

ITEM #: 19  
DATE: 01/22/08

### COUNCIL ACTION FORM

**SUBJECT: NOMINATION OF THE FORMER SIGMA SIGMA-DELTA CHI FRATERNITY HOUSE AT 405 HAYWARD AVENUE TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**BACKGROUND:**

The owner of property at 405 Hayward Avenue, Iowa House Building LLC, has submitted an application to the Iowa State Historical Society for nomination of the former Sigma Sigma-Delta Chi Fraternity House to the National Register of Historic Places. William C. Page, Public Historian from Des Moines, Iowa, has prepared the nomination.

The current zoning of the property at 405 Hayward Avenue is Residential High-Density (RH), and West University Impacted Overlay District (O-UIW).

The application for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places provides the following general description of the site:

*“The Sigma Sigma-Delta Chi Fraternity House is located on the southwest corner of Hayward Avenue and Knapp Street on the south side of the Fourth Ward in Ames, Iowa. The building was the first improvement on the site. The house sits on Lots 1 and 2 and is situated directly southwest of the intersection of the two streets. Originally, Lots 3 and 4 were included as part of this site. They remain unimproved except for a volleyball court and an unpaved parking lot. The latter runs along the western portion of all four lots with an approach drive on Knapp Street providing the access. Only Lots 1 and 2 are included in this nomination. The surrounding neighborhood is mostly residential, with single-family housing predominating. An athletic field owned by Iowa State University stands directly to the west of the fraternity property.”*

The City of Ames was designated as a Certified Local Government (CLG) in December 1995. As a CLG the City of Ames has a responsibility to review the application for nomination and to make recommendations to the State Nominations Review Committee (SNRC). After allowing for public comment, the Commission and the chief elected local official(s) shall decide if the property meets the criteria of the National Register. This recommendation must be submitted to the State within 60 days (or sooner as mutually agreed upon) of the Commission's decision.

The State Nominations Review Committee (SNRC) has requested that the Historic Preservation Commission and the Mayor determine whether the nominated property meets the National Register of Historic Places significance criteria. There is an additional request that the Commission and the Mayor agree to waiving the 60-day commenting period, since the State Nominations Review Committee plans to consider the nomination at their meeting of February 8, 2008.



The applicant has selected two of the four (A, B, C, and D) National Register Criteria as being applicable to this application.

One of the National Register Criteria selected by the applicant is "Criteria A", which is described as follows:

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

A second National Register Criteria selected by the applicant is "Criteria C", which is described as follows:

- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

The application for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places provides the following "Summary of Significance":

*"Completed in 1924, the Sigma Sigma-Delta Chi Fraternity House is National Register eligible under Criteria C. The building is an imposing example of a fraternity house in Ames, Iowa, whose design shows the eclectic influence of Craftsman, Tudor Revival, and classical styling. The front porch and porte-cochere cleverly translate the function of the building as a home into an architectural statement. Open and outstretched like arms, they beckon and convey a sense of welcome and hospitality to residents and houseguests alike.*

*The Sigma Sigma-Delta Chi Fraternity House is National Register eligible, locally, under Criteria A, because of its organizational history. Sigma Sigma's quest for national status is representative of a phenomenon shared by many local Greek organizations at Iowa State during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Sigma Sigma affiliated with the national Delta Chi fraternity in 1933.*

*The period of significance and significant date, under Criterion C, is 1924, the year the building was completed and first occupied. The period of significance, under Criterion A, is 1924-1933, the time when Sigma Sigma sought to become a national fraternity. The year 1933 is a significant date because that is when the fraternity achieved that goal.*

*The property contains one resource for this nomination, the fraternity house itself, which is contributing and classified as a building."*

The application for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places includes a more detailed explanation of how the former fraternity house at 405 Hayward Avenue meets the National Register Significance Criteria. City staff believes the documentation provided meets National Register Significance Criteria "A" and "C".



If the Historic Preservation Commission and the Mayor/City Council disagree with one another on the property's National Register eligibility, both views will be presented to the State Nominations Review Committee (SNRC) and the SNRC will conduct their review of the nomination. If both the Historic Preservation Commission and the Mayor/City Council do not consider the property eligible for the National Register, the State must halt the nomination. In the event that the Commission and the Mayor/City Council do not consider the property eligible for the National Register, the property owner, the individual nominating the property, or any interested party may appeal the decision.

An individual property cannot be listed unless the owner (Iowa House Building LLC, in this case) wants the listing. The property owner must notify the Bureau of Historic Preservation in writing if the property owner objects.

Listing in the National Register honors a historic place by recognizing its importance to its community, state or the nation. Owners of property listed in the National Register may be eligible for a 20 percent investment tax credit for the certified rehabilitation of income-producing certified historic structures such as commercial, industrial, or rental residential buildings.

The National Register status in no way limits the right of the property owner to preserve, alter, or even demolish his or her property. Property owners are not required to do anything, or sign anything, or make commitments regarding the use of their property, unless they have received federal restoration funds through the grants in aid program. In those few instances, a covenant will be preserved for a certain number of years, depending upon the amount of funds received.

