



Historic Preservation Commission

2015 Annual Report

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) was established in 1980 to promote and protect the historic resources of Lincoln. Making an annual report of past actions and future goals is among the “Powers and Duties” of the Commission.

By Section 27.57 of the Lincoln Municipal Code, the Commission ordinarily meets monthly. Four of the seven appointed, volunteer citizen members constitute a quorum of the Commission. Commission membership is to include two architects, an American historian, a landscape architect (if available), a real estate professional, and two citizens at large. By having over half the members recognized as preservation professionals, the Commission also fulfills a key requirement for the City of Lincoln to be a Certified Local Government in cooperation with the Nebraska State Historical Society and the U. S. Department of the Interior. Membership had a single change in 2015, with the resignation of Berwyn Jones and appointment of Melissa Dirr Gengler, owner of Historic Resources Group (HRG). Continuing members are architects Liz Kuhlman and Greg Munn (chair), historians Jim McKee and Jim Hewitt, realtor Tim Francis, and citizen-at-large Jim Johnson.

The Planning Department provides staff to HPC. Planners Ed Zimmer and Stacey Groshong Hageman are assisted by administrative assistant Amy Huffman. The Commission met for nine regular meetings in 2015, plus two joint meetings with Urban Design Committee.

The Commission reviews applications for landmark designations and special permits for historic preservation, making recommendations to the Planning Commission and City Council. As the preservation board of a Certified Local Government, the Commission also is the first group to review and make recommendations on National Register nominations of Lincoln properties. The Commission reviews proposed changes to designated landmarks or properties in landmark districts, such as Haymarket. The on-going outreach efforts of the Planning Department in the area of historic preservation also fulfill a prescribed “Power and Duty” of the HPC.

Certification Reviews

The Commission considered a diverse assortment of issues on its monthly agendas. Haymarket projects continued to dominate the reviews for certificates of appropriateness, a pattern typical of HPC’s activities since its early years, due to the steady level of redevelopment and commercial activity in the former wholesale and railroad district. However, the very busy pace of 2014 diminished, with less turn-over among businesses, resulting in few requests for signs.

The most noteworthy Haymarket project was the commencement of Hargreaves/Schwarz Building's redevelopment at 8th and O streets from warehouse use into commercial and residential space. The possibility of a small grocery store occupying the ground floor retail space is a very welcome prospect.

*Progress photo of
Hargreaves /
"The Schwarz" ▶
March 2016*



Two possible major changes in the vicinity of O Street and Canopy Street discussed in 2014 did not advance in 2015. These were the possible replacement of the historic building at 700 O Street with a new structure and the addition of a "liner building" to the west and northwest portions of the Lumberworks Garage adjacent to Haymarket at the SE corner of O and Canopy. The "liner building" proposal for senior housing was withdrawn and the City is considering two proposals for that site adjacent to Haymarket.

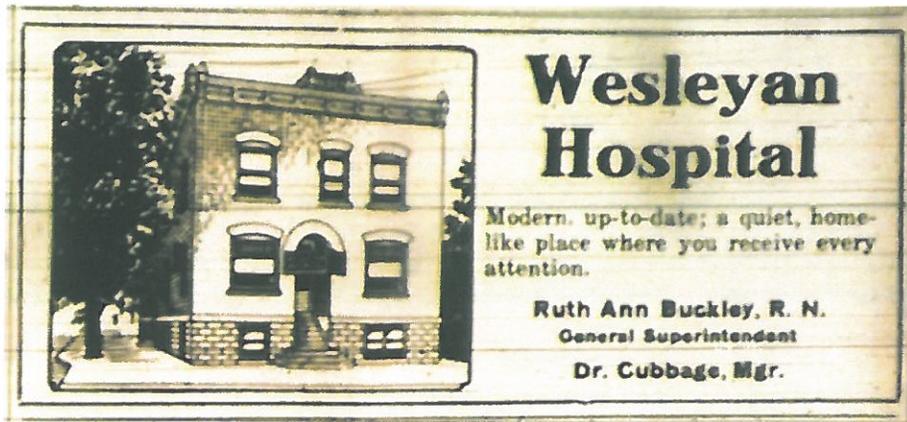
In March and April, the Commission considered applications from Bryan Medical Center for a certificate of exception on the grounds of hardship or insufficient return, regarding the landmark Sophy Teeters Building, the former nurse's residence which originally served Lincoln General Hospital. Bryan representatives presented information on the cost of rehabilitating the structure (approximately \$10 million) and the challenges presented by the very low ceiling heights on the second and third floors. A design for a memorial garden on the site was provided.

The Commission considered the information in March and April and voted to deny the requested certificate. As required under the Lincoln Municipal Code, a "certificate of allowance" permitting the demolition was issued 6 months later. The Commission indicated a preference that the site be "delisted" (the landmark overlay zoning be removed) if the building is demolished, rather than retaining review authority over a modern memorial garden/ "pocket park," however well designed.

Historic Designations

In 2015, the Commission oversaw the expansion of the roster of designated historic places in Lincoln by two landmarks and an individual National Register listing of one of those landmarks.

The dual designation involved the former Wesleyan Hospital and Nurses Training School at 48th and Madison Streets in the University Place neighborhood. Both designations were in support of its rehabilitation as housing.



