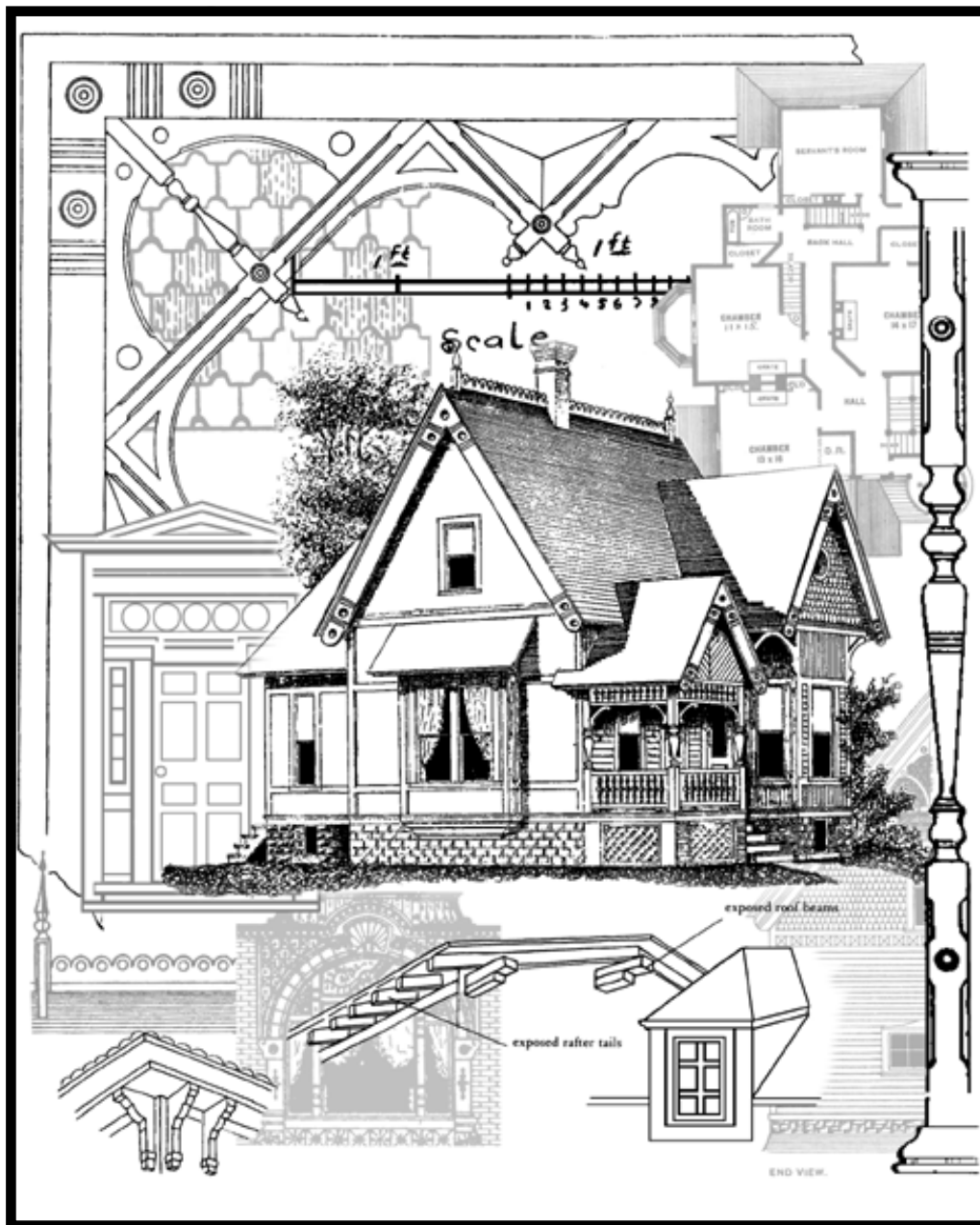


PRESERVATION WORKS

Mayor's Task Force on Historic Preservation



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Recommendations of the Mayor's Task Force on Historic Preservation

In October 1999, Knoxville's Mayor, Victor Ashe, appointed a group of citizens to study the state of historic preservation in Knoxville, and to make recommendations that could strengthen preservation efforts. The Task Force has spent six months examining programs in other cities and looking at programs at work in this city. The Task Force members:

- toured projects that are putting new vitality into historic commercial buildings and neighborhoods in downtown Knoxville and its surrounding neighborhoods;
- learned that Knoxville's administration supports preservation;
- know that Knoxville is fortunate to have a dedicated body of neighborhood groups, museum houses, entrepreneurs and volunteers who support preservation;
- learned that there is a viable nonprofit preservation organization, Knox Heritage, Inc., poised to grow and become more effective if it is adequately staffed and funded.