How are National Register properties protected? The power to protect a National Register property is limited to local design guidelines and to a review of those projects which are funded, wholly or in part, by the federal government and which impact, directly or indirectly, listed properties. National Register status does not mean that property cannot be destroyed by a highway, by Urban Renewal, or by some other project. It does mean that before a federal agency can be involved in any way with such a project, i.e., funding, licensing, or authorizing it, the federal agency must consider alternatives, which might save the National Register properties from destruction. After the review process has been completed, the agency may choose to avoid the property, or it may decide to go ahead with the project, even if a National Register property is destroyed in the process.

At its meeting of January 14, 2008, with a vote of 5-0-1 abstention, the Historic Preservation Commission recommended that the City Council waive the requirement for the 60-day period for review and finds that the nomination of the former Sigma Sigma-Delta Chi House, located at 405 Hayward Avenue, to the National Register of Historic Places meets Criterion "A" and "C" and recommends National Register eligibility to the State Nominations Review Committee.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

1. The City Council agrees to waive the requirement for the 60-day period for review and finds that the nomination of the former Sigma Sigma-Delta Chi House, located at 405 Hayward Avenue, to the National Register of Historic Places meets Criterion "A" and "C" and recommends National Register eligibility to the State Nominations Review Committee.
2. The City Council agrees to waive the requirement for the 60-day period for review and finds that the nomination of the former Sigma Sigma-Delta Chi House, located at 405 Hayward Avenue, to the National Register of Historic Places does not meet the significance criteria and recommends National Register ineligibility to the State Nominations Review Committee.
3. The City Council does not agree to waive the requirement for the 60-day period for review and postpones further consideration of this request to allow for a minimum review period of 60 days.
4. The City Council can refer this request back to City staff and/or the applicant for additional information.

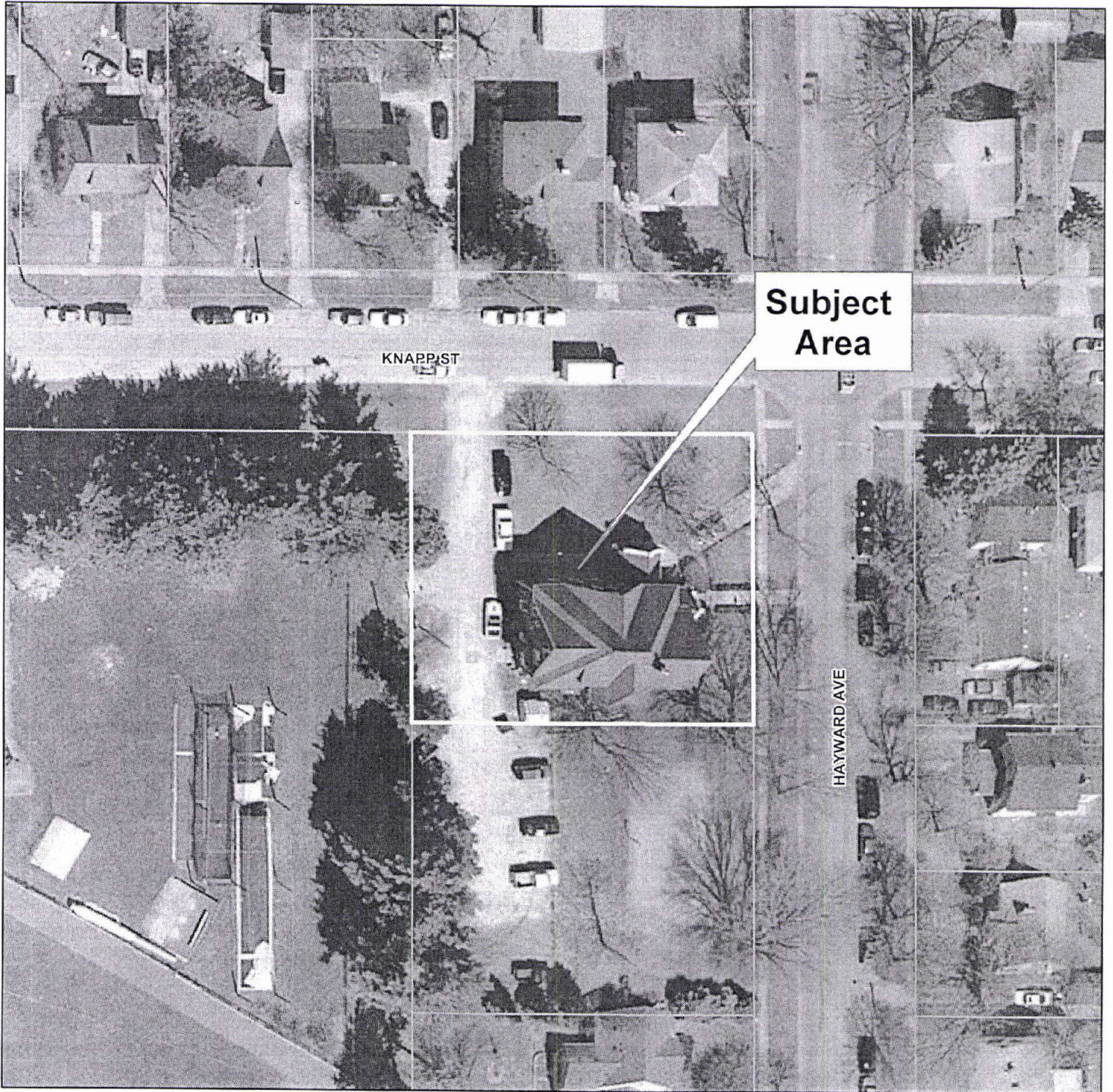
**MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Staff believes the applicant has provided sufficient background information to make the determination that the former Sigma Sigma-Delta Chi House at 405 Hayward Avenue meets Criterion "A" and "C", as described in the attached application.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council act in accordance with Alternative #1. This is an agreement to waive the requirement for the 60-day period for review, a finding that the nomination of the Sigma Sigma-Delta Chi House, located at 405 Hayward Avenue, to the National Register of Historic Places meets Criterion "A" and "C" and a recommendation for National Register eligibility to the State Nominations Review Committee.



