

ITEM #: 6
DATE: 11-17-10

COMMISSION ACTION FORM

DATE PREPARED: November 12, 2010

REQUEST: 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

PROPERTY OWNER: City of Ames
515 Clark Avenue
Ames, Iowa 50010

APPLICANT: Ames Historical Society

LOCATION: 1013 and 1025 Adams Street
(A subdivision plat is being processed that divides the property into two lots. Presently there is only one address (1013 Adams Street). Once the Final Plat is approved for the subdivision, Lot 1 will include the existing house and retain the address of 1013 Adams Street. Lot 2 (Adams Memorial Greenway) will be addressed as 1025 Adams Street.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

City staff is bringing an item previously considered by the Commission back for further consideration. This item, Design Criteria for the proposed local historic landmark at 1013 and 1025 Adams Street, was previously considered by the Planning and Zoning Commission on June 16, and September 1, 2010, as described below. At this time, the Commission is being asked to make a recommendation to the City Council on the revised Design Criteria in ***Attachment D***.

Planning and Zoning Commission Action. On September 1, 2010, the Planning and Zoning Commission recommended approval of Design Criteria (see ***Attachment C***) and rezoning to apply the “O-H” (Historic Preservation) overlay and designate the property at 1013 and 1025 Adams Street as a local historic landmark with the condition that, ***“the historic overlay maintain the openness as designated by the architect and the intent of the donor, and that those statements be attached to the 1025 Adams Street historic preservation overlay document, and that Criteria #2, which references substitute material, be deleted.”***

Initially, on June 16, 2010, the Planning and Zoning Commission considered the Design Criteria, as shown on ***Attachment C***, and recommended that the City Council approve the guidelines (with the stipulation that Criteria #2, which references substitute material, be deleted).

City Council Action. On September 28, 2010, the City Council considered the adoption of Design Criteria (see **Attachment C**) for the proposed local historic landmark on the Adams Street property, and referred this item 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 E**), 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.

Historic Preservation Commission Action. 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 then made the revisions, as shown on **Attachment D**, and recommends adoption by the City Council.

Summary of Revisions by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). 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*.

The Proposed Design Criteria 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.

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). Design Criteria and Design Guidelines will apply to any alterations and additions to the existing Adams house.

ALTERNATIVES:

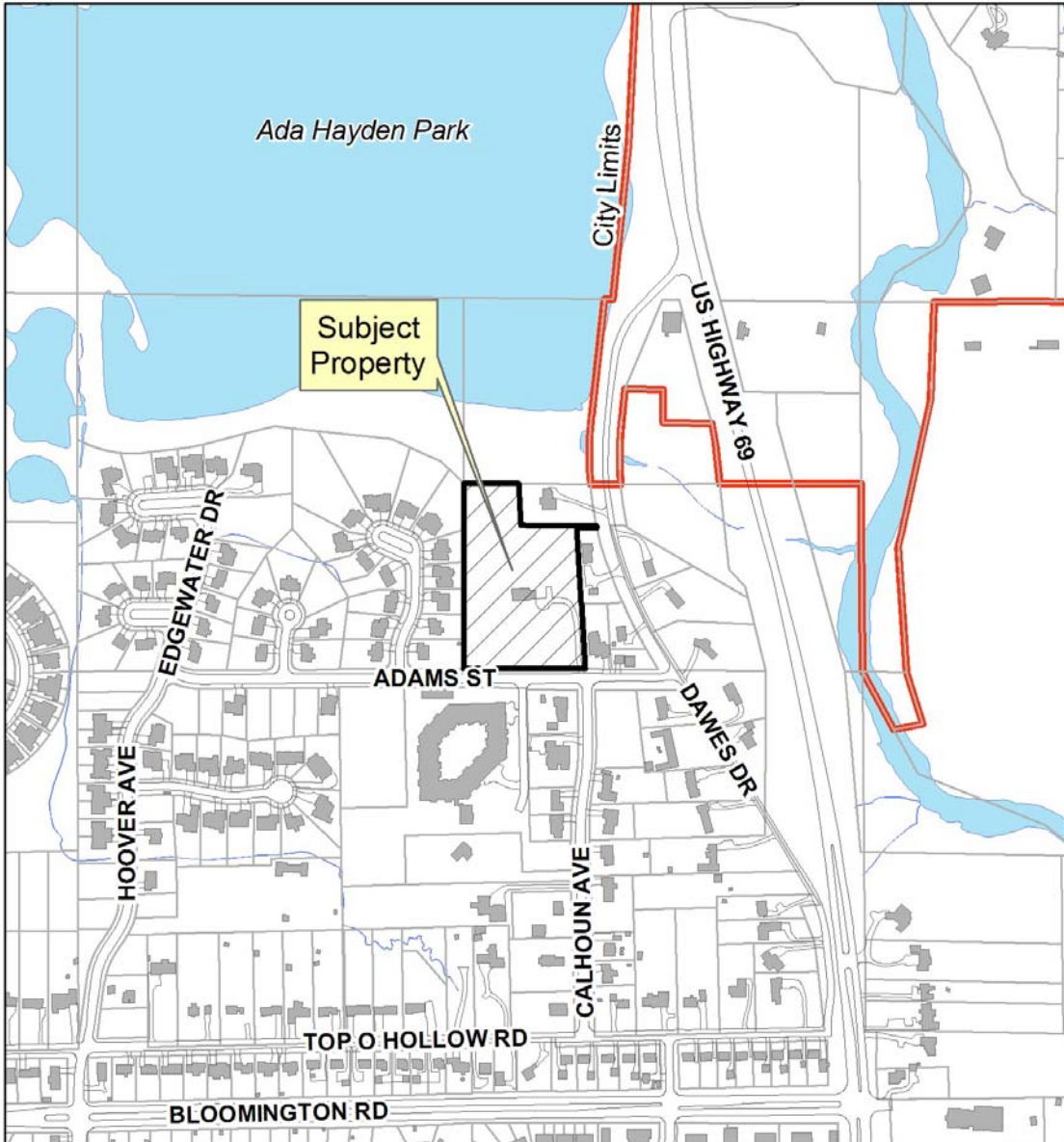
1. The Planning and Zoning Commission can recommend that the City Council approve the revised Design Criteria for the proposed Local Historic Landmark at 1013 and 1025 Adams Street.
2. The Planning and Zoning Commission can recommend that the City Council not adopt the revised Design Criteria for the proposed Local Historic Landmark at 1013 and 1025 Adams Street
3. The Planning and Zoning Commission can recommend that the City Council 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.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

It is staff's recommendation that the Planning and Zoning Commission act in accordance with Alternative 1, which is a recommendation that the City Council approve the revised Design Criteria for the proposed Local Historic Landmark at 1013 and 1025 Adams Street.