The work of the Task Force falls into five areas: designation, education and marketing, coordination, legislation and funding. Recommendations are grouped into those areas.



*Miller Building,
1905; 1911; 1935;
Restored by the City of Knoxville,
2000*

DESIGNATION

Preservation provides Knoxville's residents and visitors with a sense of our heritage. There are buildings and areas in Knoxville that need to be protected to preserve a window to the city's past. The presence of historic landmarks teaches us our history. These buildings have touched our lives.

Most restoration and preservation efforts are carried out by private property owners, and can be endangered if the property changes hands. Local historic zoning designation is important to guarantee that significant buildings have an enduring level of protection.

Through grants from the Tennessee Historical Commission, Knoxville's historic buildings have been surveyed and a Cultural Resources Plan has been prepared. Knoxville's buildings that are listed on or eligible for the National Register have been mapped and described. The National Register of Historic Places does not protect properties against demolition or inappropriate exterior changes. Two local designations offer protection to historic properties. A Historic Overlay (H-1) requires that the Knoxville Historic Zoning Commission review demolition permits and building permits. A Neighborhood Conservation Overlay (NC-1) also protects properties by requiring approval for demolition or new construction.



*The Doughboy Statue
and Knoxville High
School are listed on
the National Register
of Historic Places,
but are not included
in the register of H-1
properties. For their
protection, both
should have local
listing.*

Recommendations:

- The Knoxville Historic Zoning Commission should immediately begin a designation process for all eligible properties that should receive Historic Overlay (H-1) or Neighborhood Conservation Overlay (NC-1) protection.
- A voluntary designation program should be established for the year 2000. The program would waive the filing fee for individuals or districts that are eligible and wish to seek H-1 or NC-1 designation.
- Eligible properties should be nominated for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.



The W.O. Howard house at 1724 Washington Avenue has been privately restored using federal historic tax incentives. The house is a George Barber design listed in the National Register of Historic Places and in the Edgewood-Park City Historic Overlay District (H-1)

EDUCATION AND MARKETING

Preservation is important to Knoxville and to marketing efforts directed outside the community. Preservation is economic development. The revitalization of older residential neighborhoods strengthens the tax base with minimal cost in extending city services. Older commercial areas provide space for small business owners to begin and expand their enterprises.

Historic preservation should be marketed effectively, so it becomes a tool to educate Knoxville residents about the cost effectiveness of historic preservation and methods that can be used to develop preservation projects.

Recommendations:

- Knox Heritage should celebrate successes and Knoxville's history by developing a speaker's bureau. Speakers would tell of Knoxville's heri-

tage and promote the formation of private investors' groups to fund historic rehabilitation projects.

- A web page should provide updated, beneficial information to potential investors, tourists, and others.
- Information about Knoxville's endangered historic properties should be provided on the internet.
- Knox Heritage should involve the *Knoxville News-Sentinel* in developing a "Historical Corner," which would be a supplement to the real estate section. It would focus on historically significant buildings that are available for acquisition and rehabilitation.
- Knox Heritage should continue its marker program, with the goal of placing markers explaining construction dates and builders on all significant buildings.
- Maps of Knoxville's architecturally and historically significant buildings should be available.



The Camp - DeRobertis House at 1302 Luttrell has recently been sold for a single family residence. The house was undergoing restoration and had been gutted and put on stilts when the prior owner was unable to continue its restoration. Fifteen neighbors, concerned about its survival, formed a limited liability company to restore it. Federal historic tax credits are being used in restoration.

There is an unmet need in Knoxville for craftsmen who understand historic building materials and methods and have the skills to repair and rehabilitate historic buildings without destroying their historic fabric.

