*Northwest Planning District:*

**25. Manville Heights Neighborhood**

Manville Heights comprises a distinct residential neighborhood bounded on the east by Riverside Drive, on the south by the right-of-way of the CRANDIC Railway and U.S. Highway 6, and on the north and west by Park Road. The area developed initially as a farm operated by the Frank Hutchinson family in the 1840s and was known as “Hutchinson’s Grove.” National Guard encampments were held at Hutchinson’s Grove shortly after 1900 and the electric interurban between Cedar Rapids and Iowa City was completed along the southern edge of the neighborhood in 1904—Cedar Rapids and Iowa City Railway (CRANDIC). Electric power became available in the area as a result. Hutchinson’s Grove served as Iowa City’s Chautauqua Grounds during summers of 1906, 1907, and 1908 with participants able to travel by way of the new electric railway. Recreation use of the area was further encouraged by the establishment of City Park in 1906 and construction of the City Park bridge over the Iowa River in 1908.



*Manville Heights Neighborhood, Tudor Revival Style cottage, 215 Lexington Avenue.*



*Manville Heights Neighborhood, Hutchinson House, 119 W. Park Road, University of Iowa Press.*

The potential of the area to serve as a residential district was tapped in 1910 when Manville Heights Addition was platted by Iowa City contractor and developer, Bert E. Manville, after he purchased 80 acres from the Hutchinson family; house construction began the same year. Other subdivisions in place by 1917 included Manville Addition, Chautauqua Heights, Black Springs, and Black’s Second with the Folsom farm immediately north of U.S. Highway 6 added as the Capital View Subdivision in 1938.

During the three decades leading up to World War II, Manville Heights developed as one of Iowa City’s true streetcar and early automobile suburbs. The Manville streetcar line was extended to City Park and Heights by 1915. Layout of Manville Heights’s additions deviated somewhat from the grid system of east side neighborhoods. The Manville Addition also included oversized lots

with multi-acre, block-size dimensions that were later divided into the irregular parcels found between Woolf and Magowan avenues. The Clara Louise Kellogg School on Woolf Avenue (nonextant; now the site of the VA Hospital) opened in 1917 and Lincoln Elementary School opened in 1926 to further serve the growing neighborhood's young families.

The building of Manville Heights' houses paralleled growth in the central business district, the University's West Campus, and new hospital complex during this period. Early Manville Heights homebuyers were affiliated with the University including professors, University of Iowa Hospital physicians, and employees. Other residents included local merchants, professionals, and members of the B.E. Manville family. Manville Heights houses were constructed in the popular designs and forms of the day—Georgian Revival, Mission, Craftsman, Tudor Revival, and simplified Prairie School styles and vernacular forms such as the American-Four Squares, Bungalows, and Period Cottages. When small house designs were introduced in the late 1920s and 1930s, Cape Cod cottages and Tudor Revival cottages were added. By the early 1960s, multi-lot parcels saw sale of separate lots and construction of Ranch Style and Neo-Colonial Style homes.

Today, the Manville Heights neighborhood retains much of its suburban quality, with the added benefit of good access to the sprawling West Campus via Woolf Avenue and a separate pedestrian walkway over Highway 6. Several fraternity houses mark the eastern edge of the Heights along Riverside Drive while more contemporary houses overlook the Iowa River bluff that delineates the western edge. Park Road extends along the north while the U.S. Highway 6 route and a steep topographic change mark the southern edge. Two individual properties in the neighborhood are listed on the National Register—the Hutchinson House (119 Park Road) and the Ned Ashton House (local historic landmark, 820 Park Road).

*Objective 1:* Complete a reconnaissance and intensive level survey of the Manville Heights Neighborhood; focus intensive level survey work on individually eligible National Register properties and on a multi-block area potentially eligible as a historic district or conservation district. Completion of the survey should be a high priority for the HPC given the fact that individuals with connections to early development in the area are available to pass along recollections and historical information. Interest in completion of a survey by residents was the highest of any neighborhood consulted during neighborhood meetings. Encourage survey sponsorship (volunteers and financing) by the Manville Heights Neighborhood Association.

*Objective 2:* If a historic district is determined eligible for the National Register, a nomination should be prepared and submitted for listing.

*Objective 3:* Encourage local designation of a Manville Heights historic or conservation district. Follow the *District Adoption Steps* listed above on page 63.