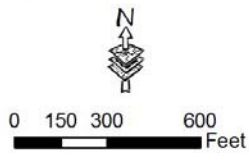
Attachment A

Location Map



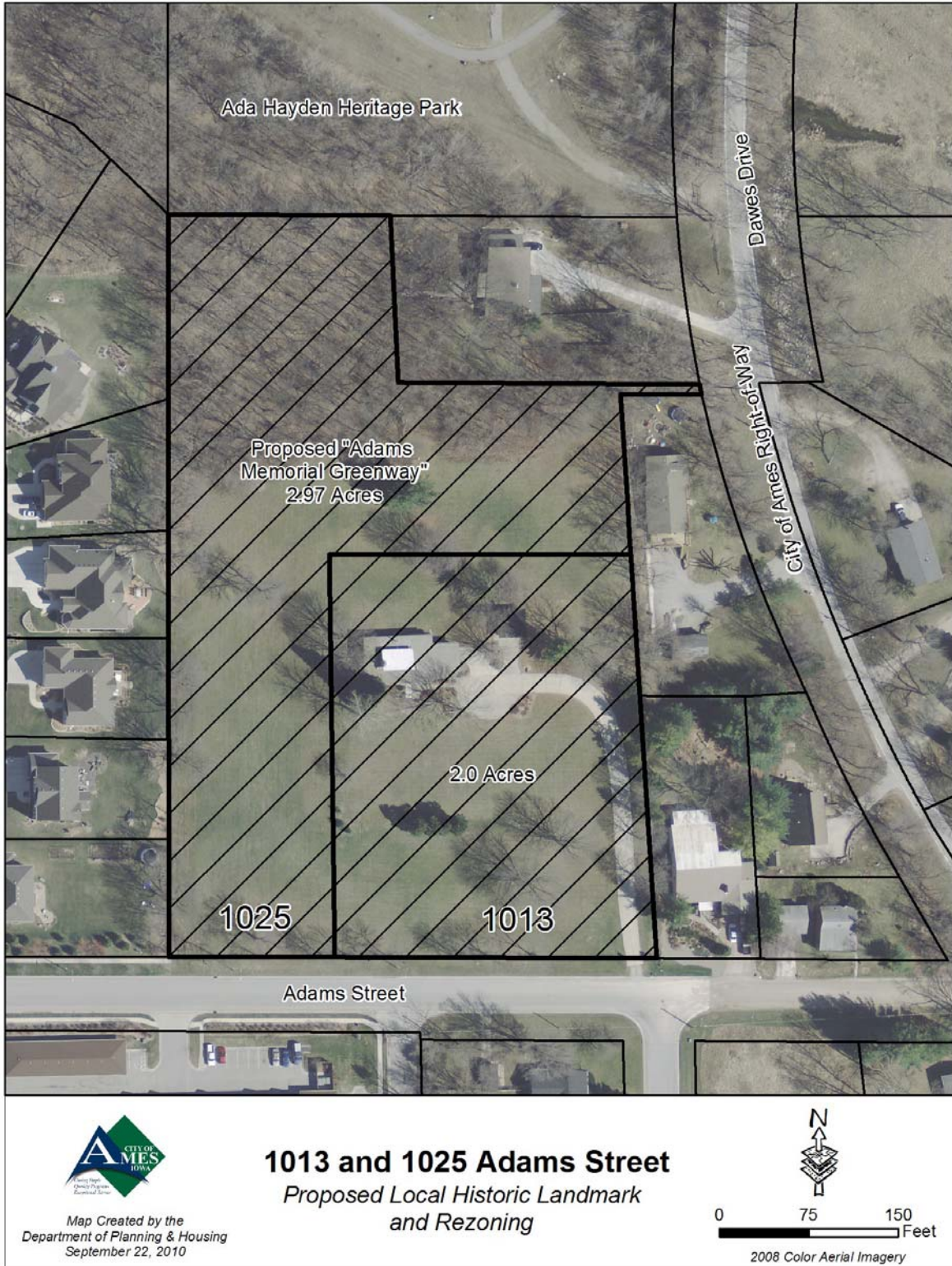
Location Map

1013 and 1025 Adams Street



Attachment B

Aerial Photo



Attachment C

Previous Draft of Design Criteria

Reviewed by the City Council and the Planning and Zoning Commission
September, 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 D
Proposed Draft of Design Criteria
(Showing Revisions by the Historic Preservation Commission)
11-08-10

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 or 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.~~
- ~~3.~~ **2.** The Adams' House relationship to its ~~grassy, open site~~ **knoll** is an essential aspect of its Landmark status. Alterations or changes in use that ~~alter~~ **reflect** the **historic**, visual or spatial relationship of the house to its grounds shall be ~~discouraged~~ **encouraged, but not required.**
- ~~4.~~ **3.** All alterations and newly constructed additions 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.**
 - ~~Dormers:~~
 - **Roof Projections:** ~~None, however~~ **The central clerestory is an integral element in of the building's massing and primary elevation, and shall be retained.**
 - Entry: **The primary entrance to the building is under** ~~Via~~ **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.
 - v. **Alterations and/or repairs should match color and pattern of existing brick.**

- 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: ~~Generally open plan with service areas (kitchen and bath) along the north edge.~~ **Rooms have a predominantly east-west orientation with windows along the south side. Retention of these features is encouraged, but not required.**

- 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.~~ **Topography to be maintained.**

Attachment E
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.

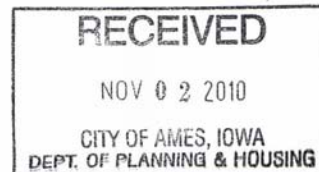
The house has been vacant for 5 years, and every year more deterioration occurs. We urge the HPC to proceed with revising the landscape design criteria as soon as possible, and to direct the application back to the City Council for immediate action. We encourage the City Council to act quickly on the 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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