Preservation is tourism. Heritage tourism is one of the fastest growing types of travel in the United States today, and Tennessee ranks eighth nationally in the number of heritage travelers. Knoxville's unique resources include its association with noted Victorian-era architect George Barber, designer of many fine residences in Knoxville's first suburbs. Knoxville has an outstanding collection of Victorian commercial architecture. Knoxville is gaining recognition for its



The Southern Railroad Freight office, after years of being abandoned and derelict, was restored as corporate offices, making use of Federal tax incentives. The building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

distinctive collection of early twentieth century architecture designed by notable architects like Charles Barber. Knoxville was the home of east Tennessee's marble industry, which furnished materials for buildings such as Grand Central Station in New York City and the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. The Tennessee Valley Authority's significance in the 1930's and beyond can best be seen here. A strong music and literary heritage is part of Knoxville's past. The Battle of Fort Sanders, a significant Civil War battle, took place here.

Knoxville is a microcosm of U.S. history, with representation of the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, western settlement and the frontier, the post-civil War industrial era, Depression-era government programs and agencies, the early conservation movement and the Atomic Age. Tools should be developed to promote Knoxville's historic richness as a way to capture a large share of the heritage tourism and benefit economic development.

Recommendations:

- Preservation groups should cooperate with the Knoxville Convention and Visitors Bureau to develop a program of heritage tourism marketing that includes tours, brochures, promotional ads and other information.
- A phone line and web site should be established to provide information on existing tours and heritage related activities.
- Neighborhood organizations, merchants' associations and others should research and develop walking, biking and driving tours that focus on Knoxville history as reflected in the city's architecture.
- Knoxville Area Transit (KAT) should continue efforts to promote linkages between downtown and surrounding neighborhoods by developing self-guided tours that highlight those areas.
- Special events should be developed and expanded to highlight Knoxville's history.

ORGANIZATIONS AND COORDINATION

Preservation is community and neighborhood revitalization. Many of the best examples of preservation in Knoxville and across the country begin when property owners realize the architectural or historic significance of their property, obtain a historic designation, rehabilitate their buildings, form preservation organizations and begin to teach the rest of us. Strong organizations fuel the rehabilitation of historic buildings and promote Knoxville's history; their cooperation in sharing information is key in building a strong preservation base.

240 E. Oklahoma, in the Old North Knoxville Historic District, is being rehabilitated by Knox Heritage Inc. The vacant burned-out building had been abandoned for years, and before that was three rental units. It was acquired by the city using the Homemakers Program. Knox Heritage, with assistance from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, will restore and sell the house to a private owner.



Strong preservation-based neighborhoods have emerged in Knoxville over the past ten years. They include Mechanicsville, Old North Knoxville, Edgewood-Park City and Fourth and Gill. Knoxville is fortunate to have many other neighborhoods with historic preservation potential. All of these groups could benefit from sharing experiences and techniques with each other, and the city benefits from their activities. Knox Heritage is uniquely qualified to act as the comprehensive city-wide preservation organization.

Recommendations:

- Knox Heritage should become synonymous with preservation in Knoxville and Knox County.
- Historic neighborhoods should form a council of preservation-oriented neighborhood groups.
- Knox Heritage should provide linkages between preservation groups.
- Knoxville's city government should create a position of "preservation coordinator" to facilitate project coordination and ties between preservation organizations and city government, so that consultation takes place on projects, and ways to strengthen preservation are incorporated into city policy.

LEGISLATION

Preservation is good planning and urban design.

Neighborhoods developed before the automobile and central air conditioning are pedestrian-friendly. Sidewalks and wide front porches encourage neighbors to visit. The design of these neighborhoods provides a space for a public life that includes neighborhood awareness and activities. Historic commercial buildings, with their large shop windows and pedestrian scale, provide places for new businesses to grow, and residential or office space on upper stories. With their emphasis on visibility into and out of the storefronts, their design gives commercial areas a sense of neighborhood and human scale that is not possible in the newer "big box" stores with their surrounding sea of parking. Designers of today have focused on a fact residents of older neighborhoods and merchants in older buildings have always known: historic commercial and residential neighborhoods are very good models for new communities. The legislation to support that design, and the continued protection of older buildings, is essential.