*Objective 4:* Support the continued use of the 1840s-era Hutchinson House (119 Park Road) as the headquarters for the University of Iowa Press or another University reuse compatible with the building's historic size and scale. As a part of any reuse, retain the open space surrounding the Hutchinson House. Consider undertaking a historic archaeology investigation at the site under the direction of the University's Department of Anthropology with field studies similar to those done at Plum Grove or under the direction of the State Archeologist's Office.

*Objective 5:* Pursue the *Communication and Neighborhood Stabilization Steps* on page 64.

**Southwest Planning District:**

**26. Melrose Historic District**

The Melrose Historic District includes a multi-block neighborhood along and south of Melrose Avenue and the University of Iowa hospital complex and athletic buildings. Through the years the people who researched, healed, coached, taught, and worked north of Melrose Avenue, frequently lived south of Melrose. The Melrose Historic District developed in several waves beginning in the late 19th century and extending through the post-World War II period. Its greatest growth was associated with the establishment of the University's General Hospital and erection of the buildings for the University's athletic programs during the late 1920s. Staff and faculty for these facilities needed housing, and the mixture of small and large lots available in new additions platted south of Melrose Avenue provided ideal home sites.



*Melrose Historic District, above: Irving and Martha Weber House, 421 Melrose Court; below: 400 block Melrose Court.*



Architecturally, the neighborhood retains an important collection of diverse, architecturally significant houses and small cottages. A handful pre-World War I residences along Melrose Avenue, a state road laid out in 1853 to connect Iowa City to points west, convey the history of the area before the West Side Campus was established. The balance of the neighborhood contains well-preserved examples of Craftsman Style bungalows, Georgian and Colonial Revival Style houses, and English Period Cottages located along narrow streets and picturesque drives.

Like other neighborhoods abutting the University campus, the buildings of the Melrose Historic District are impacted by University operations and hospital growth. The strategies suggested below view this juxtaposition as a positive factor and suggest several means for sustaining the economic vitality of the area's historic buildings.

- Objective 1:* Retain designation of Melrose Historic District as a National Register district. Regularly provide information to new property owners about the responsibilities and advantages of owning property in a National Register historic district.
- Objective 2:* In the near term, focus neighborhood historic preservation efforts on an education program to develop a clear understanding of what a local ordinance historic district means for a designated area. Address FAQs, including questions about “urban myths” and genuine concerns. Establish a “user-friendly” technical assistance effort for property owners by implementing the *Technical Assistance Steps* on page 65.
- Objective 3:* In the mid term (within two years), encourage designation of the Melrose Historic District as a local historic district. Following up on Objective 2, follow the *District Adoption Steps* listed above on page 63.
- Objective 4:* If the neighborhood becomes a locally designated historic district, adopt a financial incentive program to support buildings undergoing the design review process (see *Goal 3: Economic Incentives, Objective 4*) that could be extended to district properties. See *Home Ownership Incentive Program* on page 65.
- Objective 5:* Consider establishing a regular event (annually or bi-annually) such as an Irving Weber neighborhood walking tour in conjunction with Irving Weber Days or a “front porch festival” in order to invite neighbors and Iowa City residents to share the history of the Melrose Historic District. Such an event will help establish the importance of the district's history in the community and for University planners.
- Objective 6:* Where possible, retain expansive settings of older residences located along Melrose Avenue including wide and deep lot dimensions, deep set backs and landscaping.
- Objective 7:* Because of the proximity of major activity nodes for the University (hospitals and sports venues), the Melrose Historic District is at greater risk than most campus-adjointing residential neighborhoods. It also has a high potential for serving as a vital partner for the University by stabilizing the southern edge of its campus, providing a source of affordable, well-preserved housing, and telling the story of the University Hospitals and some of the University's most prominent sports figures. To reduce the risk for the Melrose Historic District, improved communication and continued joint planning needs to take place. Joint issues to be addressed include: a) affirming Melrose Avenue as the long-term boundary between the Melrose Historic District and the south edge of the University campus; b) developing joint efforts to sustain the availability of well-maintained, owner-occupied housing in the Melrose Historic District; and c) improving the visual relationship between historic residences and parking areas.

*Objective 8:* Spotlight the neighborhood’s history for University and Hospital visitors by developing a walking tour, beginning at the University Hospital complex, which includes Melrose Avenue’s historic residences, post-World War I residential enclaves, Brookland Park, etc. Complete the historic signage program planned by the Melrose Neighborhood Association.

