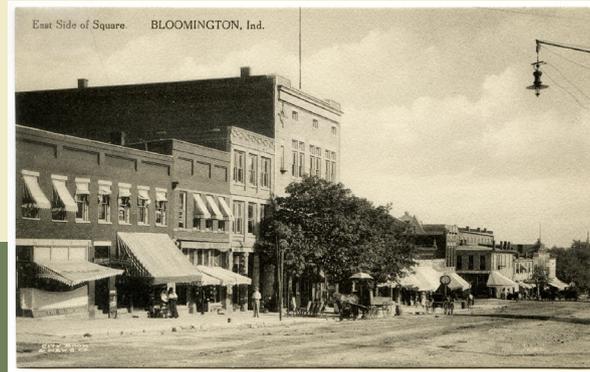
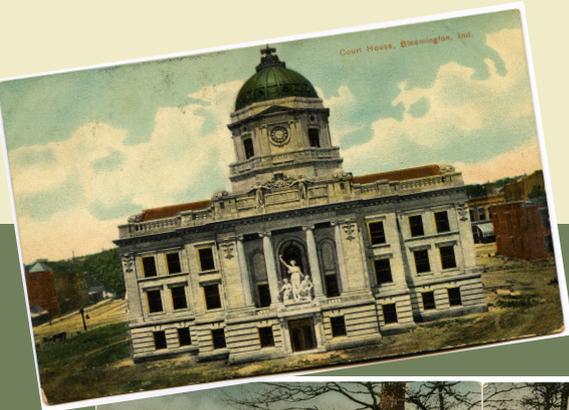


# PRESERVATION PLAN FOR HISTORIC BLOOMINGTON



CITY OF BLOOMINGTON  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

# PRESERVATION PLAN FOR HISTORIC BLOOMINGTON

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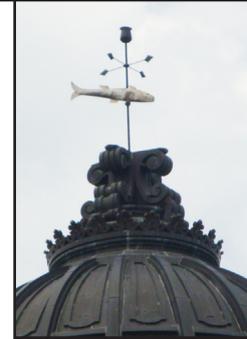
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# INTRODUCTION

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On February 11, 2010, the Bloomington Historic Preservation Commission formed a committee to update and revise the 1998 Preservation Plan for Downtown Bloomington and the Courthouse Square (the "1998 plan"). This was done in response to the dramatic changes in the community since 1998, and a perceived need to begin long-range planning for the decade ahead.

The following report is the 2012 Preservation Plan for Historic Bloomington. The Commission's intent is that the 2012 plan will serve as the working plan for the Commission for several years. This plan is advisory only. It does not change any preservation-related ordinances or Commission procedures. Any changes discussed in this document must go through the customary public processes. Instead, this plan will serve as a blueprint that guides the Commission in the years to come.

The scope and organization of this publication are as follows:

- **Part 1: Background and Methodology.** Describes the committee's work in preparing this report.
- **Part 2: Summary of Findings and Goals.** The executive summary of the report.
- **Part 3: Character Area Analysis.** Provides a summary of each of eight so-called "character areas," including the historical context, committee comments, "SWOT" analysis (i.e., Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats), and a summary of strategies and recommendations.
- **Part 4: Current Issues in Historic Preservation.** Evaluation of a number of preservation issues that affect the Commission's work in all character areas.

## PRESERVATION FOR PLACEMAKING

*"Historic preservation...protects the sense of place associated with the city.... Historic context offers a sense of identity and cultural continuity to visitors and, most importantly, to the citizens of Bloomington."*

1998 Preservation Plan



# BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

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Since its publication, the 1998 plan has served as the strategic plan for the Commission. This 2012 plan follows the same general format and is being created for the same purpose. By all accounts, the 1998 plan has been a successful advocacy tool. It has, for example:

- Led to the protection of numerous structures and districts through the designation and demolition delay process;
- Helped shape the City's 2007 Unified Development Ordinance ("UDO") by laying the groundwork for inclusion of requirements that new downtown development have mass, scale, and other architectural features that are compatible with historic structures;
- Prompted the creation of a façade grant program for historic properties;
- Increased awareness of the need for and effectiveness of historic preservation initiatives;
- Helped formalize the process by which the Commission conducts design review.

Most importantly, the 1998 plan laid the groundwork for the City Council's 2005 passage of the "demolition delay" ordinance. The ordinance, along with its 2007 amendments, allows the Commission to impose a waiting period of 90-120 days before a demolition permit can be granted on buildings identified as "Contributing, Notable or Outstanding" in the City's most recent historic preservation survey ("the 2001 Interim Report"). This waiting period provides a window of opportunity for preservation.

The committee found that demolition delay remains vital to historic preservation. The impetus for the demolition delay ordinance was the policy shift to increase residential densities near the core of downtown.

The Commission observed that the resulting redevelopment often threatens small-footprint historic homes and commercial buildings. This conflict has been further exacerbated by high-density student housing developments in the downtown area.

In addition to the 1998 plan, the committee carefully reviewed a number of other studies, reports, and ordinances concerning historic Bloomington. One particularly important report was the 2005 "Downtown Vision and Infill Strategy Plan."

The committee spent considerable time studying and walking the "character areas" of historic Bloomington, as well as researching and writing brief histories of each character area. This 2012 plan purposely amends the boundaries of some character areas identified in the 1998 plan, the 2005 Downtown Vision and Infill Strategy Plan, and the City's UDO, and identifies several previously overlooked areas.

Since history lies at the root of preservation, and education is often the best form of advocacy, the committee deemed the inclusion of additional historical information on these focus areas as useful to both the Commission and the report's target audience.

Lastly, the committee discussed and strategized how best to advance the goals identified in this plan. The committee divided the available tools into three basic categories:

- **Legal** (historic designation, demolition delay, etc.);
- **Advisory** (design guidelines, education, participation in City current and long-range planning processes, etc.);
- **Financial** (facade grants, tax credits, etc.).

The following "Summary of Findings and Goals" outlines the Committee's plan for using these tools to achieve the goals of this plan.

# SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND GOALS

1. The most significant part of Bloomington’s historic building inventory – the Courthouse Square – is unprotected by local designation. We must work with downtown businesses, building owners, and civic leaders to preserve this historic commercial and governmental core for future generations.

**Work with Courthouse Square National Register District owners, stakeholder groups, and other City entities to formulate a preservation plan oriented to economic development, including local designation of the district and expansion of local preservation incentives. (See Pages 6-11)**

2. After over fifty years of ownership, Indiana University recently sold the historic Showers Furniture Factory Area for reuse and redevelopment. We must ensure that that area’s history is preserved, and advocate for redevelopment in a manner that complements that history.

**Locally designate the historic Showers buildings and participate in redevelopment planning for the area. (See pages 12-16)**

3. Each of the three University Village subareas - the Kirkwood Corridor, Restaurant Row, and the Café District - has its own charm and eclectic character. While none of the three areas presently warrants full historic district designation, all share a tremendous sense of place which can only be created organically, and which can easily be lost.

**Look for advisory ways in which the Commission can help ensure the preservation of the existing fabric of University Village, and**

**be prepared to comment formally should conditions change, or major shifts in density or character be proposed. (See pages 17-24)**

4. The Monon Corridor area, formerly known as the Old Levee, has for generations been a mixed commercial/industrial area defined both positively and negatively by its proximity to the railroad and the former Monon Depot. The opening of the B-Line has created an obvious catalyst for change, and focused development toward the rail line rather than away from it. There still remains a checkerboard of very high quality historic buildings and infrastructure which should be preserved.

