



**EL PASO HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION MINUTES  
AUGUST 9, 2010  
4:00 P.M.**

The El Paso Historic Landmark Commission held a public hearing in Council Chambers, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, City Hall Building, August 9, 2010, 4:00 p.m., with the following members present:

**Commission Members Present:**

Joe Riccillo, Chair  
Hugo Gardea, Vice-Chair  
Ricardo D. Gonzalez  
Randy Brock  
Ernesto Villanueva, Jr.

**Others Present:**

Tony De La Cruz, Planner  
Cynthia Osborn, Assistant City Attorney

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Chair Riccillo called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

**AGENDA**

**I. CALL TO THE PUBLIC – PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was none.

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Chair Riccillo asked Staff if there were any changes to the agenda.

Mr. De La Cruz responded no changes, the agenda stands as presented.

**MOTION:**

Motion made by Commissioner Gardea, seconded by Chair Riccillo and unanimously carried **TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS IT STANDS.**

No further discussion from the Commissioners. The vote was taken.

**AYES:** Commissioners Brock, Gonzalez, Gardea and Villanueva, Jr.

**NAYS:** N/A

Motion passed. (4-0)

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**WELCOME**

At this time, Chair Riccillo welcomed newly appointed Commissioner Ernesto Villanueva, Jr. Commissioner Ernesto Villanueva, Jr. was appointed July 27, 2010, by Representative Steve Ortega, District 7.

Commissioner Villanueva, Jr. stated he was honored to be a member of the Historic Landmark Commission.

## II. REGULAR AGENDA – DISCUSSION AND ACTION

1. Addresses of property HLC Commissioners have requested that HLC staff review or investigate and provide a report to the HLC. If no addresses are submitted in advance and listed under this agenda item, Commissioners may announce such addresses under this agenda item. Discussion on property announced at this meeting will take place during the next regularly scheduled meeting. August 9, 2010 deadline for HLC members to request agenda items to be scheduled for the August 23, 2010 meeting. August 23, 2010 deadline for HLC members to request agenda items to be scheduled for the September 13, 2010 meeting.

**A. Magoffin Villas at 915, 917, 1001 Magoffin Avenue and 1000, 1008, 1010 Myrtle Avenue**

Mr. De La Cruz explained CF Jordan was selected as the contractor for the project and building permits have been pulled. As of today, Mr. De La Cruz noted, it did not appear that any groundbreaking had occurred.

**B. Alamo Elementary School at 500 South Hills Street**

Mr. De La Cruz explained the In-Staff Engineer adamantly requested field verified measurements; he contacted El Paso Independent School District who supplied the requested information. At this time he has finalized the drawings, the In-Staff Engineer is reviewing them; in the interim, Mr. De La Cruz will submit the Historic Overlay Rezoning Application for City Council approval.

**C. 906 North Mesa Street**

As of this time, letters mailed to the property owner of record (per Central Appraisal District) regarding possibly designating the property historic have yielded no response. Code Enforcement Staff have also been unable to contact the property owner of record. The property is currently open and vacant.

Chair Riccillo thought he saw a "For Sale" on the property. Should he see the "For Sale" sign, he would notify Mr. De La Cruz.

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### HLC Staff Reports

**2. A. Design Guidelines regarding Manhattan Heights and Old San Francisco Historic Districts**

Mr. De La Cruz requested Commissioners review the draft Manhattan Heights Design Guidelines and forward any comments/additions/revisions as soon as possible.

- B. Discussion and action regarding the definition of "compatible material", the use of compatible materials and sleeper porches, windows and the use of synthetic material and stamped concrete in historic districts.**

Mr. De La Cruz explained that:

1. The President of the Manhattan Heights Neighborhood Association had requested the design guideline language be revised to include the use of synthetic materials, specifically regarding windows.
2. At a prior HLC meeting, Vice-Chair Gardea had stated, in some cases, stamped concrete would be appropriate.
3. Previously, Commissioner Booher had opined the use of substitute materials was inappropriate.