*Objective 9:* The *University of Iowa 2006 Campus Master Plan* identified National Register listed properties that it owns as heritage properties that should be protected. (see Section 4.5.3 : “Protect the campus’ historic landscape and architectural resources that positively contribute to its unique identity.”) Though this policy was established for historic resources within the current campus, it should also apply to properties owned by the University but located “off-campus” in a National Register Historic District such as the Melrose Historic District. An effort should be made to engage University representatives in discussions for specific historic resources in the Melrose Historic District. University-owned properties include individual residences along Melrose Court and Melrose Avenue currently used as day-care or housing, the Huston House (223 Lucon Drive) used as a student cultural center, and the Caywood Apartment Building/Melrose Apartments (741 Melrose Avenue).

For example, a comprehensive reuse study should be undertaken for the Caywood Apartment Building in order to investigate historic preservation strategies that could make it a vital part of the University campus. A task force including representatives of the Melrose Historic District could assist the University in investigating potential use of federal investment tax credits to finance rehabilitation through the sale of the credits to for-profit entities. Planning assistance from a group of specialized architects and planners experienced in academic campus reuse issues and federal historic tax credits should be sought. Reuse options such as the sale of condominium residential units to Hawkeye football supporters could be investigated. A planning effort for the Caywood Apartment Building could serve as a model for future efforts to plan for historic resources in the Melrose Historic District with both a University and neighborhood/community interest.

*Objective 10:* Pursue the *Communication and Neighborhood Stabilization Steps* on page 64.

### **Other Planning Districts:**

Scattered historic properties survive in other parts of the community. In some instances, farmsteads have been incorporated into modern residential subdivisions. A solitary farmhouse or barn may survive as testimony to a property’s earlier use. “Rose Hill,” the Irish family residence at 1415 E. Davenport Street is one such example. Now located along a street of late 20th century homes near Hickory Hill Park, the 1849 brick house survives as an example of the Greek Revival Style that typified early Iowa City housing. The house was listed on the National Register by its owner in 1992 and was designated a local landmark in 1996. The two measures combine good private and public preservation efforts.

In other cases, scattered historic properties retain their early open-space settings, agricultural use, or large acreage sites. The James McCollister Farmstead located at 2460 S. Gilbert Street was among the first properties locally listed on the National Register when its owner nominated it in 1976. It was designated a local landmark in 1996. The property's 1864 brick house survives as an excellent example of the Italianate Style, its substantial size providing evidence of the early prosperity of Johnson County's farmers. The McCollister Farmstead is also an example of a property that is in a location and setting that is likely to see development pressure in the future. Together, National Register listing and local landmark designation will provide a level of protection intended to guide changes to the McCollister Farmstead property in the future.

*Objective 1:* Provisions of the City's Sensitive Areas Ordinance should be retained and administered to protect scattered historic resources, especially archeological resources, in largely undeveloped areas of the Northeast, Southeast, South, South Central and North Corridor Planning Districts.

*Objective 2:* *Completion of a systematic reconnaissance level survey of outlying areas of Iowa City should be undertaken.* Farmsteads, residences, former schools, churches, commercial buildings, industrial properties, transportation resources such as bridges and early roadways, and other historic property types should be evaluated in advance of development taking place.

*Objective 3:* When appropriate, the HPC should encourage owners to complete National Register of Historic Places nominations and local landmark designation. Together, these measures will provide a minimal level of protection for important historic resources in outlying areas of the community.

**Summary:** A summary is provided in the table on the following page of many, but not all, of the neighborhood strategies suggested for the 26 neighborhoods discussed under Goal 10. Substantially completed objectives are represented by the solid • symbol and future objectives shown with an open ◦ symbol. Objectives with the highest level of importance are designated as “A” priority and should be initiated in the next two years. “B” priority objectives are of moderate high importance and can be deferred for two to five years. “C” priority objectives are of lesser importance or require other activities to be completed before they are initiated. They can be delayed from in five to eight years. “D” priority objectives are long-term initiatives to be undertaken in eight to ten years.