**Comprehensively survey the Monon Corridor area, and then determine the appropriate ways in which to honor the area’s history and preserve its historic resources, while encouraging the area’s thoughtful transformation to a mixed-use neighborhood. (See pages 25-27)**

5. Bloomington’s core neighborhoods face a variety of challenges and opportunities. Deferred maintenance and intentional neglect, the pressures of University expansion, and construction of student housing impact different neighborhoods in unique ways. City policies that variously encourage downtown density or encourage preservation, while both valid development tools, can conflict. Changing consumer demands and demographic changes may also threaten historic fabric. Increasingly neighborhoods are looking to the Historic Commission to take a measured approach to change, and to increase appropriate reinvestment by owners.

**Key Core Neighborhood goals:**

- **Create a more formal designation strategy, and prioritize City neighborhoods for historic or conservation district status.**
- **Work with current districts to update existing design guidelines.**
- **Revise application and review processes in order to streamline and clarify Commission processes regarding COA's and demolition delay.**
- **Actively address the problem of demolition by neglect.**
- **Champion good design and educate the public on the use of appropriate materials, scale and massing by creating non-binding design guidelines. (See pages 28-30)**

6. Historic preservation has a proven track record in incentivizing the profitable reuse of historic buildings, and in stimulating economic development. The Bloomington Urban Enterprise Association ("BUEA") facade grant program has been a great success; the HPC would like to build on that success by creating new incentives and benefits for the preservation of historic properties.

**The commission should advocate for the use of preservation to stimulate the local economy, including continued promotion of façade grants for residential and commercial projects; advocacy for a successor program when the BUEA is phased out; and education of the public about existing incentives. (See page 31)**

7. Signage and awnings in the downtown core need to be more effectively regulated. Some signage and awnings detract from the substantial historic value of the area. In light of this situation, new policies and additional advocacy are advisable.

**Draft signage and awning guidelines for historic properties, and propose revisions to general regulations. (See page 32)**

8. The HPC encourages green building practices that are sensitive to historic integrity and emphasize reuse of existing historic structures.

**Encourage the integration of green building practices into historic district guidelines and assist districts in adopting sustainability guidelines. (See pages 33-34)**

9. The HPC's work and effectiveness depend on having a public that is aware of its past, and believes that preservation enhances present-day quality of life.

**Actively look for opportunities for public education and community outreach. (See pages 35-36)**

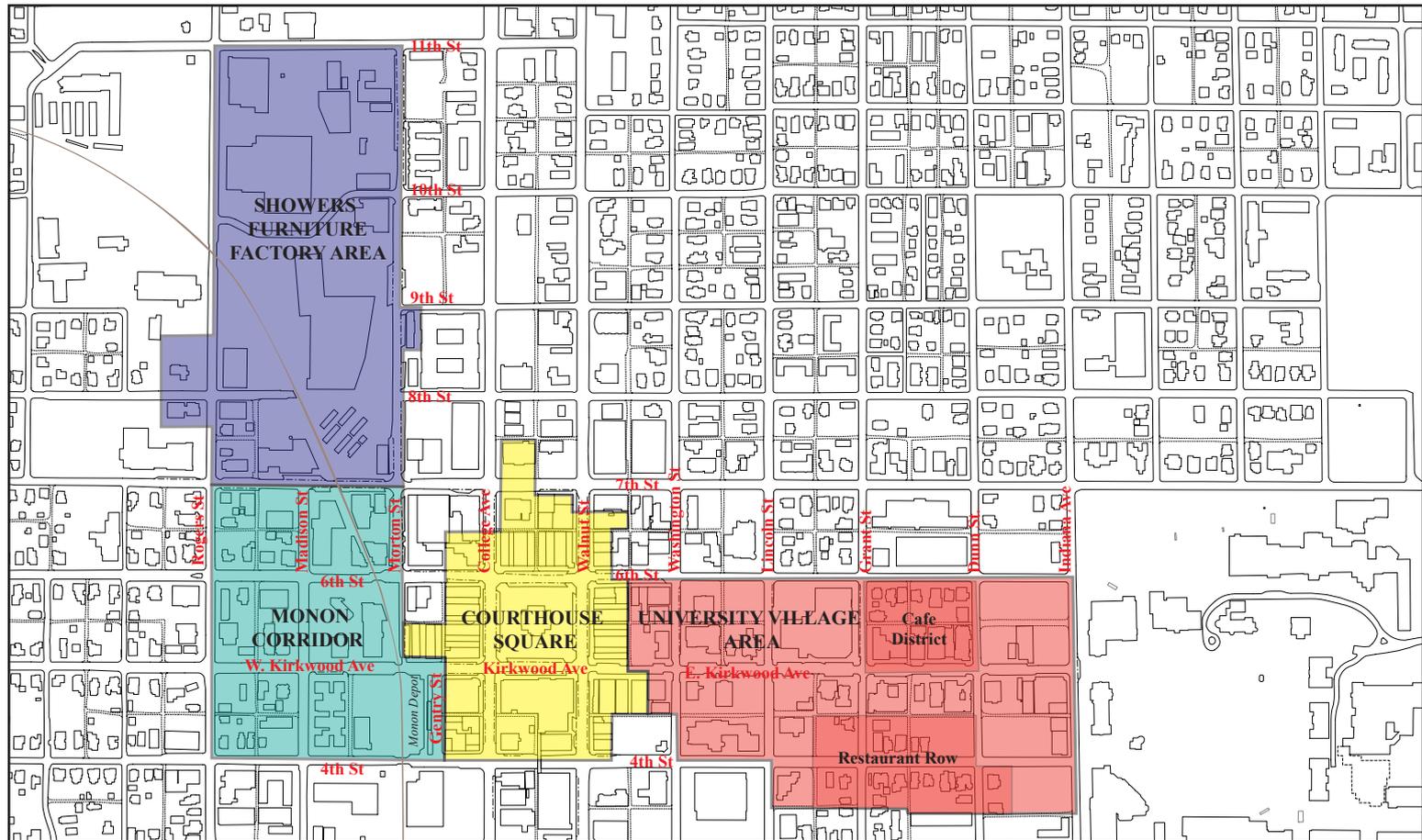
10. The Commission's work suffers from lack of coordination with other City Departments and initiatives like the Bloomington Entertainment and Arts District ("BEAD"). Conflicting policies and rules sometimes result, thereby undermining preservation.

**Develop more formal mechanisms to coordinate with other city departments, boards, and commissions, including requesting notice and taking full advantage of the right to comment. (See page 35-36)**

11. There are several areas that have significant historic resources which have not been adequately surveyed. In addition to the Showers Furniture Factory Area, these include stretches of West Kirkwood, and the region of College and Walnut Avenues south of Third Street. The lack of surveying has left significant resources unprotected, and given the public the impression that these areas are not historically significant.