Mr. De La Cruz gave a PowerPoint presentation regarding Compatible Materials

Compatible Materials

Mr. De La Cruz stated Staff felt it would be beneficial if Commissioners would discuss/determine/define compatible materials and the use of alternative materials within the historic districts. Public hearings will be held to receive comments from members of the public. Furthermore, Mr. De La Cruz explained, windows are typically approved via Administrative Review. Administrative Review Design Guidelines state *material(s) should not be an ~~determining factor, when approving replacement windows that will maintain the same character and look as the original.~~*

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Chair Riccillo explained State and other agencies have also requested Commissioners define “compatible material(s)”. He asked Commissioners, when defining “compatible materials”; are we talking about “architectural design” or “building materials”.

Vice-Chair Gardea felt each case should be considered individually. He emphasized horizontal sliding windows are not compatible with double-hung windows. His issue with compatibility is *does the replacement window match the configuration of the historic window.* Configuration being six and six or one and one; i.e., six panes on top, six panes on the bottom, the top sash having one pane, the bottom sash having one pane. He pointed out Commissioners prefer repair over replacement. He is not opposed to synthetic windows; however, the issue of stucco versus siding is more complex.

Commissioner Gonzalez clarified when discussing materials, Commissioners are referring to material(s) that match the building’s architectural design/style. If the material matches the architectural style, if it continues the same style that was established when it was built, that would be appropriate.

Chair Riccillo wondered should “compatible materials” be defined as “compatible with the architectural design of the building”. He would like to establish some kind of consistency for future Commissions. He stated, in the Sunset Heights Historic District, previous and current Commissions have approved stucco finishes for structures that are architecturally appropriate.

Commissioner Gonzalez explained unfortunately previous Commissions justified approving stucco finishes by looking at other structures with stucco that never should have been authorized.

Commissioner Villanueva, Jr. stated he is a resident of Sunset Heights and knows first hand what Commissioners are referring to; however, one of the characteristics of historic neighborhoods is that they are not monotonous. You have different styled homes next door to each other. For example, you have a Queen Anne styled home next door to a Four Square next to an Arts ‘n Crafts style home. When historic neighborhoods were built the whole idea was ‘diversity’ by approving stucco because the neighbor has stucco would be taking away from the diversity that established the historic district initially.

Vice-Chair Gardea reminded Commissioners that each historic district has a “period of significance”. A period of significance is the time when the historic district achieved its architectural significance, when the historic district peaked. Architectural significance can encompass a wide range of years, for example, from the 19<sup>th</sup> century through the 1950’s. If a building retains the integrity of its original construction and that range of significance is 50 or 60 years, then the structure would be considered a contributing structure to that district. Any changes to the structure could generally incorporate changes from its original construction to the end of that period of significance. *He reiterated each case should be considered individually, per historic district.*

Mr. De La Cruz explained the guidelines state new additions should be compatible; however, that language is very broad. For example, when an applicant questions "what is compatible" he will suggest that the applicant walk the neighborhood to get a feel of the neighborhood, see the different styles of architecture and apply that knowledge to whatever it is they are requesting. Additionally, he suggests the applicant design the proposed addition, or infill development, that might reflect different characteristics of a specific architectural style, but not necessarily replicating a 1920's bungalow, for example.

Preserving historic character

Mr. De La Cruz commented on the following PowerPoint bullet points:

- New additions should not damage or destroy significant materials and character or recreate a false appearance to the structure
- "For social or economic reason, secondary façades were comprised of secondary materials"

In conclusion, Mr. De La Cruz stated, perhaps a vinyl clad addition that maintains a particular look within the neighborhood, approved through the correct process, would not necessary be inappropriate.

Protecting historical significance

Mr. De La Cruz commented on the following PowerPoint bullet points:

- Refraining from repeating historic form, materials, features and detailing; (not replicating exactly the original detailing, may create a false sense of historical appropriateness)
- Protecting visual qualities;
- Modest additions that replicate the original are discouraged;
- Discouraging maintaining the same wall plan, roof line, materials, siding lap and window type; (NPS encourages the roof line be stepped down from the original structure, in the event the addition was removed, damage to the original structure roof line would be prevented)
- Setbacks (when constructing an addition) should be moved back or forward, should not be maintained along the same plane as the original structure; to clearly delineate the footprint of original structure.