Summary of Common Neighborhood Strategies													<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Completed Objectives <input type="checkbox"/> Future Objectives		HD – Historic District (local) CD – Conservation District (local) HD-NR – Historic District (Nat'l Register only)	
High to Low Priority: A to D																
Neighborhood	Survey			District Adoption Steps			Communication & Neighborhood Stabilization Steps			Technical Assistance Steps		Home Ownership Incentive Program	Volunteers in Special HP Survey/Proj./Event	University related Strategy		
	Recon.	Intensive	Priority	HD or CD	NR-HD	Priority	Heritage Education	District Forum	Parking, Upkeep, & Complaints	Education/ Training	Newsletter-History Corner					
<i>Downtown Planning District:</i>																
1. Downtown	•	•		○	○	B	○ B	○ B		○ B	○ B		○			
2. South Side	○	○	A					○ B	○ C				○			
<i>Central Planning District:</i>																
3. Brown Street HD	•	•		•	•		○ A	○ A	○ A	○ B	•○ A	○ B	•○	○		
4. Clark Street CD	•	•		•	○	C	○ A	○ A	○ C		•○ A	○ B	•○			
5. College Green HD	•	•		•	•		○ A	○ A	○ B		○ A	○ B	○			
6. College Hill CD	•	•		•	•		○ A	○ A	○ B	○ B	○ A	○ A	○			
7. East College Street HD	•	•		•	•		○ A	○ A	○ B		•○ A	○ B	○			
8. Dearborn Street CD	•	•		•			○ A	○ A	○ C		•○ A	○ B	•○			
9. Dubuque Street Corridor	•	•		○			○ B	○ A	○ C	○ B	○ C	○ C	○	○ B		
10. Gilbert-Linn Street HD-NR	•	•		•	○	B	○ A	○ A	○ A	○ B	•○ A	○ B	•○	○ C		
11. Goosetown	•	•		○	○	A	○ A	○ A	○ B	○ B	•○ A	○ A	•○			
12. Governor-Lucas St. CD	•	•		•			○ A	○ A	○ C		•○ A	○ A	○			
13. Jefferson Street HD-NR	•	•		•	○	B	○ A	○ A	○ C	○ B	•○ A	○ C	○	○ A		
14. Longfellow HD	•	•		•	•		○ A	○ A	○ C	○ B	•○ A	○ B	•○			
15. Muscatine Avenue Moffitt Cottages HD (in Longfellow)	•	•		•	•											
16. Oak Grove - Kirkwood Avenue Corridor	○	○	B	○	○	C	○ B	○ B	○ C		○ B	○ C	○			
17. Lucas Farms - Ginter, Friendly, Highland, Pickard, & Yewell Streets	○	○	B	○	○	C	○ B	○ B	○ C	○ B	○ B	○ B	○			
18. Morningside-City High	○	○	C	○	○	D	○ C	○ B	○ C	○ B	○ C	○ B	○			
19. Rochester Avenue	○	○	C				○ C	○ B	○ C	○ B	○ C	○ C	○			
20. Summit Street HD	•	•		•	•		○ A	○ A	○ C	○ B	•○ A	○ C	○			
21. Woodlawn HD	•	•		•	•		○ A	○ A	○ C	○ B	○ A	○ C	○			
<i>North Planning District:</i>																
22. North Dubuque Street/ Montgomery-Butler House				○	○	A	○ B									
23. Tank Town	•	○	D				○ B	○ B	○ B	○ B	○ C	○ B	○			
24. Dubuque Road	•	○	D				○ C	○ C	○ D	○ B	○ D	○ D	○			
<i>Northwest Planning District:</i>																
25. Manville Heights	○	○	A	○	○	B	○ B	○ A	○ C	○ B	○ B	○ C	○	○ B		
<i>Southwest Planning District:</i>																
26. Melrose HD-NR	•	•		•	○	A	○ A	○ A	○ B	○ B	•○ A	○ B	•○	○ A		
<i>Other Planning Districts</i>																
	○	○	D				○ C	○ C	○ D	○ D	○ D					

## ***VI. Model for Evaluating Economic Impacts of Historic Preservation***

As part of the update of the 1992 *Historic Preservation Plan*, Iowa City has requested information on methodologies to examine the economic benefits of historic preservation. While the cultural, social, and aesthetic benefits of historic preservation are well known, the economic benefits have been less well documented and publicized. In recent years, a growing body of studies has also addressed the economic impacts of preservation. Through this work, researchers have documented widespread economic activity generated by historic preservation – activity that is often triggered with modest public investments and incentives.