**Update the 2001 Interim Report to include previously omitted properties and areas. (See page 35-36)**

# CHARACTER AREA ANALYSIS



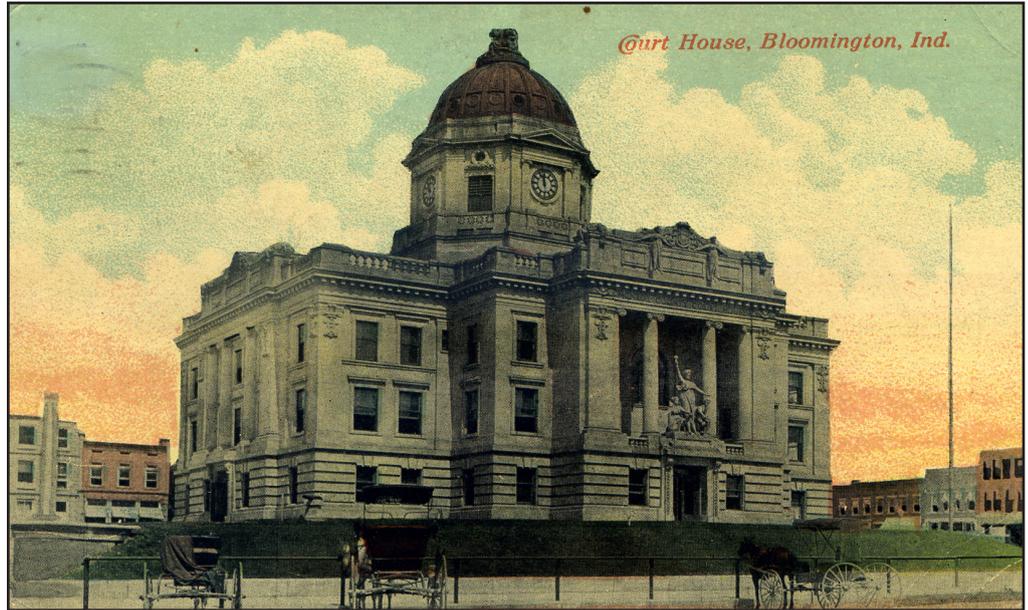
# COURTHOUSE SQUARE

## Historic Background and Urban Design Characteristics

Bloomington was established as the county seat shortly after the founding of Monroe County in 1818, and is the oldest county seat of any of the surrounding counties. It was platted on the “Shelbyville Plan,” where primary streets intersect at the corners of the Square rather than bisect it, as in many other Indiana towns. This arrangement allows for more commercial frontage within the Square.

Bloomington’s growth ran parallel to that of the region’s limestone industry and to Indiana University. All had their formal beginnings in the 1820s. With connection of the Salem, New Albany and Louisville Railroad in 1853, new horizons were opened and the city began to flourish. Industries like the Showers Brothers Furniture Factory and numerous limestone quarrying and fabrication sites were able to develop regional, and eventually national, significance.

Buildings around the Square were constructed primarily of wood during Bloomington’s early history. Numerous fires, a growing regional economy, and continual redevelopment of the Square took their toll on early structures. None have survived.



The oldest surviving building is the Faulkner Hotel (122-124 N. Walnut) built of brick in 1847 by Aquila Rogers, one of the county’s earliest settlers. A handful of brick buildings from the 1850s and 1860s also survive, including the Fee-Breeden Building (1853) at 122 W. 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Bundy European Hotel (c. 1860) at 212-216 W. Kirkwood, and the Old Opera House, also known as Mendelssohn Hall (1868) at 103-105 W. Kirkwood.

The increasing commerce of the later 1800s dramatically changed the appearance of the downtown. This became particularly evident following the 1893 Chicago World’s Exposition, when the classical style taught at Paris’s Ecole des Beaux Arts (a style that lent itself well to the use of local limestone) gained national popularity. Thus the stone industry entered its heyday.



Old Post Office - Beaux Arts



Old City Hall - Beaux Arts



Kresge - Art Deco



Howe Building - Italianate

Not to be outdone, many owners resurfaced their brick buildings with limestone well into the early 20th century. Their efforts were an expression of the new affluence of the town, as well as the availability of what became the nation's preeminent building material.

The Beaux Arts style and use of limestone also played a dominant role in construction of new buildings in Bloomington. At the center of the Square is the magnificent 1908 Courthouse designed by Wing and Mahurin and decorated with exterior sculpture by Albert Molnar and interior murals by Gustav Brand.

The formal geometry and grandeur of the Beaux Arts style as displayed in the Courthouse buttresses the historic atmosphere of the Square. Many of the surrounding buildings that face the Courthouse complement, and thus fortify, this architectural motif. Two additional former civic buildings also display the style: the old City Hall (1915) at 122 S. Walnut and the old Post Office (1912) at 119 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street.

The Italianate-style, an Americanization of the motifs associated with Italian villas, was also popular during the late 1800s. This was particularly so for commercial buildings, as it lent itself well to the introduction of prefabricated cast iron facades. Bloomington was no exception, as evidenced in its large collection of Italianate style buildings around the Square. These include the Howe Building (1893) at 125 N. College, the old Odd Fellows Building (1892) at 200 N. Walnut, and the Benckart Building (1890) at 112 S. College.

Several 19th-century brick buildings received Art Deco limestone skins during the 1930s as stylistic influences changed over time. Examples include the Kresge Building at 101 N. College, the block that once housed the Eagle Clothing Store from 105-109 N. College, and the old J.C. Penny Building at 115 N. College. The Wicks Building at 116 W. Sixth was given a Chicago Commercial-style limestone storefront with tripartite windows.

Through the years, the Nichols family, Bloomington's earliest local architects, created some of the most dramatic downtown vistas. John L. Nichols was a



Faulker Hotel - 1840



Old Opera House - 1868



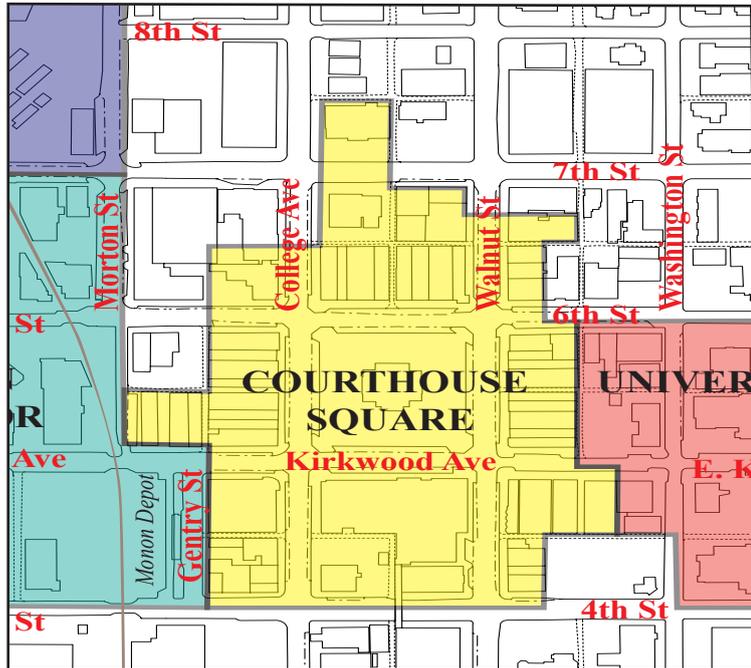
Masonic - Egyptian Revival



Spanish Colonial Revival

prolific designer, but his father before him was also active as a contractor. Both described themselves as architects, as was customary in the days before certification.

The younger Nichols was relatively well-traveled, having practiced in Denver prior to relocating in Bloomington. He designed several commercial blocks of rock-faced limestone with cantilevered bays suspended over the street. These features are included prominently in the Queen Anne-style Allen Building (c. 1907) at 104 E. Kirkwood and



the Classical Revival-style Old First National Bank Building (1907) at 121-125 W. Kirkwood. This design feature repeats itself in nearly every block downtown and is distinctive to Bloomington.

During the early twentieth century, Bloomington attracted several additional regionally significant architects: Rubush and Hunter, who designed the Egyptian Revival-style Old Masonic Temple (1927) at 120 W. Seventh; McGuire and Shook, who designed the Beaux Arts-style Ben Becovitz Building (1926) at 110 N. Walnut; and Alfred Grindle, who designed the Spanish Colonial Revival-style building (1923) at 120 N. Walnut.