In conclusion, NPS recommends "A modern addition should be readily distinguishable from the older work; however, the new work should be harmonious with the old in scale, proportion, material and color. Such additions should be as inconspicuous as possible from the public view."

C. Update on Administrative Review Cases since last HLC meeting for the properties listed on the attachment posted with this agenda. (See Attachment "A")

Mr. De La Cruz commented on the number of reroofing cases and discussed other Administrative Review requests as listed in the attachment.

Of interest:

- A. 2630 Richmond Avenue; and  
The property has been purchased. The new property owners have submitted a copy of the original blueprints and some photographs of the structure, as originally constructed. The property owners are proposing to recreate the home as originally constructed. Mr. De La Cruz will take photos and provide Commissioners an update at the next meeting.
- B. 1100 Los Angeles (Wallace house)  
The property owners are rehabilitating the structure; however, due to the cost, are running low on funds. The property owners have discussed their dilemma with Mr. De La Cruz and are looking into grant funding opportunities. Mr. De La Cruz asked Commissioners if they might suggest or be aware of any possible grants that would assist the property owners in their endeavor.

D. Discussion and action regarding rezoning the property at 1701 N. Stanton with a Historic Overlay.

Mr. De La Cruz gave a PowerPoint presentation and noted the property is located within the (NCO) Neighborhood Conservancy Overlay. Neighborhood Conservancy Overlay Design Guidelines must be adhered to. Per his research at the El Paso Public Library and Trost & Trost construction logs provided by Mr. Trost's son, Mr. De La Cruz was unable to attribute the structure's design to Trost & Trost.

Ms. Osborn gave background information regarding the property and noted 1701 N Stanton was listed on the July 28<sup>th</sup> Building and Standards Commission agenda; however, the item was deleted due to the property owner's compliance with the order to stabilize the pergola and board and secure the structure.

Mr. De La Cruz opined, when designating a property with an Independent H-Overlay designation, the structure should qualify as a 'landmark status' either as an independent structure or within an historic district. At this time, he did not feel this particular structure would merit designation as an Independent Historic structure.

Chair Riccillo concurred with Mr. De La Cruz regarding not designating the property with an H-Overlay due to the structure not being a Trost & Trost design.

Commissioner Gonzalez would like to designate the property with an H-Overlay per *Section 20.20.050 Historic landmark designation criteria. A. Character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the city, state or the United States.* Furthermore; due to the structure's significant elevation and location, on the corner of a busy intersection Mesa Street and Schuster Avenue, the property warrants an H-Overlay designation.

Commissioner Villanueva, Jr. would like the property designated with an H-Overlay per *Section 20.20.050 Historic landmark designation criteria C. Embodiment of distinguished characteristics of an architectural type or specimen.* He felt this type of architecture, Craftsman Style, was not readily found nowadays. Commissioner Gonzalez concurred with Commissioner Villanueva, Jr.

Vice-Chair Gardea concurred with Commissioner Gonzalez in that the structure does have architectural integrity. He explained architectural integrity is not the condition of the building; it is the integrity of the building. Additionally, he questioned whether or not the structure still maintained what was originally constructed. He felt the entire Stanton/Mesa area could become an historic district.

Chair Riccillo explained he had requested Staff provide Commissioners an update regarding this particular property. He wondered if Commissioners might be overstepping their bounds in their attempts to designate properties with an H-Overlay within the Rim University Area Neighborhood Association.

If the structure was located within an historic district, Mr. De La Cruz explained, yes, the home would be classified as historically significant and a contributing structure. However, in his opinion, this structure does not meet the same criteria as the 27 Independent Historic Overlay structures such as the St. Patrick's Cathedral and the Fall and McGee Mansions.

Neighborhood Conservancy Overlay

At the next meeting, Mr. De La Cruz will present Commissioners information regarding the Neighborhood Conservancy Overlay (NCO), to include demolition do's and don'ts. Additionally, Mr. De La Cruz will provide Commissioner Gonzalez the NCO ordinance citation number.

