

ATTACHMENT A

GUIDELINES FOR WOODLEY PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT

The architectural integrity and cohesiveness of the old Woodley Park section of the city of Washington is a primary consideration in the decision of the Woodley Park Community Association to file this application for designation of Old Woodley Park as an historic district. As part of that application the WPCA sets forth below guidelines with respect to those characteristics of the buildings and grounds in Old Woodley Park which were deemed of primary consideration and historic worthiness. Our purpose is to assist the Historic Preservation Review Board and the citizens of Old Woodley Park as to the characteristics deemed of importance and worthy of regulation and those not so considered.

There are several distinguishing features that characterize the Old Woodley Park residential neighborhood. These features flow from the dominant rowhouse nature of the residential streets. Woodley Park retains an integral unity for which historic district status has been requested. The architectural merit and the architectural space created by the buildings are understood from the street. Thus the directives placing emphasis on retaining the context of the street facade derives from the architectural history of the district.

Of prime concern architecturally, visually and esthetically was the delicate scale and the intricate façades of the fronts of the rowhouses that constitute the overwhelming portion of housing stock in Old Woodley Park. Similarly, the set back of the rowhouses and the open greensward in front of them running in a line visually unimpaired from the building line to the sidewalk is another significant characteristic of the neighborhood. Decorative detail, restrained in nature and color and delicate in proportion enrich the facades. Wooden windows -- round headed, palladian, and double hung -- complement fan and door lights. Front porches are common, but in the usual situation may occupy less than one-half to two-thirds of the front of the rowhouse. These are all distinguishing characteristics of the neighborhood.

There are generally no distinguishing features to those portions of the buildings that present themselves to the service alleyways. All the research and the visual inspection of the buildings lead to the conclusion that the rears of buildings and sides along alleys served purely functional purposes. There is an absence of distinguishing detail to these wall surfaces and there is no evidence that the unimproved rear yards had any particular theme comparable to the greensward appearance of the front yards.

The conclusion drawn from the research is that significant features tend to be those that are visible from the street. Those portions of buildings not so visible are of insignificant importance from a historical perspective. “Visible from the street” does not include views or line of sight from a street up an alley. Therefore, changes involving building features and masses not facing a street (e.g. facing an alley or service way) as well as changes not visible to a person on the street (e.g. changes on the roofs or designed skylights in porch roofs) should not be subject to special scrutiny during the permit review process.

Accordingly, the WPCA states its view to the Historic Preservation Review Board and the Historic Preservation Division of the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs so that they may be better guided in their regulatory actions to maintain the character of this proposed historic district. In addition, the guidelines are submitted as part of the application for the purpose of advising the Review Board, the staff and the community citizens so that they will be in a position to know more clearly what would be aspects of renovation which would not offend the historic character and integrity of the community, as well as what might transgress that integrity. It is hoped that as a result the community will be able to assist in maintaining the historic nature of the district and at the same time be able expeditiously to maintain their property.

SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

The following guidelines are noted:

1. The greensward in front of buildings is an essential characteristic of the historic district and should be kept. This covers the space between the front of the rowhouse to the sidewalk.

2. The front facades of the buildings display decorative detail which is delicate in scale and restrained in color and plasticity, including interesting patterns of brick and tile and keystones, cornices and medallions that should be maintained.

3. Many of the buildings are part of a repeating pattern of architectural detail (e.g. every second or third house) which gives an architectural rhythm to the block face. Therefore preservation of this pattern of detail is considered of historical significance to the neighborhood.

4. Front porches, usually two-thirds to one-half across the front of the house, but some extending across the whole front of the house and some covering only the entrance, are a characteristic of the neighborhood and should be retained. In this regard such porches should not be enclosed and their scale and design should be retained. The flooring on the porches are not of historic nature and no restriction should be placed on that aspect of the porch. For example, slate, tile or brick flooring on porches would be acceptable as would wood. In addition, a sun roof or a skylight for the increase of light to interiors, if not in the form of a "bubble" that extends above the roofline would be permissible as long as it does not change the effective view from the street.