For several years, some commercial property owners and developers have suggested the need to adopt a building code for historic buildings. Others have argued that the current building code sufficiently addresses the special needs of rehabbing an existing building, making a special code unnecessary. The City has launched an in-depth research project to study this issue, which needs to be resolved so that the problems of rehabilitating a historic building are taken into account without jeopardizing the public health and safety concerns that building codes are enacted to protect.

Recommendation:

- The City's Department of Development should complete its ongoing study to consider the need of devising a building code for historic buildings.

Enforcing requirements in Knoxville's historic districts has grown to be a demanding staffing requirement for the city's Department of Development. Designating a building inspector whose assignment is to become familiar with the properties in historic overlay districts and to work with owners in those districts could be very helpful to the Department of Development and to owners in historic districts.

Recommendation:

- Knoxville's Department of Development should train and assign a building code inspector to specialize in historic overlay districts.



This house in Fourth and Gill is being rehabilitated as a youth hostel using the Federal preservation tax credits. The house is adjacent to I-40 and was vacant and deteriorating for many years.

In each of Knoxville's historic areas, there are some properties that have not been maintained for many years. These buildings are easy to find- there are large holes in the roofs, porches have collapsed, or other serious structural defects are obvious. The derelict properties cause numerous problems for adjacent owners. It is difficult to receive a reasonable quote for insurance when the neighboring house is not maintained; it is difficult to obtain a fair price for the house you may need to sell, or to sell the house at all if a neighbor's house is poorly maintained. Whether an absentee landlord or an occupant owns the poorly maintained house, it is interfering with the property rights of adjacent owners. The city should be able to compel the repair of derelict property so that the property can be maintained without displacing the owner.



115 E. Scott has been privately restored as a single family residence after many years of existing as a deteriorating boarding house. The building was condemned before the present owners began their restoration efforts. It is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and the Historic Overlay (H-1) District of Old North Knoxville

Recommendation:

- The City should develop a “demolition by neglect” ordinance which prevents the continued lack of maintenance that endangers a neighborhood’s revitalization. Remedies under the ordinance could take the form of attaching the cost of repairs as a lien against the property to be recaptured when the building is eventually transferred to another owner. Properties to be covered under the ordinance should at least include National Register of Historic Places, historic overlay (H-1) and

neighborhood conservation (NC-1) properties.

Unless a property is included in an H-1 or NC-1 overlay, the city’s building code allows no delay of a demolition permit, and provides only nominal fines if demolition of Knoxville’s architectural heritage proceeds without a properly authorized permit.

Recommendations:

- The City should consider modifying the court process or legislation affecting violation of Knoxville’s building codes to provide for larger fines for demolition without an authorized permit.
- The City should consider modifying the demolition permit application procedures to provide for a delay in issuance of a demolition permit if the proposed building is listed on for the National Register of Historic Places.

In many states, differential tax assessment for historic properties and tax credits for newly rehabilitated historic properties can provide incentives to initiate rehabilitation projects in residential and commercial areas. For these measures to be implemented in Knoxville, modifications would need to be made in Tennessee’s Constitution. While this will not be achieved quickly, it is a strong enough incentive that efforts to effect the change should begin.

Recommendation:

- Encourage the newly formed Tennessee Trust for Historic Preservation, in its statewide efforts, to research and support a constitutional change that would allow differential tax assessments for re-



This significant home at 229 E Scott is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is part of the Old North Knoxville Historic Overlay District (H-1). Owner occupied, its lack of maintenance has created a severely deteriorated structure in danger of collapse. Holes in the roof are evidence of its disrepair

When a Federally funded or licensed project is considered for properties in Knoxville, a review is mandated under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the National Environmental Policy Act. This Section 106 Review is intended to protect historic resources. If a compromise that protects the resources cannot be reached, the President's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation negotiates a Memorandum of Agreement naming the interested parties that will meet to decide how the project can least harm historic resources. Representatives of the City of Knoxville are not usually included as interested parties. As a result, the City and local preservation groups may never be informed of negotiations that directly affect the City's historic resources.