Despite some devastating fires, a few demolitions, and some substantial remodels over the years, Bloomington’s downtown retains a strong urban context and displays stylistic motifs ranging from the 1840s into the 1970s. There is a great deal of historic integrity in the single blocks surrounding the courthouse in each direction.

More importantly, the sculptural skills displayed and the concern for quality and craftsmanship create a unique and distinctive environment for the conduct of business, entertainment and shopping. This focused energy continues to be an enviable resource appealing to the skilled labor and professional classes needed for the 21st century.

*“The sense of enclosure evoked by repetitive building walls along the sidewalk and linkages produced by the many retail windows draw people into this 19th century commercial environment. The Courthouse Square district is the heart, the literal center of historic Bloomington and the symbolic center of a growing community. Action needs to be taken to ensure its future and improve its present.”*

1998 Preservation Plan

## COMMITTEE COMMENTS:

The Courthouse Square exhibits a number of design elements that contribute to the small-town nature and sense of community that make it a place worthy of protection.

In blocks surrounding the Square, the uniformity of building orientation, setbacks, and materials, and the consistent and repetitive proportions of storefronts and windows, together create a continuity that provides a harmonious rhythm and scale to the business district. Some of these elements are transient, like urban landscaping and street furniture. Others, like the old Faulkner Hotel at the southeast corner of 6th Street and N. Walnut, are cultural artifacts that have defined Bloomington for 150+ years.

Ensuring the retention of these features is an important goal for the Bloomington. Although in the past the Commission's approach to downtown buildings has been highly flexible – providing assistance through leveraged funding without increased regulation – that tactic may no longer serve the highest good. The Commission should engage Square-area owners and stakeholders to form an economic-development-oriented designation plan.

Through local designation the Commission can create clarity for building owners regarding the variety of renovations they may encounter. Some buildings have historic features beneath inappropriate facades; some buildings require rebuilding major historic elements of the façade; some buildings have no historic fabric left, but the original façade is documented with archival photographs. On the other hand, non-contributing existing buildings can be redeveloped as compatible infill.

While design guidelines are available, they are non-binding and their use is not mandatory. The Commission has taken a highly flexible approach rather than insisting on rigorous re-creation of a frozen moment in time. However, inappropriate new construction and even partial demolitions can threaten the historic look many have struggled to create and maintain.

## STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Work with Courthouse Square-area owners and stakeholders to devise a designation plan for the area so as to preserve the integrity of existing historic buildings and control the design of infill.
- Encourage the BUEA and eventual successor entity to continue to provide façade grants to historic buildings in the Courthouse Square area, and otherwise provide economic incentives aimed at maximizing commerce through preservation.
- Develop design guidelines for signage and awnings within the historic area.



Well-drafted design guidelines help preserve district integrity when rebuilding becomes necessary.

### Strengths

- Quality of architecture of both historic and non-contributing buildings
- Demolition delay covers most of the Square
- New UDO controls based upon Downtown Vision Plan

### Weaknesses

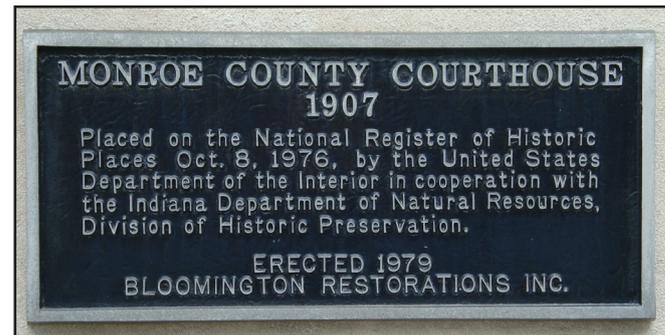
- No local designation, lack of comprehensive design review
- Chaotic signage and awning styles
- Street trees are in very poor condition
- Existing design guidelines are non-binding

### Opportunities

- Economic development through preservation
- BUEA façade grants
- Eligibility for tax credits
- Creation of design guidelines for context-sensitive infill
- Integration of green building practices
- Exploration of better incentives

### Threats

- Difficulty of staying on top of building maintenance
- Confusing code requirement
- Limits of demolition delay law



Continuity over time: Northeast corner of Walnut and Kirkwood



Change over time: Southwest corner of Kirkwood and College



# THE SHOWERS FURNITURE FACTORY AREA

## Historic Background and Urban Design Characteristics

The Showers Furniture Factory area rose in tandem with the construction of the Louisville, New Albany and Salem Railroad (later the Monon Railroad, and now the B-Line Trail). When the railroad reached Bloomington in 1853, the surrounding area was still owned by a few relatively affluent farmers with houses scattered here and there. Houses from several of these farmsteads remain, including the Elias Abel house at 317 N. Fairview (1856), and the Cochran house at 405 N. Rogers (c. 1850). One undeveloped area, a part of the old Robertson Graham tract, is now Reverend Butler Park.

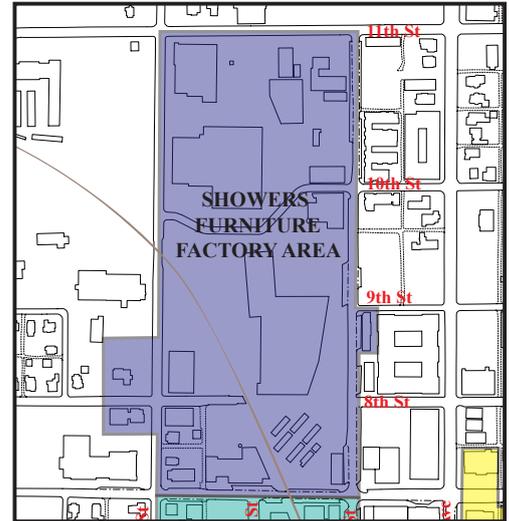
With the railroad came rapid change. Until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Morton Street was called Railroad Street. A tangle of tracks ran in the right of way at and south of the central passenger station at Morton Street's intersection with Kirkwood Avenue. Many businesses, including the Seward Foundry, Johnson Creamery, the Indianapolis Basket Company, and the Central Oolitic Stone Company, located in the area to take advantage of the rail service.

In 1907, a second railroad, the Illinois Central (IC), was built along the ridge north of 11<sup>th</sup> Street. A spur of the IC curved south, descending just east

of Rogers. The still standing Illinois Central freight house at 7<sup>th</sup> Street and Morton was the terminus of the short but active industrial side track. That spur was dismantled years ago, but the main line remains an active freight corridor operated by the Indiana Rail Road.

In 1884, the Showers Brothers Furniture factory was drawn to a site between Morton and Madison stretching from 8<sup>th</sup> Street to 10<sup>th</sup> Street. A fire had destroyed its factory at 9<sup>th</sup> and Grant Streets. The company grew quickly, and was so successful that in 1910 it erected a new plant, Plant #1 (now Bloomington City Hall). The two-story timber frame and masonry building was divided into twenty-foot bays with double-hung windows with limestone lintels and sills. The east side of the plant was outfitted with a long loading dock and heavy wooden double doors to take advantage of the new IC rail spur. The second floor was lit through the use of clerestory windows located in the factory's now iconic sawtooth roof.

Showers Brothers employees handled all aspects of furniture making – “From Tree to Trade” was the company's motto. Raw lumber came off rail cars in the north end of the property, was kiln dried, cut into usable pieces and veneer in mill buildings, and was





Cochran House



Johnson Creamery



IC Freight House



Smallwood Pike

then fashioned into bedroom and kitchen furniture. The finished products were then loaded back on rail cars to transport to market. By 1925, Showers Brothers employed 2,000 Bloomington residents and produced 700,000 pieces of furniture a year, enough to fill 16 train-car loads per day.