This growing body of scholarship is making the case for preservation as a vital and cost-effective economic development tool. In the past, some have considered preservation activities to be luxuries, undertaken only in a thriving economy – and cut when leaner times forced difficult budget choices. Yet these new studies demonstrate that preservation can be a powerful economic engine. Public preservation incentives, such as federal and state tax credit programs, as well as local incentives such as those described in Appendix K and recommended under Goal 3, *Objective 2* above, can be used to leverage significant amounts of private capital, create local jobs, and stimulate a wide range of economic activity.

A recent study published by the Brookings Institution reviewed more than 300 studies that have evaluated some aspect of the economic impacts of preservation. While the study acknowledges that methodologies vary and that improvements are needed to better gauge these impacts, overall, the results of the various studies are consistent in their findings:

Historic preservation is typically judged to be a sound investment. By most accounts, it is more efficient and profitable to preserve a historic building than to construct a new one. Designating a landmark or district as historical typically maintains if not boosts the value of the property, and as an economic development tool, historic preservation has proved its worth. Nearly any way the effects are measured, be they direct or indirect, historic preservation tends to yield significant benefits to the economy.<sup>18</sup>

Comments during our Iowa City interviews regularly suggested that, while those involved in the field of preservation were aware of these positive economic impacts, the message was not reaching the general public. In addition, there were concerns that, even if positive economic benefits could be shown in other locations, they may not be valid in Iowa City. Therefore, a study of the economic impacts of preservation in Iowa City could be extremely valuable and is recommended as an important first step under Goal 3, *Objective 1*.

The discussion below outlines a methodology for measuring the economic impact of preservation in three key areas: rehabilitation, property values, and heritage tourism. In each case, the methodology is based on successful previous studies. In each case, the methodology proposed is conservative in that it focuses on only a few, selected economic activities, generally those that are most easily tracked through established preservation programs. Less accessible, yet still

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<sup>18</sup>Randall Mason, “Economics and Historic Preservation: A Guide and Review of the Literature,” (Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program), September 2005.

economically significant, data collection areas (such as lodging taxes in historic hotels, or historic rehabilitations that have not utilized the main public incentives) would yield additional valuable insights, but would be more difficult and costly to complete. Also, by focusing solely on dollars generated, we have not addressed preservation activity that cannot be easily quantified, such as the work of the dedicated volunteers in the community.

## **A. Rehabilitation**

Money spent on the acquisition and rehabilitation of historic properties is the most obvious economic impact of preservation activities. Studies of this impact generally focus on projects that take advantage of federal or state tax credits or other funding mechanisms, as these programs require documentation of expenses in a manner that is difficult to obtain for other similar projects. In Iowa City, this could include an analysis of projects taking advantage of federal tax credits, state tax credits, and any grant programs available.

Any economic activity, such as the rehabilitation of historic properties, generates an original, or “direct” impact, which consists of the actual purchases of labor and materials for the project. In addition to these direct impacts, any economic activity creates “indirect” impacts. The indirect impact is the purchase of goods and services by the various industries that produce the items for the original direct activity. For example, a contractor may purchase paint for a rehabilitation project. The contractor may also use some of his earnings to buy groceries at a local store. The purchase of the paint is a direct impact, but the purchase made by the paint factory to produce the paint, and the purchase of groceries, are the indirect impacts. Economic multipliers can be used to calculate these indirect impacts.

The combined direct and indirect costs associated with these projects can also be translated into other metrics, such as jobs created, total household earnings, and tax revenues. Those various metrics can also be compared to other industries to establish how preservation rates as an economic activity. For example, in a study of the economic impacts statewide in Colorado, rehabilitation was found to create 32 jobs per \$1 million of direct impact, more than computer and data processing, trucking, banking services, and manufacturing semiconductors.

A general methodology for the analysis of Federal Investment Tax Credit (ITC) projects follows:

### *1. Data Gathering*

For ITC projects, administration responsibility is shared between the NPS and the Iowa State Historic Preservation Office. Thus, there are essentially two sets of records—NPS and SHPO—that track the same projects. Records for all ITC projects in Iowa City should be obtained for as long a period as possible, preferably in electronic format. It is likely that only hard copy data is available for at least some years. This data should be compiled into a computerized database, and cross-checked against one another for accuracy. As an additional data source, we suggest examining the NPS-compiled annual statistical report and analysis of the federal tax credit, which provides an annual total dollar amount and the number of approved projects dating back to 1988 should also be consulted. It is likely that some discrepancies will occur between these various data sources. Resolving these inconsistencies will demand judgments about the reliability and accuracy of the various sources.