Recommendation:

- The City should request to be included in any Memoranda of Agreement between the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the Tennessee Historical Commission and other parties, and intended to devise a strategy for mitigating the impact of Federally funded or licensed projects on historic resources in the city boundaries.



1643 Washington is described in George Barber's Art In Architecture catalogue. For many years it was divided into multifamily housing, then occupied by vagrants. The city of Knoxville acquired the house and sold it through the Homemakers program. It is being restored as a single family house.

One of the important design elements of historic districts is the placement of buildings on individual lots. Older neighborhoods vary in the front, rear and side setbacks and lot coverage that have been standard in Knoxville since the 1950's. Currently, a property owner who wishes to rehabilitate a property in an older neighborhood or construct a new building on a vacant lot must obtain zoning variances in order to be consistent with the historic overlay (H-1) requirements. The

neighborhood conservation overlay (NC-1), which is more recent, waives these setback and coverage requirements.

Recommendation:

- The Knoxville Historic Zoning Commission should request an ordinance modification to make H-1 consistent with NC-1 in allowing side, front and rear setback variances, lot coverage variances.

FUNDING

Preservation enriches Knoxville, as buildings and neighborhoods are restored so they can represent our history and teach us about our past. Preservation is achieved primarily with the participation of property owners, private investors and developers, and benefits not only them, but also the community that retains its landmark buildings. An infusion of private capital is critical to the success of any preservation effort.

Knox Heritage must receive full funding so that it can operate effectively. The revolving loan fund already established by Knox Heritage should be adequately capitalized to allow for the preservation of endangered buildings, and monies must be found to allow Knox Heritage to achieve staffing that can manage the fund and other activities. Monies must be available to city government so they can stabilize blighted properties that are historically significant. Other programs furthering preservation must also be funded and established.

Recommendations:

- Interested preservationists should work to provide additional capital for the revolving loan fund established by Knox Heritage and to hire adequate staff, so that historically significant properties can be acquired, protected and rehabilitated.
- The City's Department of Development should work to establish a fund for acquiring historically significant blighted properties through condemnation, with resale to owners who agree to restore them appropriately.
- A full-time director for Knox Heritage should

In order to provide for adequate funding for preservation programs, several approaches should be explored and appropriate methods for funding should be developed.

Recommendations:

- Tax increment financing should be explored to see if it is appropriate for providing funding for preservation activities.
- At least one financial institution should be recruited to be the leading lender for preservation projects.
- The city should consider contracting with Knox Heritage and looking to their staff as a resource with a “fee for service” contract for needed preservation services.

Preservation contains within it no instant answers and no easy solutions. By looking at other communities, and at the individual and organizational efforts in our community, the Mayor’s Task Force on Preservation discovered that there are good models locally and nationally. Other cities such as Charleston, South Carolina, Macon, Georgia, Asheville, North Carolina and many others are pursuing preservation programs that are revitalizing historic neighborhoods. Within Knoxville, private investment groups and individuals, and Knox Heritage with its Inner Cities Venture Fund from the National Trust for Historic Preservation are beginning to point the way towards neighborhood revitalization. Using these programs as inspiration, and following our own instincts, we can help our city achieve success in preserving its past.



The J. Allen Smith - Coughlin House at 5305 Lyons View was designed by Charles Barber. It was built in 1916 as the house of J. Allen Smith, Founder of the White Lily Flour Co. Demolition threatens the house, which is eligible, (but not listed) for the National Register of Historic Places and with Historic Overlay (H-1) zoning.



The Neoclassical house at 1424 Armstrong in the Old North Knoxville Historic Overlay District (H-1) and National Register of Historic Places, was serving as an apartment building when it was condemned several years ago. It has recently been purchased by a private owner and is being restored. New wiring, plumbing and a roof have done much to protect it.



#17 Emory Place was built in 1890 by Whittle and Spence Truck Company. The building is now office space, and was one of the first buildings restored in the Emory Place Historic District. Emory Place was built as a commercial area located at the end of the street car line that served the Victorian-era suburbs to the North, and was the home of a farmers market, bandstand and fire station. A landscaped boulevard, reproduction street lights and restored buildings enhance its historic status.



Moses School has been restored by the Boys and Girls Club of Knoxville. In the heart of historic Mechanicsville, it provides facilities for the Boy's Club and the Knoxville Police Department Training Academy.

