

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: ORDINANCE TO AMEND SECTION 31.13 OF THE *MUNICIPAL CODE* TO ESTABLISH DESIGN CRITERIA FOR A LOCAL HISTORIC LANDMARK LOCATED AT 1013 AND 1025 ADAMS STREET

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

On September 28, 2010, the City Council considered the adoption of Design Criteria as proposed by the Ames Historical Society (see ***Attachment A***) for the proposed local historic landmark on the property at 1013 and 1025 Adams Street. This item was referred back to staff ***“to look at the design criteria for the landmark designation, particularly as it pertains to landscaping of an historic landmark and the site as a whole.”*** There was much discussion that focused on criteria for the “landscape.” The Council was concerned that the proposed criteria were too broad and did not provide enough information to potential buyers on what types of vegetation would be acceptable.

In an attempt to provide more specificity to the landscape criteria, concerns were expressed that there was now perhaps too much focus on landscaping, and that the criteria went beyond any interests the Adams may have had on landscaping. Accordingly, the Ames Historical Society, in a letter dated November 1, 2010 (see ***Attachment C***), concluded that the house and the topography (knoll) where the house sits are of primary importance. The topography enhances the house's setting. **They believe it is not important to dictate further landscape details to future owners, and support the passage of the application with design criteria for the house and landscape criteria protecting the topography of the entire 5 acres.**

On October 11, and again on November 8, 2010, the Historic Preservation Commission discussed possible revisions to the Design Criteria, and considered revisions proposed by staff. The Commission made revisions and recommended adoption by the City Council.

The HPC removed any reference to “substitute materials”, since this is already addressed in Chapter 31 of the *Municipal Code*. Design Criteria that apply to the landscape of the site were revised to address the “knoll” upon which the Adams house sits. This is the key element of the landscape that enhances the setting for the Adams house. All reference to the grassy, open site, small shrubs near the house, and preservation of the daylighting of central rooms has been removed from the previous draft of the Design Criteria. There are no special restrictions on the removal of existing plants, or on the planting of new trees, shrubs, and other plant materials. However, alterations or changes that reflect the historic, visual or spatial relationship of the house to its grounds *are encouraged, but not required*. Other provisions of the proposed Design Criteria were changed to clarify the previous draft. For example, the Design Criteria for “Dormers” was changed to “Roof Projections,” since no dormers exist on the Adams house. Also, the format used for

the Design Criteria was changed to be consistent with the format used elsewhere in the *Municipal Code*.

Robert Harvey, a licensed Landscape Architect, retired ISU professor, and an expert in historic landscape design, was invited and attended the Historic Preservation Commission meeting on November 8. Mr. Harvey emphasized at the meeting that it is important to focus on the original owner's intent rather than restoration of the historic landscape.

On November 17, 2010, with a vote of 5-0, the Planning and Zoning Commission recommended approval of the Design Criteria for the proposed Local Historic Landmark at 1013 and 1025 Adams Street, along with its own recommended changes to fine tune or clarify the Historic Preservation Commission's recommended language.

The Commission eliminated a duplication of language found in (3)(i) and (3)(v) of the "Criteria for Exterior Materials." "Topography" was removed from Criteria #3 and labeled as "Criteria #4". The topography of both Lot 1 (the house lot) and Lot 2 (the Greenway lot) is to be maintained (see ***Attachment B***).

The Planning and Zoning Commission recommended that proposed Criteria #2 be altered to read as follows:

"The Adam's House relationship to its knoll is an essential aspect of its Landmark status. Any alterations or changes to the vegetation shall be encouraged, but are not required to reflect the historic, visual or spatial relationship of the house to its grounds."

The Commission's language was intended to encourage, rather than require, any landscaping alterations to meet the historic, visual or spatial relationship of the house to its grounds. However, a strict reading of the Commission's wording would more likely be interpreted to mean that the alterations themselves are encouraged, and that they need not reflect the historic, visual or spatial relationship of the house to its grounds. That was not the intended meaning of the Commission, but the language was drafted on the spot with little time to reflect on the actual meaning of the proposed wording. The staff is recommending the following slightly different language to better reflect the Planning and Zoning Commission's intent.

"The Adam's House relationship to its knoll is an essential aspect of its Landmark status. Alterations or changes to the vegetation that reflect the historic, visual or spatial relationship of the house to its grounds shall be encouraged, but not required."

The proposed "Design Criteria" (see *Attachment B*) for the topography of the landscape are intended to apply to the entire Adams property, since the knoll extends into the Adams Memorial Greenway (Lot 2). The "Design Criteria" that address the architectural elements of the house are to apply to the Adams House, only. Additionally, "Design Guidelines" in Chapter 31 of the *Municipal Code* will be applicable to any new construction of buildings on the Adams house lot (Lot 1), and any alterations and additions to the existing Adams house.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. The City Council can approve, on first reading, the revised Design Criteria for the proposed Local Historic Landmark at 1013 and 1025 Adams Street. Under this alternative, the final approval of the design criteria should occur concurrently with the approval of the rezoning of the property to O-H.
2. The City Council can decide not to adopt the revised Design Criteria for the proposed Local Historic Landmark at 1013 and 1025 Adams Street
3. The City Council can approve the revised Design Criteria for the proposed Local Historic Landmark at 1013 and 1025 Adams Street, with modifications deemed appropriate.
4. Action on this request can be postponed and referred back to City staff and/or the applicant for additional information.

MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The Historic Preservation Commission, the Planning and Zoning Commission, and City staff have worked to address the City Council's concerns. The revised Design Criteria for the proposed Local Historic Landmark at 1013 and 1025 Adams Street address the importance of the "knoll" to the historic significance of the property, but does not restrict the removal, or the planting of trees, shrubs, and other types of vegetation on either lot.

Therefore, it is the City Manager's recommendation that the City Council act in accordance with Alternative 1, which is to approve, on first reading, the revised Design Criteria for the proposed Local Historic Landmark at 1013 and 1025 Adams Street. Under this alternative, the final approval of the design criteria should occur concurrently with the approval of the rezoning of the property to O-H.

Attachment A
Previous Draft of Design Criteria
Reviewed by the City Council on September 28, 2010

1. The Adams House is a mixture of late Prairie School and Postwar Modern styles of architecture. Details of design and dimensions of distinct architectural elements of the building, as shown on the building plans prepared by the builder, Bertrand Adams, shall be followed and conformed to for all alterations or new construction of additions to the building.
2. Substitute materials may be allowed if they are consistent with the historic materials in size, design and texture. Proposals for substitute materials must be expressed with specificity in the application for Certificate of Appropriateness.

Staff Comments: Regulations and restrictions for the use of substitute materials are covered by Section 31.10(6). This section of the Design Criteria should be deleted.

3. The Adams' House relationship to its grassy, open site is an essential aspect of its Landmark status. Alterations or changes in use that alter the visual or spatial relationship of the house to its grounds shall be discouraged.
4. All alterations and newly constructed additions shall conform to the following characteristics of the building:
 - Building Height: One-and-a-half stories, not including the basement.
 - Roof Type & Pitch: Nominally flat with a slight slope to the clerestory that opens up toward the south.
 - Dormers: None, however the central clerestory is an integral element in the building's massing and primary elevation.
 - Entry: Via a porch on the south side, with alternate entry toward driveway on east.
 - Exterior Materials: Brick and concrete masonry walls. Built-up roofing with metal edge/parapet. Concrete paving to front porch, walkway and driveway. Steel pipe columns support roof over porch. Alterations and/or repairs should match color and pattern of existing brick.
 - Windows: Narrow sash steel windows with predominantly horizontal muntin pattern and metallic finish. Corner windows should be restored, as possible, to their original, more open configuration.

- Solid/Void Ratio: Maintain position and size of all large-scale openings (doors, windows, etc.) Additional openings as required for accessibility or egress improvements should coordinate with the existing rhythm and pattern of voids.
- Plan/Footprints: Generally open plan with service areas (kitchen and bath) along the north edge. Predominantly east-west orientation with windows along the south side.
- Landscape: Generally open with small shrubs near house. Provision for daylighting of central rooms is key to the house's aesthetic concept and should be preserved.

Attachment B
Revised Draft of Design Criteria
To be considered by the City Council on December 12, 2010

1. The Adams House is a mixture of late Prairie School and Postwar Modern styles of architecture. Details of design and dimensions of distinct architectural elements of the building as shown on the building plans prepared by the builder, Bertrand Adams, shall be followed and conformed to for all alterations or new construction of additions to the building.
2. The Adams' House relationship to its knoll is an essential aspect of its Landmark status. Alterations or changes to the vegetation that reflect the historic, visual or spatial relationship of the house to its grounds shall be encouraged, but not required.
3. All alterations and newly constructed additions to the house on Lot 1 shall conform to the following characteristics of the building:
 - Building Height: The building height shall be limited to one-and-a-half stories, not including the basement.
 - Roof Type & Pitch: The roof line of the building shall be nominally flat with a slight slope to the clerestory that opens up toward the south.
 - Roof Projections: The central clerestory is an integral element of the building's massing and primary elevation, and shall be retained.
 - Entry: The primary entrance to the building is under a porch on the south side, with an alternate entry toward driveway on east. These entry features shall be retained.
 - Exterior Materials: Acceptable building materials are as follows:
 - i. Brick and/or concrete masonry walls. Alterations and/or repairs should match color and pattern of existing brick.
 - ii. Built-up roofing with metal edge/parapet.
 - iii. Concrete paving to front porch, walkway and driveway.
 - iv. Steel pipe columns supporting roof over porch.
 - Windows: Windows shall be narrow sash steel windows with predominantly horizontal muntin pattern and metallic finish. If window replacements are necessary, corner windows should be restored, as possible, to their original, more open configuration.

- Solid/Void Ratio: Maintain position and size of all large-scale openings (doors, windows, etc.) Additional openings as required for accessibility or egress improvements should coordinate with the existing rhythm and pattern of voids.
 - Plan/Footprints: Rooms have a predominantly east-west orientation with windows along the south side. Retention of these features is encouraged, but not required.
4. Topography: Topography to be maintained on both lots.