Once data is finalized, the total direct value of rehabilitation efforts should be calculated both annually and cumulatively.

## 2. *Indirect Impacts*

Indirect impacts typically are calculated using the RIMS II multipliers. RIMS II multipliers estimate the amount of household economic activities among employees either directly or indirectly involved with the economic impact. Household economic activities generally reflect local consumer purchases and general household expenditures. Employees are counted by job-years – full time employment for one person for one year – and many individuals may fill a job year. For example, the worker in the lumber factory who produced the porch beams is represented here, along with the medical services purchased by the contractor who oversaw the installation of the beams. Of course, the beams may be only one small component of the total rehabilitation project; the multipliers are intended to approximate the total impact of the entire rehabilitation project.

RIMS II multipliers are available for a variety of industries and at a variety of regions. The primary multiplier that should be considered in a study of this type is “other maintenance and repair” (industry number 12.0300). Additional multipliers are available to compare rehabilitation with new residential and commercial construction (11.0101, 11.0102, and 11.0800).

RIMS II multipliers have been shown to be statistically similar to survey-based input-output tables and are updated regularly to include the most recent information on area wage and salary and personal income data. RIMS II data is also readily available and considered a standard tool in economic impact studies of all kinds. An important note: These multipliers should not be used at scales different than those for which they were originally developed. For example, a statewide multiplier should only be used on statewide data, not on data particular to a county or city. A specific multiplier may need to be developed (based on the statewide RIMS II methodology) if the city wishes to examine Iowa City data in isolation from other statewide data. Also, multipliers represent an average and are not indicative of the specific dollar impact of a particular firm or project. RIMS II multipliers are calculated by historical economic relationships based on national industry data from 1992 and 1997. Because there have been some changes in these relationships over time, there is bound to be some slight error in the RIMS II multipliers, but generally not greater than 10 percent, and probably less than that.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>“Regional Multipliers from the Regional Input-Output Modeling System (RIMS II): A Brief Description,” US Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis; available online at [www.bea.doc.gov/bea/regional/rims/brfdesc.html](http://www.bea.doc.gov/bea/regional/rims/brfdesc.html); accessed 9/21/06.

## B. Property Values

In addition to the community-wide impacts of preservation activities on the local economy, preservation also pays dividends to the owners of historic properties. The most obvious benefit is in the generally positive impact on property values of designated properties.

Critics of preservation often claim that the regulatory requirements associated with designated historic properties have a negative impact on property values. Studies nationwide have repeatedly demonstrated, however, that property values in designated areas generally increase at the same level or faster than for similar properties that are not designated. This conclusion is similar for residential and commercial areas nationwide.



*Federal tax credits aided the restoration of Union Brewery at Linn and Market Streets.*

The property values debate – “What effect does local historic district designation truly have on property values?” – is a complex issue that involves multiple variables that change widely depending on each area studied. Analysis of the impacts of historic designation on property values in Iowa City should ideally look at four indications that express several different aspects of value over time: rate of appreciation, value comparison, rate of value change, and sale price.

- Total Appreciation Since Designation, or, how have properties in locally designated districts increased in value compared to the surrounding area?
- Value Comparison and Rate of Value Change, or how much “house” do you get for your money in a local historic district versus the surrounding area?
- Median Sales Price, or how do homes sales in the historic district relate to sales in the nearby area?

In addition, because of the prominent role that conservation districts play in Iowa City’s preservation program, looking at these same questions separately for conservation districts, and making comparisons between historic districts and conservation districts where possible, would add additional value to the study.

Key challenges in performing this type of analysis include: identifying appropriate and reliable data sources; selecting case study neighborhoods for comparisons; and, isolating the impacts of historic designation from other factors that influence property values.

### C. Heritage Tourism

Another key area in which historic preservation acts as an engine for economic activity is heritage tourism. Historic areas attract visitors who provide a significant source of revenue for the local economy.

The term “heritage tourists” refers to both travelers who incorporate at least one visit to a historic site or landmark among other activities during their visit, and also to the smaller subset of visitors whose primary reason for traveling is to visit historic places. There has been considerable research conducted throughout the country on the particular characteristics of “heritage tourists” versus other pleasure tourists. As documented in studies in both North Carolina and Texas among many other states, heritage tourists tend to spend more money and stay longer on their trips than do other travelers.<sup>20</sup>

Just as with historic rehabilitation projects, the economic impacts of heritage tourism go far beyond the direct expenditures. Indirect impacts “ripple” through the local economy, as direct expenses at hotels, restaurants, and retail establishments circulate in the economy.