Chair Riccillo commented on designating the Richmond property with an Independent Historic Overlay when most properties in the Rim University Neighborhood have greater historic significance. He wondered if there was language in the Neighborhood Conservancy Overlay that addressed neglect.

Commissioner Villanueva, Jr. wondered how difficult it would be to create a Neighborhood Conservancy Overlay.

Mr. De La Cruz explained the process creating a National Conservancy Overlay for Commissioners. The process could take several months.

Demolition within the NCO and Nationally Registered Historic Districts

Mr. De La Cruz explained the majority of demolition by neglect requests has been for historically designated properties.

Vice-Chair Gardea stated he would be more comfortable knowing the NCO language addressed demolition requests. For example, properties over a set number of years (50 or a designated number of years) would merit additional review. He explained usually local historic districts are created when a significant property has been demolished.

Mr. De La Cruz responded the city has two Nationally Registered Historic Districts, the Rio Grande Historic District and the Montana Historic District. Should a property owner request a demolition the city would have to grant a demolition permit. Dr. Ainsworth was working on revising the ordinance regarding demolition in either the Rio Grande or Montana Historic Districts whereas significant properties, over 50 years old, would require additional review.

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Commissioner Gonzalez explained the Rim-University Area Neighborhood Association did not want to deal with the Historic Landmark Commission; therefore, the city created the Neighborhood Conservancy Overlay guidelines/requirements.

**Development Services Department Report**

3. N/A

**Visionaries in Preservation Report**

4. VIP Manager Presentation

N/A

5. Discussion and action regarding VIP issues

Writing Design Guidelines for historic districts that do not currently have design guidelines

Mr. De La Cruz explained one of the goals of Commission/Visionaries in Preservation Plan is writing the design guidelines for historic districts that do not have design guidelines. Mr. De La Cruz felt he would be able to finalize the Manhattan Heights Design Guidelines now that "compatible materials" had been defined.

Updating existing Design Guidelines for current historic districts

Additionally, one of the goals of Commission/Visionaries in Preservation Plan is for Staff to update the existing design guidelines. After the adoption of both the Manhattan Heights and Old San Francisco Historic District Guidelines, Mr. De La Cruz would begin updating the existing design guidelines.

Heightened interest regarding purchasing Downtown buildings

Mr. De La Cruz explained he has received a number of telephone calls from members of the public requesting information regarding a number of Downtown buildings; specifically, converting the buildings into lofts and/or residential living.

Hiring a Historic Preservation Officer

Mr. De La Cruz hoped the city would be hiring a Historic Preservation Officer (HPO) soon; hiring an HPO would allow him to focus his attention on achieving the VIP goals.

6. Update on City Department VIP goals

See above.

Other Business

7. A. Discussion and action on nomination procedure for historic landmark recognition plaques.

Items 7A and 7B were discussed concurrently.

Per the ordinance language, Chair Riccillo thought September 1<sup>st</sup> was the date that the Historic Landmark Commission must nominate properties to receive an historic landmark plaque by.

Mr. De La Cruz concurred and stated; first and foremost, it was his desire that the application process be correct.

Fee – Historic Landmark Plaque Application

Mr. De La Cruz explained other municipalities had a fee attached with their application; however, if Commissioners would like to impose a fee then a rewrite of the Historic Landmark Commission ordinance language would be required.

Commissioner Gonzalez asked if Commissioners do not select a property to receive an historic landmark plaque by the deadline what happens then.

Mr. De La Cruz responded the plaques roll over to the next year.

Chair Riccillo proposed a rewrite of the ordinance language.

Mr. De La Cruz suggested the proposed ordinance language eliminate a specific date and include a processing fee.

Commissioner Gonzalez believed it would be better for Commissioners to obtain more plaques rather than rush into the process to award three plaques. He suggested looking into a program to obtain more plaques. then award the plaques as a group. Additionally, he suggested rather than charging an application fee, charge the recipient's of the award the price of the plaque, if not the entire cost, perhaps a portion.