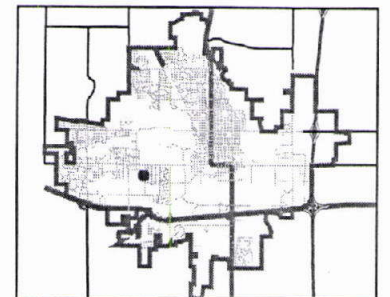
# Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places



## Location Map 405 Hayward



0 30 60 120 Feet







December 12, 2007

Ms. Gloria Betcher  
Ames HPC  
531 Hayward Ave  
Ames IA 50014

RE: **Sigma Sigma-Delta Chi Fraternity House, 405 Hayward Avenue, Ames, Story County**

Dear Ms. Betcher:

The State Nominations Review Committee (SNRC) plans to consider the property referenced above for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places during their February 8, 2008 meeting. As a participant in the Certified Local Government Program, Ames HPC is required to review and comment on proposed National Register nominations of properties within its jurisdiction. The State is required to provide you with a 60-day period for the review, unless we mutually agree to expedite the process. I am contacting you to ask that you initiate the review process for the Historic Preservation Commission. Enclosed are copies of the nomination, photographs, and the review form. The review process will require the following:

- ◆ The Historic Preservation Commission should the review during one of their meetings. Send a formal invitation to the Mayor with a copy of the nomination. Send a formal invitation to the property owner/owners. If they are not familiar with the National Register, be sure to include an explanation. Make sure that a copy of the nomination is available for public review before the meeting. For example, leave a review copy at the courthouse or public library. Indicate in your meeting announcement that a review copy of the nomination is available and where the review copy can be found.
- ◆ The question to answer when reviewing the nomination is whether the nominated property meets the National Register of Historic Places significance criteria. If the Commission feels that the nomination makes the case for meeting significance criteria, the Commission should check the box recommending that the property be listed. If the Commission feels that the property does not meet the significance criteria, then check the box recommending that the property not be listed. The Mayor should use the same approach when reviewing the nomination.
- ◆ You might want to invite the individual who prepared the nomination to attend the public meeting and present the nomination. Keep a record of the meeting (copy of notice, agenda, minutes, list of attendees). At the conclusion of the meeting, the Commission should make a motion regarding their recommendation. The Chairman of the Commission will complete Item #1, the Commission's portion of the review form. Be sure to fill in the date of the public meeting, sign the signature line and record any comments that were made. If the Mayor attended the public meeting, inquire if he/she is prepared to complete Item #2 on the review form.

- ◆ In the event that the Mayor was unable to attend the meeting. The Commission Chairman should forward the Review form to the Mayor for review and comment. Have the Mayor sign the form and return them to the Historic Preservation Commission.
- ◆ Item #3 on the Review form asks for the review and comment of a preservation professional. If your commission does not have a professionally qualified historian or architectural historian who can complete this part of the form, you may leave Item #3 blank and I will arrange to have a State staff member complete that part of the form.
- ◆ After you have completed Items #1 through #2 (through #3 if a preservation professional is available), please make a copy of the completed review forms for your file and send the original copies of the completed forms to me.
- ◆ The Commission should keep the nomination and photographs. File them together in your inventory, as you will need the information for future reference. If a State preservation professional was needed to complete Item #3 on the review form, I will return a copy to the commission for filing.

If the Historic Preservation Commission and the Mayor disagree with one another on the property's National Register eligibility, both views will be presented to SNRC for their consideration during review of the nomination. If both the Historic Preservation Commission (by Commission majority) and the Mayor do not consider the property eligible for National Register listing, we must halt the nomination. Be advised that when a nomination is halted, the property owner, the person who prepared the nomination or any interested party may appeal the decision. In addition, the nomination will still go forward to the National Park Service for an official "Determination of Eligibility."

Please contact Lowell Soike at 515/281-3306 with any questions or concerns regarding the CLG program or the process for this review.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Foster Hill  
Tax Incentive Programs Manager/  
National Register Coordinator