Data on heritage tourists is generally collected by surveys. A detailed survey of the characteristics of visitors to Iowa City would be invaluable in establishing the role of this industry in the community, as well as the impact of those visitors qualifying as heritage tourists. Key issues to be considered in such a survey include:

- Attributes of Iowa City that Attracted Tourism (e.g., natural features, shopping, events, museums, etc.)
- How Money was Spent During Visits (e.g., lodging, transportation, entertainment, etc.)
- Characteristics of Heritage Tourists:
  - Length of Visit
  - Type of Lodging
  - Sightseeing Activities
  - Entertainment Activities
  - Sports and Recreation Activities
  - Household Income
  - Age
  - Residence Location

This survey information should be supplemented with data from local historic sites, including regional sites such as the Amana colonies that would likely provide economic activity in Iowa City.

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<sup>20</sup>Donavan Rypkema, *The Impact of Historic Preservation on the North Carolina Economy*, (Raleigh: Preservation North Carolina), 1997; and The Center for Urban Policy Research. *Historic Preservation Work for the Texas Economy*. (Austin: Texas Historical Commission), 1999.

## D. Selected City and Community Level Economic Impact Reports

Other communities have completed similar economic impact studies. A bibliography of some of these studies that may provide additional assistance in establishing an economic impact study for Iowa City follows:

Athens-Clarke County Planning Department. *Economic Benefits of Historic Preservation in Georgia, A Study of Three Communities: Athens, Rome and Tifton*. Atlanta: Historic Preservation Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, 1996.

Avault, John, with the assistance of Jane Van Buren. *Economic and Fiscal Aspects of Historic Preservation Development in Boston*. Boston: Boston Redevelopment Authority, 1985.

Center for Business and Economic Studies, University of Georgia. *Economic Benefits from the Rehabilitation of Certified Historic Buildings in Georgia: Case Studies*. Atlanta: Georgia Department of Natural Resources; Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites Division; Historic Preservation Section, 1987.

Clarion Associates. *The Economic Benefits of Historic Preservation in Colorado*. Denver: Colorado Historical Foundation. 2005.

Chen, Kim. *The Importance of Historic Preservation in Downtown Richmond*. Richmond: Historic Richmond Foundation, 1990.

Gale, Dennis. *The Impacts of Historic District Designation in Washington, D.C.* Washington: Center for Washington Area Studies, 1991.

Hammer, Siler, George Associates. *Economic Impact of Historic District Designation: Lower Downtown, Denver*. Denver: Office of Planning and Community Development, City and County of Denver, 1990.

Pearson, Roy L., Ph.D., and Donald J. Messmer, Ph.D. (Mid-Atlantic Research, Inc., Williamsburg, Virginia). *The Economic Impact of Colonial Williamsburg* (Executive Summary only). Williamsburg: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1989.

Rypkema, Donovan and Katherine M. Wiehagen. *The Economic Benefits of Preserving Philadelphia's Past*. Philadelphia: Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia, 2000.

Youngblood, Col. George L., et. al. *The Economic Impact of Tourism, Generated by the Gettysburg National Military Park, on the Economy of Gettysburg*. N.P. 1987.

# IOWA CITY HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN 2007

## Appendices

- Appendix A: Chronological Overview of the Historic Preservation Movement in Iowa City, Iowa: 1957-2006
- Appendix B: National Register of Historic Places Iowa City Listings
- Appendix C: Public Meeting Comment Summaries (North Side/Goosetown, Longfellow, West Side, and Downtown meetings)
- Appendix D: Interview Questions; Summary of Responses; and Individuals Interviewed
- Appendix E: Outline for Update of “Iowa City Historic Resources” Multiple Property Documentation Form including Bibliography
- Appendix F: Clarion Associates Recommendation Memorandum
- Appendix G: Historic Preservation Commissioners, 1983–2006
- Appendix H: Projects Receiving Design Review, 1985–2006
- Appendix I: Historic Preservation Award Winners, 1983–2005
- Appendix J: Related Historic Preservation Websites
- Appendix K: Tax Incentives for Historic Buildings
- Appendix L: Maps of Completed and Proposed Historical and Architectural Survey Areas
- Appendix M: Map of Iowa City Subdivisions Recorded, 1924–1965
- Appendix N: FHP History