Attachment C
Ames Historical Society Letter
11-01-10



November 1, 2010

Historic Preservation Commission
515 Clark Avenue,
Ames, Iowa 50010

Dear Commission Members,

The Ames Historical Society wishes to comment on the pending application for Local Landmark Status for the Mary and Bertrand Adams home in north Ames. Recently, the Ames City Council directed the application back to the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) to reconsider the landscape design criteria.

We understand the concerns expressed by the Council regarding the proposed criteria as being overly restrictive. We have looked further at the documentation and the background relating to this issue, such as how the grounds were treated by the Adams's. Our conclusion is that what is historically important is the house and the topography and the knoll where the house sits. The topography enhances the house's setting. We do not feel it is important to dictate further landscape details to future owners.

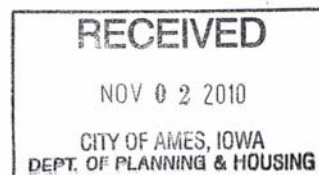
The house has been vacant for 5 years, and every year more deterioration occurs. We urge the HPC to proceed with revising the landscape design criteria as soon as possible, and to direct the application back to the City Council for immediate action. We encourage the City Council to act quickly on the application. We support the passage of the application with design criteria for the house and landscape criteria protecting the topography of the entire 5 acres. It is our hope that this transaction can be brought to an end, after this very lengthy and complex process.

Please advise me if there is anything we can do to assist this process to completion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Peggy Baer".

Peggy Baer, President, on behalf of the
Ames Historical Society Board of Directors



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ORDINANCE NO.

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF THE CITY OF AMES, IOWA, BY ENACTING A NEW SECTION 31.13 (28) THEREOF, FOR THE PURPOSE OF ESTABLISHING DESIGN CRITERIA FOR A LOCAL HISTORIC LANDMARK LOCATED AT 1013 ADAMS STREET AND 1025 ADAMS STREET; REPEALING ANY AND ALL ORDINANCES OR PARTS OF ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT TO THE EXTENT OF SUCH CONFLICT; PROVIDING A PENALTY; AND ESTABLISHING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

BE IT ENACTED, by the City Council for the City of Ames, Iowa, that:

Section One. The Municipal Code of the City of Ames, Iowa shall be and the same is hereby amended by enacting a new Section 31.13 (28) as follows:

“Sec. 31.13. STANDARDS FOR REVIEW, DESIGN GUIDELINES, DESIGN CRITERIA.

(28) Design Criteria for Lot 1, Mary Adams Subdivision, known locally as the Adams House, 1013 Adams Street and Lot 2, Mary Adams Subdivision, known locally as the Adams Memorial Greenway, 1025 Adams Street .

(a) The Adams House is a mixture of late Prairie School and Postwar Modern styles of architecture. Details of design and dimensions of distinct architectural elements of the building as shown on the building plans prepared by the builder, Bertrand Adams, shall be followed and conformed to for all alterations or new construction of additions to the building.

(b) The Adams' House relationship to its knoll is an essential aspect of its Landmark status. Alterations or changes to the vegetation that reflect the historic, visual or spatial relationship of the house to its grounds shall be encouraged, but not required.

(c) All alterations and newly constructed additions to the house on Lot 1 shall conform to the following characteristics of the building:

- | | | |
|-------|--------------------|---|
| (i) | Building Height: | The building height shall be limited to one-and-a-half stories, not including the basement. |
| (ii) | Roof Type & Pitch: | The roof line of the building shall be nominally flat with a slight slope to the clerestory that opens up toward the south. |
| (iii) | Roof Projections: | The central clerestory is an integral element of the building's massing and primary elevation, and shall be retained. |
| (iv) | Entry: | The primary entrance to the building is under a porch on the south side, with an alternate entry toward driveway on east. These entry features shall be retained. |

- (v) Exterior Materials: Acceptable building materials are as follows:
- Brick and/or concrete masonry walls. Alterations and/or repairs should match color and pattern of existing brick.
 - Built-up roofing with metal edge/parapet.
 - Concrete paving to front porch, walkway and driveway.
 - Steel pipe columns supporting roof over porch.
- (vi) Windows: Windows shall be narrow sash steel windows with predominantly horizontal muntin pattern and metallic finish. If window replacements are necessary, corner windows should be restored, as possible, to their original, more open configuration.
- (vii) Solid/Void Ratio: Maintain position and size of all large-scale openings (doors, windows, etc.) Additional openings as required for accessibility or egress improvements should coordinate with the existing rhythm and pattern of voids.
- (viii) Plan/Footprints: Rooms have a predominantly east-west orientation with windows along the south side. Retention of these features is encouraged, but not required.
- (d) Topography: Topography to be maintained on both lots.”

Section Two. Violation of the provisions of this ordinance shall constitute a simple misdemeanor punishable as set out by law.

Section Three. All ordinances, or parts of ordinances, in conflict herewith are hereby repealed to the extent of such conflict, if any.

Section Four. This ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and publication as required by law.

Passed this _____ day of _____, _____.

Diane R. Voss, City Clerk

Ann H. Campbell, Mayor