Mr. De La Cruz explained Dr. Ainsworth had researched a manufacturer located somewhere on the East Coast.

Vice-Chair Gardea suggested purchasing the bronze plaques from W P Southwell in San Antonio; he did not think the Southwell bronze plaques were too expensive.

Per the Commissioner's suggestion to award more than three plaques, Ms. Osborn explained, per the Code, Commissioners can only award a maximum of five plaques per year. She referred to *Section 20.20.070 Historic landmark recognition* and read the following into the record "*The subcommittee may recommend not more than five structures.*" There is no language in the code that addresses fees; however, Commissioners can amend the language.

Vice-Chair Gardea referred to *Section 20.20.070 Historic landmark recognition* and commented on item 3b. *The building must have an H-overlay, be a recorded Texas Historic Landmark, or listed on the National Register of Historic Places.* He explained the language implies that if a property is on the National Register but not having a locally designated H-overlay, the property is eligible to receive a plaque. For example, property located in the Rio Grande National Register Historic District would be eligible to receive a plaque although the area has not been designated with an H-overlay. In his opinion, Vice-Chair Gardea stated, the language should be changed to ensure that plaques be awarded to properties having an local H-Overlay designation.

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Mr. De La Cruz suggested the language read "*properties listed as a contributing property in the National Register of Historic Places*". Additionally, he suggested removing the ordinance language referencing the Texas Historic Landmark.

Regarding National Register Historic Districts, Vice-Chair Gardea was concerned with recipients purchasing a plaque; yet they are not a part of an H-Overlay designation. Commissioners do not review changes to properties located in the Rio Grande Historic District.

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Commissioner Gonzalez concurred and added as part of the historic landmark recognition criteria properties should have an local H-Overlay designation.

In conclusion, Mr. De La Cruz requested Commissioners review the proposed Historic Overlay Rezoning Application and provide him with their recommendations/additions/comments at the next meeting. In the interim, he would contact the Texas Historical Commission and inquire whether or not there might be any funding opportunities for a project of this kind. At the very least, Commissioners will have established a correct procedure to award future plaques.

Historic Landmark Commission ordinance language rewrite

Commissioner Gonzalez pointed out that the application must conform to what is stated in the ordinance language. Based upon the discussion, Commissioners have suggested amending the existing code language.

For the next meeting, Ms. Osborn suggested:

1. the agenda wording as follows: "Discussion and action regarding Section 20.20.070."; unless Commissioners were finished with that discussion; and
2. Requested Commissioners bring with them their suggestions regarding how the ordinance language should be amended to include 20.20.070. A2. The HLC shall award a maximum of five plaques each calendar year.

Chair Riccillo suggested leaving out any reference regarding a fee so that in the future there would not be a need to amend the ordinance language.

**B.** Discussion and action on nomination of new member to Historic Landmark Designation subcommittee.

Chair Riccillo noted that subcommittee members had been appointed; however, due to circumstances, Commissioner Gonzalez was now the sole subcommittee member.

**C.** Approval of Historic Landmark Commission Meeting Minutes.  
July 12, 2010

Chair Riccillo asked if Commissioners had any additions/corrections/revisions. There were none.

**MOTION:**

Motion made by Chair Riccillo, seconded by Vice-Chair Gardea and unanimously carried **TO APPROVE THE JULY 12, 2010 MEETING MINUTES.**

No further discussion from the Commissioners. The vote was taken.

**AYES:** Commissioners Gardea and Brock

**NAYS:** N/A

**ABSTAIN:** Commissioners Gonzalez and Villanueva, Jr.

Motion passed. (2-0)

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No further business.

**MOTION:**

Motion made by Chair Riccillo, seconded by Vice-Chair Gardea and unanimously carried **TO ADJOURN THE HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION MEETING AT 5:44 P.M.**

No further discussion from the Commissioners. The vote was taken.

**AYES:** Commissioners Brock, Gonzalez, Gardea and Villanueva, Jr.

**NAYS:** N/A

Motion passed. (4-0)