With profit and employees came new facilities: in 1912, Plant #2; in 1915, Plant #3; in 1916, the Administration Building (now IU Press); and in 1928, the showroom and research lab (now office space). The construction boom brought other essential buildings, including four which are still standing: back-to-back kilns (just south of 11<sup>th</sup> Street), the sawtoothed Planing Mill (south of the kilns), and a brick garage (between the planing mill and the administration building).

The area developed a culture of its own. An encampment of working-class homes rose up west of Rogers Street and north of 11th Street, within earshot of a huge whistle (12 inches in diameter and 42 inches long!) which on a still day could be heard for ten miles. The neighborhoods developed a strong link to the small African American community in Bloomington, and streets were punctuated by handsome limestone schools and churches, including the Bethel AME church. Less wholesome pursuits also had a place in the area. The eastern edge of the west side was burdened by its reputation for bars and brothels.

The stock market crash of 1929 laid bare the area's excesses. By the mid 1960s, the district's collapse could be delayed no longer. In 1955, Showers Brothers sold its facilities to a Chicago company, which in turn divested the complex to Indiana University, which used the buildings for storage. In 1966, two fires destroyed the north part of Plant #1, and all of Plants #2 and #3. In 1967, the last passenger train left the Monon station at Morton and Kirkwood. Bloomington's story was much like that of the rest of America; as heavy industry and the railroads waned, the buildings built around those industries fell into disuse and decay.

After several decades of decline, forceful leadership from both the private and public sectors began plotting the area's renaissance. In 1994-1996 the City of Bloomington, CFC, Inc., and Indiana University joined forces to revitalize Plant



Planing Mill



Administration Building



Kilns



Showroom/Research Lab

#1, restoring the facility into City Hall, private office space, and IU Research Park, respectively. The project became a catalyst for further preservation efforts nearby. The Johnson Creamery (400 W. 7<sup>th</sup> St.), Hays Market Building (300 W. 6<sup>th</sup> St.) and Johnson Hardware Building (401 W. 7<sup>th</sup>) were either restored or upgraded.

For a variety of reasons, the velocity of the area's redevelopment into a mixed-use city center has intensified in recent years. The rebirth of the Monon Railroad corridor as the B-Line Trail encourages pedestrian and bicycle trips in the area. The rail line had continued to be used for freight until the City of Bloomington purchased it in late 2003. In addition, development was spurred by the gradual departure of incompatible uses (heavy industry, car dealerships, etc.), the growth of Indiana University to over 42,000 students, and a new zoning code which encourages dense development of student housing and related services.

In some cases, the influx of capital has resulted in the creative re-use of historic properties. For example, in 2010 the locally designated Smallwood Pike buildings at 9<sup>th</sup> Street and Morton were transformed into a restaurant, and 19<sup>th</sup>-century homes at 645 and 639 North College were re-purposed as student housing. These buildings were literally on the verge of falling down. But with prime parcels selling for well into the millions per acre, extreme pressure exists to demolish historic structures in order to increase density.

In 2011, Indiana University sold a portion of the Showers building to Monroe County, and the balance of the campus to the City of Bloomington. The Mayor's plan is eventually to sell off parcels to developers committed to a master plan for the area. The decline of the historic furniture factory campus has unquestionably been reversed, and more big changes are on the horizon.

#### **Strengths**

- Industrial character much different from other commercial areas
- Large grouping of early 20th-century industrial buildings

#### **Weaknesses**

- Need for roads and infrastructure
- New apartment construction starts to overwhelm area
- High cost of land

#### **Opportunities**

- Creative adaptive reuse of historic buildings can be signature projects that set the tone for the redevelopment area
- Preservation of rail spur corridors as pocket parks
- Changes in traffic patterns possible
- Historic buildings will be rehabilitated as a part of redevelopment

#### **Threats**

- Lack of design oversight for infill buildings adjacent to historic buildings
- No current agreement as to Commission's role in overseeing design issues
- Signage and public landscaped space chaotic
- Lack of imagination on the part of developers in regards to the building reuse

*"At the present time a new plant is rising with marvelous rapidity... The construction began on March 1st last, and by the middle of next month the new plant, five times the size of the old, will be completed in every detail."*

*"Frequently Mr. Showers has to buy a farm to get the timber that is on it...and it is estimated that at various times he has owned one fourth of the farms in Monroe County."*

**Indianapolis Star**, August 22, 1910

## COMMITTEE COMMENTS

An urgent need now exists for a common vision for the areas north and west of the factory. The area is part of the City's certified Technology Park, and is ripe for mixed-use redevelopment. In addition, the student housing boom appears to continue unabated. Many of these apartment buildings are at least four stories with a tall retail storefront presence on the street. These numerous housing projects continue to pull away from the industrial historic context established by the historic buildings nearby, both by their massing and materials.

The HPC should be positioned to enter the dialogue as City leadership master plans the area, and as investors propose projects.

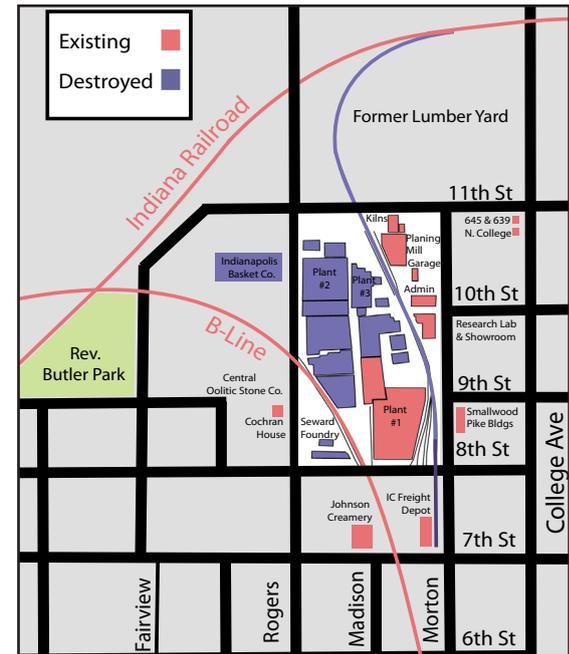
The historic buildings remaining today are early twentieth-century industrial buildings and the design puzzle will be how to retain focus on these properties while designing adjacent new construction. Like the two-story attached nineteenth-century retail buildings profiled on the Square, these buildings have a definable context which should be respected by any infill project. However, based on the early twentieth-century vernacular industrial style, they are qualitatively different from buildings on the Square in their:

- proximity to the street and sidewalk;
- primarily brick construction with limestone detailing;
- horizontal expansion;
- rhythm and shape of window openings;
- simplicity of decoration;
- interior design of parking, or partially hidden lots.