◀ 1917 Advertisement

The second property designated as a Lincoln Landmark was the Rees House at 4701 Bancroft Street in the College View neighborhood. The accompanying "Special Permit for Historic Preservation" reviewed by the HPC and granted by the Planning Commission allows this Art Deco residence to be used as the medical office of a nurse practitioner. In land uses, these two 1915 adaptive reuse projects are mirror images of one another, exchanging medical and residential uses to better serve the current needs of their neighborhoods, and prompting significant investments in the maintenance of the historic properties.

Rees House ▶



Another landmark designation with accompanying special permit reviewed by the Commission in 2015 (and approved by the Planning Commission and City Council in 2016) involved a pair of brick American Foursquare homes at 1037-39 and 1045 South 13th Street, the Betz-VanAndel Houses. Since this designation was not completed until 2016, it will be more fully reported in an upcoming annual report.

Redevelopment Reviews

The Historic Preservation Commission serves the city as a design and preservation advisor on redevelopment projects and other issues in proximity to designated landmarks or National Register properties, even when preservation certificates are not required under the zoning code. This year the Commission served this function on a half-dozen issues, including two major projects on which it met jointly with the Urban Design Committee.

A project of particular interest was the proposal by Hudl to construct a seven-story headquarters building west of Haymarket Historic District, at Canopy and P streets. The combined design boards reviewed the project in June and both groups (voting separately) recommended approval of the redevelopment project, including allowance of a height waiver. The building is now under construction.



The Commission reviewed a major proposal for redevelopment of the NRHP-listed Lincoln VA Campus and gave special attention to a proposal to construct VASH (veterans' supportive) housing on the campus. In response to the Commission's review and neighborhood input, the VASH housing was redesigned and relocated within the plan, gaining approval of Lincoln and VA groups. Progress on the overall project and the VASH housing is awaiting resolution of a master lease for the property and decisions on the location of the future Lincoln VA Clinic.



Proposed
VASH Housing

Another major advisory review conducted jointly with Urban Design Committee involves the redevelopment of the "Telegraph District" in the vicinity of 21st and N Streets. The initial building involved in the project at 401 and 333 S. 21st Street are not historic properties but the LT&T Warehouse at the northeast corner of 21st and L Streets is regarded as NRHP-eligible and the "Muny Building" (former Municipal Pool Bathhouse) is a designated landmark. That review process will be ongoing in 2016 and will involve a Master design plan for a wide area from L to O streets and Antelope Valley Parkway to Antelope Creek. The Commission is also interested in the future of the Frank Woods Pioneer Telephone Museum in the district and is providing input to the City and the developers.

Proposed
Redevelopment in
Telegraph District



A more modest proposal reviewed and recommended for approval by the Commission involved a mixed-use office and residential project on N. 63rd and Ballard streets in Havelock, adjacent to (but outside) the Havelock Avenue Landmark District. The plan provides office space at the storefront level and eight apartment units above, and is sympathetic in scale, organization, and materials to the “Main Street” buildings north and west of it, even though it does not directly share in Havelock Avenue frontage. The project was recommended for approval.

*Proposed Design
Looking Southwest*



*Proposed Design
Looking Northwest*

The Preservation Commission also received a final report on the South Haymarket Neighborhood Plan and recommended its adoption by the City Council, which was accomplished in December. The South Haymarket plan recommends land uses, circulation improvements, and enhancements in the public rights-of-way to support current projects and to foster the long-term redevelopment of South Haymarket as a vibrant mixed use area, including a variety of types of residences.

Outreach

Outreach efforts in 2015 included numerous walking tours, television programs (in cooperation with Preservation Association of Lincoln and Nebraska State Historical Society), and illustrated talks to groups from 3rd graders to senior citizens. Ed Zimmer is an active contributor to the Historical Society’s website “Place Makers of Nebraska: The Architects” (co-editing with project leader David Murphy and Lynn Myers of Omaha), which is growing into a rich resource on Nebraska’s built environment. For more information on Nebraska architects, visit the website at: [http://www.e-nebraskahistory.org/index.php?title=Place Makers of Nebraska: The Architects](http://www.e-nebraskahistory.org/index.php?title=Place_Makers_of_Nebraska:_The_Architects)

Architects with significant connections to Lincoln who are already well-represented on that site include James Bellangee, George Berlinghof (and Berlinghof & Grant, and Berlinghof & Davis), E. L. Davis, F. W. Fitzpatrick, Paul V. Hyland (and Hyland & Green, and Hyland with J. G. McArthur), Artemas Roberts, H. E. Wagner, John K. Winchell, and A. W. Woods (and Robert & Woods, Woods & Cordner, and Woods & Anderson).

Grant Support

Lincoln's historic preservation program has benefited by a formal partnership with the State Historic Preservation Office in the Nebraska State Historical Society since the 1980s. Lincoln was designated as one of Nebraska's first "Certified Local Governments" (CLG) in 1984, establishing the program's standing within the federal/state/local historic preservation structure outlined in the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. As a CLG, Lincoln is eligible to apply for annual support from the Historic Preservation Fund of the U. S. Dept. of the Interior and has received such support annually since the 1980s, typically totalling about \$25,000 annually. These funds have helped support broadcasts on 5CityTV, graduate interns (usually UNL Community & Regional Planning students), and other expenses, as well as the Planning Dept.'s staff costs. These grants require a 60/40 match, which has been met in-kind through Planning Dept. staff time.

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