REGISTER STATUS OF KNOXVILLE'S HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Properties included in the National Register of Historic Places and a Historic Overlay:

- Armstrong-Lockett House (included in the larger Kingston Pike Historic District)
- William Blount Mansion (also a National Historic Landmark), 200 W. Hill Av.
- Fourth & Gill Historic District, bounded by Broadway, Glenwood and I-40 East.
- Knoxville City Hall (Old City Hall), Summit Hill at Henley
- Southern Terminal & Warehouse Historic District (Jackson, Central, 100 block
- Gay Street, Gay Street Viaduct and Southern Terminal). A portion of this district on part of Jackson Avenue is included in a historic overlay.
- Old North Knoxville Historic District (bounded by Woodland, Broadway and Central). A portion of this district, on Scott, Oklahoma, Armstrong, Fremont, and cross streets, is included in a historic overlay.
- Old Grey Cemetery, Broadway.
- Mechanicsville Historic District, bounded by Cansler, Boyd, Western and I-275).
- Knollwood, 150 Major Reynolds Place (6411 Kingston Pike).
- Park City Historic District, on Washington, Jefferson, Woodbine and East Fifth Avenue. A portion of this district, along Washington and Jefferson, is included in a historic overlay.
- Two Fort Sanders properties – 219 12th and Fort Sanders Manor (Laurel @ 17th)

Properties listed in Historic Overlay only:

- Baker-Peters House, 9000 Kingston Pike
- Fort Dickerson, Dickerson Road
- James White Fort
- 107 Gill

Properties listed on National Register of Historic Places only:

- James Park House, 422 W. Cumberland Avenue
- Old Post Office Building (Customs House), Clinch at Market
- Southern Terminal and Warehouse Historic District, Jackson, Gay, Central and State Streets
- Camp House, 1306 Broadway
- Knox County Courthouse, Main at Gay
- Statesview, Peters Road
- Middlebrook, 4001 Middlebrook Pike
- Alfred Buffat Homestead, Love Creek Road
- Knoxville Post Office, 501 Main Street
- Medical Arts Building, 603 Main Street
- Gay Street Commercial Historic District, Gay, Church and State Streets south of Summit Hill and north of Church
- Market Square Commercial Historic District, Market Street
- Park Junior High School, 523 Bertrand Street
- Lamar House Hotel-Bijou Theatre, 803 s. Gay Street
- U.T. Agriculture Farm Mound, Neyland Drive
- Talahi Improvements, Cherokee Boulevard, Iskagna, Keowee, Talahi, Tugaloo, Kenesaw and Taliluna
- Knoxville College Historic District, 901 College Street
- Andrew Johnson Hotel, 912 S. Gay Street
- Ft. Sanders Historic District, White to Grand, 11th to 19th
- Col. John William House, 2325 Dandridge Avenue

- Knoxville Iron Foundry Complex, Lower Second Creek Valley
- Louisville and Nashville Freight Depot, Lower Second Creek Valley
- Louisville and Nashville Passenger Station, Western Avenue at Henley Street
- Knoxville YMCA Building, 605 Clinch Avenue
- Samuel McCammon House, 1715 Riverside Drive
- Ossoli Circle Clubhouse, 2511 W. Cumberland Avenue
- Emory Place, Emory Place at Broadway
- Forest Hills Boulevard, Forest Hills north of Sutherland
- South Market Historic District, Church to Cumberland on Market
- Kingston Pike Historic District, Concord to Cherokee Boulevard
- First Baptist Church, 510 Main Street
- Adair Gardens, east of Broadway
- Lindburg Forest, south of Woodlawn Pike
- Christenberry Club Room, Emerald Avenue
- Savage Gardens, 5200 Lynndel Road
- Gov. John T. Wilder House, 2027 Riverside
- Tyson Junior High School, Kingston Pike
- Daniel House, 2701 Woodson Drive
- Tennessee School for the Deaf
- Island Home Boulevard Historic District
- Thomas J. Walker House, 645 Mars Hill
- National Cemetery, Broadway
- First Presbyterian Cemetery, State Street

MAYOR'S TASK FORCE ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION



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