There are several unrestored but National Register-listed buildings in the Showers area that are currently underutilized. These include the Showers Administration Building, the Planing Mill, the Kilns, and the garage. These buildings present an opportunity for investors

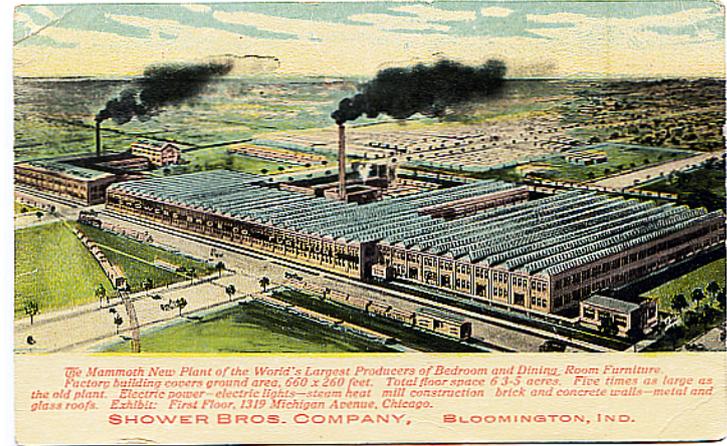
to take federal historic preservation tax credits and to enhance the historic character of a rapidly changing area. These buildings should be perceived as anchors for future redevelopment. Proposals in the area should be subject to site plan approval that will allow the HPC some input during the process.

In 1996, by designating the Smallwood Pike Buildings, the HPC highlighted the importance of design along this significant corridor. Sensitive new construction, compatible with the existing early twentieth-century industrial template, will create the kind of vital linkages necessary to tie 11<sup>th</sup> Street into the bustling office culture on 7<sup>th</sup> Street.



## STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

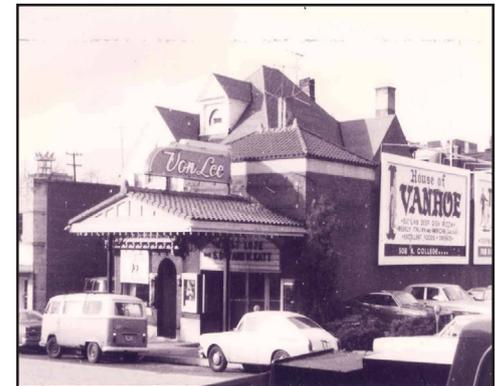
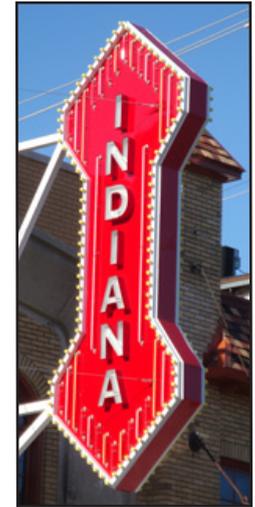
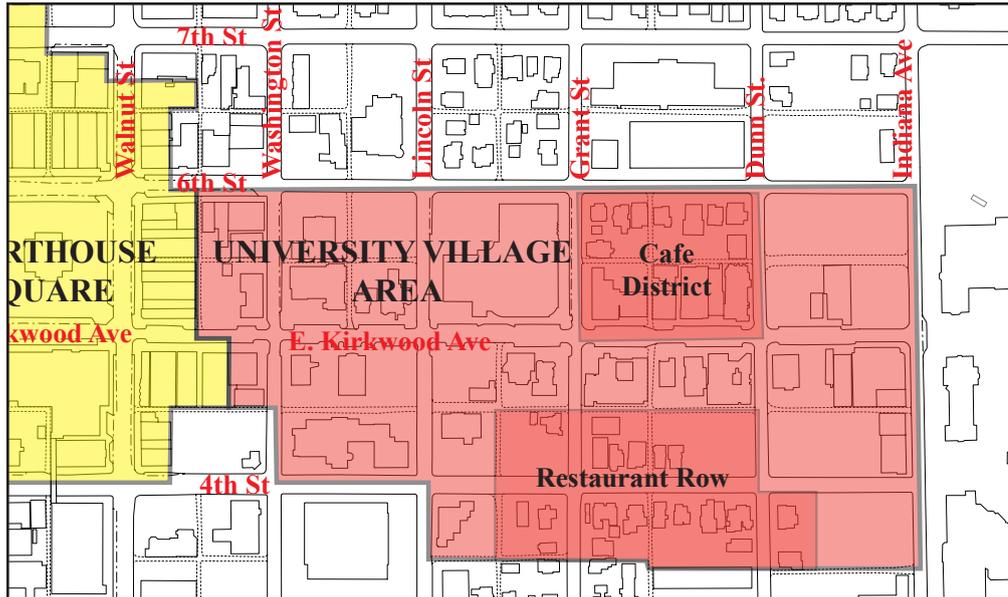
- The significance of remaining historic buildings in the Showers Technology Park (Plant #1, IU Press, Garage, Planing Mill, Kilns) should be highlighted by opening up vistas to them, by ensuring compatible contiguous new development, and through informational signage.
- Encourage local designation of historic buildings under development pressure.
- Encourage creativity in preserving the industrial character of the area. Some small unique buildings may be challenging to adapt to new uses. The signature project is a unique and striking adaptation. We must learn lessons from the Showers Building's success.
- Have input in redevelopment and design of the area in the future, and collaborate with the Monroe County Historic Preservation Board of Review.
- Develop signage guidelines.
- Examine reconfiguration of interior connectors/grid within this campus. For example, 10<sup>th</sup> Street might be straightened between Rogers and Morton, and the former IC spur on the west side of the Planing Mill might be an ideal location for a pedestrian mall/pocket park.



# UNIVERSITY VILLAGE

The 1998 plan identified three distinct “character areas”: the Kirkwood Corridor, Restaurant Row, and the Old Library District (referred to as the “Cafe District” in this report). In the “Downtown Vision and Infill Strategy Plan,” these separate districts were lumped together and called the “University Village” subarea. Although all three areas do feature commercial and mixed uses, Restaurant Row and the Cafe District are qualitatively alike and the Kirkwood Corridor is very different.

Most of the buildings on Restaurant Row and in the Cafe District are residential in character. Both areas convey a neighborhood-like appeal, with grassy lawns in front and still-identifiable houses at similar setbacks from the street. A large proportion of the houses have been adapted for retail or restaurant use. In contrast, the Kirkwood Corridor, which bisects the two districts, has its own distinct character.



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# East Kirkwood Avenue

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## Historic Background and Urban Design Characteristics

East Kirkwood's development reflects the impact of the relocation of Indiana University to Dunn's Woods. The University abandoned Seminary Square after a devastating fire in 1883, and that event dramatically shifted the growth of the institution from the west to the east side of town. The trajectory of University growth, now spreading west from the Old Crescent, collided with the residential areas spreading east from the Square.

Acknowledging these influences, it is largely by accident that Bloomington enjoys such a fortunate city plan that links campus with the Courthouse Square through a short commercial corridor. Kirkwood acts almost like a Main Street. The opportunity for a dramatic, picturesque vista was fashioned in one stroke of a pen.

Originally Kirkwood Avenue was lined with middle-class residences and over-arching elm trees. Remaining examples of this era are the Nichols-designed house at 322 E. Kirkwood, and Campbell House at 218 E. Kirkwood, now owned by First Christian Church. The Nichols house enjoyed only a short period as a residence (1893-1916) before being turned over to the Sigma Nu fraternity. It is now a commercial building with multiple local businesses as tenants. Several traditional churches also remain in the area.

Before the construction of public dormitories, the expanding university student body encouraged the development of private residential halls. They developed around the needs of specialized groups such as Catholic women. An early - now demolished - apartment building named Arbutus Flats was located on the south side of the street at 414 E. Kirkwood. Other



19th-Century View - Kirkwood at Indiana



21st-Century View - Kirkwood at Indiana

student rooming houses on Kirkwood, including Saint Margaret’s Hall and the Indiana Club, are now demolished.

The residential student culture on Kirkwood gradually died away into a retail environment in the mid-twentieth century. However remnants of these residential structures can be glimpsed above later commercial storefronts. Sandwiched between Grant Street and Dunn Street are at least three historic roofs that make an eclectic comment on the development of the city. These comprise a recognizable architectural form, unique to the area, which attests to periods of city growth in multiple layers from different eras of development all together in a single structure.