5. Windows, as character defining features of buildings, should maintain the depth of set-in, profile of moldings and material of the original windows. Other windows should not be changed in such a way as to disturb the rhythmic pattern of the facades from the street.

6. Front fences and/or masonry walls projecting above ground level are permissible if they keep the flow and open space characteristic of the greensward. Any masonry wall that is more than two feet high above ground level of the greensward would be contrary to that

objective. Fencing that blocks the flow and openness would also be contrary to that standard.

7. No additions to the front of buildings should be permitted as additions in height or mass would disturb the unity of the row. By this we mean additional rooms, enclosing porches, etc. Front porches previously removed may be restored.

8. Steps and walks in the front of the building should be maintained with materials as they now are. If renovations or replacements are to occur, they should be replaced as they now are or originally were. As the original material of walks and steps may not be known the materials should be compatible with the existing pattern in the community.

9. Railings on porches, above walls and along walkways and steps in the front of the house should be compatible with neighboring houses or kept as is. There is no information available as to the original nature of such railings; hence keeping them as is or compatible with neighboring houses is the most appropriate course of action.

10. Air conditioners visible from the street in the front of the building. There should be no through-the-wall installation of air conditioners visible from the street. They should be kept in the windows or owners should be encouraged to install heatpumps, central air conditioning, etc. with outside installation requirements placed unobtrusively, and preferably not in the front of the building. This would only apply to above grade facades. Cutting through a brick wall below grade, such as with an English basement, would be permissible so long as there was no cutting through of the berm in order to provide egress to the English basement.

11. The roofs that are visible to the street should be maintained as is with existing materials or returned to the original materials.

12. There should be no change to the roofline of buildings, i.e., there should be no additions to buildings that raise the height of the roof that fronts on the street and is visible from the street. For example, the use of heatpumps or other facilities on roofs are permitted so long as they are not visible from the street. Thus, in addition, roof decks, greenhouses or other structures

would also be permitted so long as they are not visible from the street. Line of sight does not include views from a street up an alley.

13. The rear of all houses, and sides of houses to the extent they do not face on a street, are not character defining aspects of the Woodley Park historic area, nor were they treated by developers and builders as having architectural value. Accordingly, we deem these of lesser significance and feel that owners should be free to make whatever changes or renovations they desire for those parts of the facade of the building, including windows, porches, decks, fences, brickwork, air conditioners through brick or any other changes or additions. The one exception to this is where the side or rear of a building faces directly on the street. In that case it is subject to all of the above guidelines.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

In addition to these specific guidelines there are some general guidelines that are implicit in them and are set forth herein. Whenever possible, repairs should be done to existing property items. If repair is inappropriate or impossible then replacement in kind, if possible, is appropriate. When a building or items with respect to the building are non-conforming they may be renovated or replaced with like non-conforming items or replaced with replications of the original item as it appeared when the building was built. In that connection, it is preferable to encourage owners to replace existing non-conforming items with items that tend to return towards the original, even if they are not exactly like the original, rather than cause them to replace existing items that are non-conforming when faced with an “either or” choice. This recognizes that the owner could if he or she wished replace the non-conforming item with an identical non-conforming item. When remodeling a building “in toto” a non-conforming building can be kept as it is (either by repair or replacement) or changed in the direction of its original look. Where a building has been demolished replacement should be with a new building that fits generally into the neighborhood. We recognize that it may be necessary to deviate

somewhat from the original or current neighborhood characteristics because of the difficulty of getting some materials of that type. However, the scale and design found in the neighborhood should be maintained wherever possible.

The community has developed these guidelines as a means of simplifying and clarifying the permit approval process. It is the expectation of the WPCA that these guidelines provide sufficient guidance to city staff, who pass judgment on permit applications, as to community attitude. The community, while seeking to preserve the harmonious architectural character of the area, also seeks to minimize intrusiveness resulting from historic district review requirements. Therefore, the Community Association proposes that its review of permit requests be limited to the exception basis. The details of the community involvement in the review process are not yet defined and are expected to evolve with experience. The association expects that a formal review by a designated community group would occur where the permit is brought to the Association's attention by the staff of the Historic Preservation office or where a redevelopment or substantial renovation involving exterior portions of buildings is involved.