Thus a unique urban architecture has grown up along Kirkwood, taking reference from some of these sites. It is multi-leveled with irregular massing. Some facades permit public access deep into the face of a building. Newer buildings address the street in complex ways.

Two landmark buildings anchor the corridor through sheer size and location. These are the Monroe County Public Library (the west anchor) and the Carmichael Center (the east anchor), both finished around 1996. They set precedent for creativity along the corridor. The new library has become an approachable resource, completely embraced by the community. Both have multiple levels, plaza-like spaces, and upper levels with access to the street through balconies and open patio space.

There is an energetic mixing of unlikely exterior materials from cedar siding to sheet metal and stone veneer. Color is less restricted than in the downtown.

Businesses and venues along Kirkwood are distinct from the Café District and Restaurant Row, which house primarily restaurants and cafes in residential settings. On Kirkwood there are a variety of small gift, music, art, jewelry and clothing shops. Seating along the street is public and informal. People hang out on benches, drape themselves across limestone walls, sit on railings where people watching is an accepted behavior.

The Kirkwood Corridor acts as a gateway to the University and a natural transition between “town and gown.” The culture is youth-oriented. It is less organized and more impulsive than the downtown. This spontaneity warrants preservation as well and it is for this reason that guidelines must accentuate creativity.



Nichols House



Buskirk-Chumley Theater



Cafe Pizzeria

## COMMITTEE COMMENTS

The Kirkwood Corridor serves as the primary connecting link between the Indiana University campus and Bloomington's downtown and westside neighborhoods; it stretches from the Sample Gates at Indiana Avenue across the Square to Rogers Street and beyond. In effect the corridor, particularly the east side, functions as a strip version of the downtown, almost a secondary Main Street.

The physical appearance of the street is in constant transition as merchants, restaurants, banks, entertainment and service providers vie for commercial advantage. Its history over the past 75 years reveals a gradual transition from a primarily residential street to a commercial/institutional strip.

The recently completed Parks Department redesign of the Kirkwood streetscape is intended to help lace the east and west ends of this prominent corridor back together after significant demolitions in the recent past. The retention and expansion of the Monroe County Public Library at its current location remains a good example of how to assure vitality by retaining core uses.

Auto-related banking uses and fast food chains threaten to interrupt the pedestrian nature of the Kirkwood Corridor and the coherence of its linkage to the Courthouse Square. Recent new developments have tended towards a boxiness that seems too standardized and predictable for this diverse streetscape.

Few significant historic buildings remain along Kirkwood. But the few that survive are anchors: The Indiana Theatre, now the Buskirk-Chumley Theatre, and the Von Lee Theatre, which pin the corridor at either end along with Trinity Church, Victoria Towers and Kirkwood Manor in between, and the Gables on Indiana Avenue.

However, low-density commercial properties allow for locally owned small businesses to thrive in this vibrant campus-proximate district. And the remaining

### Strengths

- Axial corridor linking downtown and campus
- Energy/informality/use
- Eclectic architecture
- Anchor uses including public library, theaters, churches
- Interesting diverse streetscape distinct from downtown

### Weaknesses

- Loss of historic fabric/lack of design cohesion
- Surface parking lots
- Chaotic use of materials/signage

### Opportunities

- Opportunity for creativity in design
- Re-evaluation of buildings for historic value
- Learn design patterns from historic buildings that remain

### Threats

- Total loss of memorable elements like vestigial residences
- Development pressure
- Expense of redevelopment inhibits small business uses

small residential house forms provide affordable commercial opportunities for small cafés and other local businesses.

Protection of this unique district will continue to provide affordable and small-scale commercial opportunities and incubators for local businesses. Furthermore, the charm of this local commercial enclave would be destroyed by demolition and construction of larger scale and less affordable commercial structures. Protection of this valuable local form of a college-oriented small business district should be a priority.



The Gables on Indiana



Nick's English Hut



Odd Fellows Building



Trinity Episcopal Church

## STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Pursue preservation as an economic development tool to conserve and protect small local businesses. Further expensive new construction in this area may disproportionately draw only national level tenants and franchises due to lease economics.
- Re-survey buildings like Café Pizzeria and Nick's English Hut, which may have obtained the age and history necessary for listing in the Interim Report.
- Acknowledge the threat to the eclectic nature of the old adapted buildings along Kirkwood and find an approach to deal with their potential loss that preserves this unique character distinct from the Square.
- Promote infill to replace surface parking units with scale and form consistent with historic fabric.
- New construction along Kirkwood has a set of characteristics: chaotic and redundant signage, aluminum storefronts, and chain retail. If all existing buildings were replaced, a monoculture of this type of building would be damaging to the corridor as a whole. New construction should interpret historic forms with each story addressing the street in a different way, including overhanging balconies, stairways and asymmetric levels. Finding balance is key.
- Work with leaders of landmark churches in order to ensure their preservation.

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## Restaurant Row

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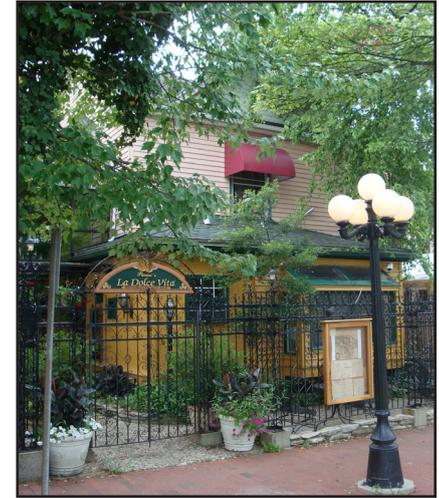
### Historic Background and Urban Design Characteristics

Restaurant Row runs along East 4<sup>th</sup> Street, roughly between Grant Street to the west and Indiana Avenue to the east. The houses along East 4<sup>th</sup> Street were built within a few years of the relocation of the campus to the east end of Kirkwood. Because of this proximity, many large Victorian homes near campus became rooming houses for students as early as 1910. The area now known as Restaurant Row was perennially defined as a service satellite to Indiana University. In the last twenty years it has become a unique part of the local commerce. Its evolution is distinct from the Kirkwood Corridor, one-half block to the north, where most of the existing buildings were built for commercial use. Through the mid-twentieth century many small professional offices, travel agencies and doctors located in the houses along 4<sup>th</sup> Street, causing surprisingly little modification of the structures.

Today restaurant uses prevail and the residential façades have adapted to incorporate more commercial displays. The resulting small and affordable commercial space encourages the growth of local start-up businesses, as contrasted with the Kirkwood Corridor where many nationally franchised businesses are currently locating. Older spaces continue to provide

unique venues for local commerce and become the anchoring characteristic. The structures themselves permit flexibility and diversity, and their location near the heart of the Indiana University campus insures a significant amount of pedestrian traffic. As with the downtown, the focused location insures that customers may make several stops within the district.

Restaurant Row still reflects the massing, setbacks, roof rhythms and proximity of the original residential character of the street. The neighborhood conveys an intimacy and familiarity common to closely spaced urban housing. Mature trees in the tree plot over-arch the street, and outside seating has become a feature of most of the restaurants.



## COMMITTEE COMMENTS

The architectural character in Restaurant Row is still recognizable as single-family residential. The small footprints, with green space in front and hidden or separated parking areas, create an intimate and relaxing environment. Perhaps the most heartening success of the previous plan was to recognize and make distinct this small, treasured area of Bloomington.

Most of the houses on Restaurant Row have already been heavily modified, which makes the decision to go forward with local designation a difficult one. Restaurant Row currently is protected by demolition delay, but that tool is insufficient to preserve the elements of the residential architecture that define its character. The architectural integrity of the area has been identified as a priority in the UDO, the Strategy Plan, the Bloomington Entertainment and Arts District, as well as the 1998 Preservation Plan. All express concern for the integrity of Restaurant Row. New approaches may be needed to protect it.

Design guidelines for this district should affirm the success of the existing buildings. Sign regulations should encourage, if not require, the use of ground signs as opposed to on-building, canopy signs. And thought should be put into ensuring that patios and handicap access are thoughtfully constructed.

Potential redevelopments west of Restaurant Row present an opportunity for the extension of the district. The Old National Bank lots between Grant and Lincoln, and the old Post Office site between Lincoln and Washington are rare opportunities for large-scale infill. Efforts should be made to ensure that development of these lots has orientation to Fourth Street, as well as compatible scale and character.

Lastly, the hitching post presents a wonderful opportunity for preservation education and tourism. It should be memorialized and better landscaped. When done it will certainly become a point of interest and meeting point for restaurant patrons.

## STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Maintain residential character and mass. In addition, ensure compatible redevelopment to the west.
- Retain the rhythm of residential window forms on the second story.
- Keep uniform setback from the street with green space.
- Deny demolition for higher density or height except in non-contributing structures.
- Retain public tree cover and preserve existing trees.
- Create guidelines to create visual compatibility for signage, awnings, patios, and American with Disabilities Act features to protect character of the area.
- Preserve hitching post and memorialize with signage.



Hitching Post

## Historic Background and Urban Design Characteristics

The Cafe District comprises a block within the Old Library District that is defined by its uniqueness. Much like Restaurant Row, the Cafe District builds on its residential character and proximity to campus. However, the styles of the houses represent a greater range of eras. The houses date from as early as 1855 (Elisha Ballantine House at 315 E. 7th) through the 1930s and have retained their architectural integrity through the years.

The Cafe District features a variety of uses located in primarily residential structures. Restaurants, medical offices and student housing create an interplay of activity which would be destroyed by larger-scale business or parking uses. Unlike Restaurant Row, there is no tree plot along this corridor, and the open front yards have few mature trees. In this area small houses have been amplified to their highest commercial potentials: eclectic, colorful, flexible, in some ways expressing what is best about Bloomington--an intimate restaurant that features local jazz musicians on Friday and Saturday nights, or a public restroom that features goldfish in a bathtub.



## 2011 COMMITTEE COMMENTS

Redevelopment in this area is problematic. The district is enclosed by a three-story IU parking garage on most of its north side. In addition, in its 2010 master plan, IU targets the blocks to the east for a major redevelopment, including a student welcome center, structured parking, and mixed-use space. While the decommissioning of surface parking lots should be encouraged, so should preservation of the single row of smaller houses on the south side of Sixth Street. Further, the redevelopment should be of a scale, mass, and vernacular aesthetic that complements rather than overwhelms the local character that defines the area today.

The district's strength as an historic residential and mixed commercial environment should be the basis on which plans for the area evolve. Over time the residential use of the houses may be less attractive since they are low-occupancy and generally have small footprints. Ensuring their easy reuse is important: building code and accessibility mandates should remain flexible to retain these structures as assets to the community at large.

### STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Draft guidelines that encourage visual compatibility for signage, awnings, patios, and American with Disabilities Act features to protect the character of the area.
- Retain the residential character of the green space (front yards).
- Deny demolition of historic buildings for parking or higher-density development.
- Encourage flexible zoning and parking for business uses (including collective parking).
- Support adaptive reuse by addressing local accessibility issues, including economic incentives.

# MONON CORRIDOR (THE OLD LEVEE)

## Historic Background and Urban Design Characteristics

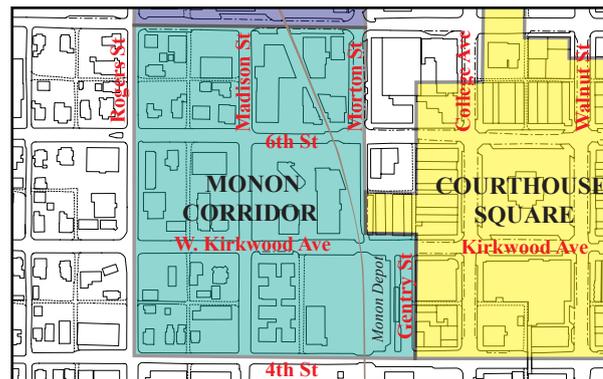
In most areas as close to the Courthouse Square as West Kirkwood, there is a concentration of historically surveyed and documented structures. The area of land along Kirkwood from Gentry Street on the east and Rogers Street to the west is anomalous because there are few significant historic buildings. The reason for this is its historic use.

Upon lots along West 4<sup>th</sup> Street, 6<sup>th</sup> Street, and Kirkwood once stood buildings and structures associated with Bloomington's lively railroad traffic. All are now demolished. In fact, Morton was named Railroad Street throughout most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1883, there was a locomotive turntable, a freight station and a passenger station that conveyed students north and south to their homes throughout the Midwest. All of this railroad-related infrastructure was located within a block and a half of the Courthouse.

Consequently the area also evolved as a haven for travelers. Orchard House, a famous early traveler's lodging, was located across from the



Monon Depot (Looking northeast toward Courthouse)



Louisville, New Albany and Chicago Passenger Depot on what is now Gentry Street. This hotel had been in existence since the days of stage coach transportation. Bundy's European House was built in the 1890s and still stands, now adapted as a bar and pub.

Other early industrial uses collected around the railroad: a coal business, lumberyards, warehouses, and wholesalers. As late as 1913 the Model Rolling Mill was operating on 6<sup>th</sup> Street and parts of this remain as an aluminum-covered office building.

Because of these large-footprint uses, the area developed unevenly when the uses were removed. The remaining historic fabric lacks continuity and the potential for a true multi-resource historic district is not present. Surface parking lots as well as drive-through facilities create a break with the consistency of the urban wall downtown.

Improvement of the old railway right-of-way as a bike and pedestrian trail has provided a path to the future and incited more interest in the

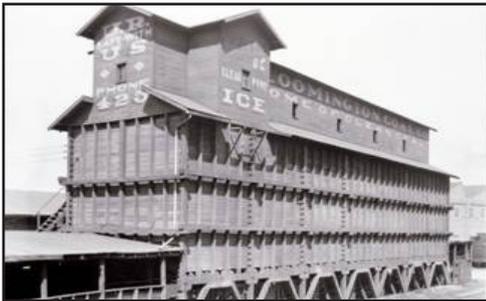
quality of redevelopment. The B-Line is bringing elevated interest to this area and the promise of increased visibility and commerce. Even today, the area shows vitality through new construction in the recently built Wonderlab Museum, the Kirkwood Apartments, and a newer brick office building on 6th and Rogers which was prescient in its compatible scale and design for the area. There is admirable traffic around Bloomingfoods West in an adapted 1920s garage which has become a vital focal point for all of the west side neighborhoods.

A swath of land in the 400 block of Kirkwood, West 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Streets, contains the remains of a prominent residential corridor, illustrated by the Batman House, the John East House and the Jesse Howe House. Along this corridor Bloomington's prominent bankers, lawyers and businessmen of the 19<sup>th</sup> century lived in a neighborhood rivaling the one developed by the Showers family on North Washington. The area presents the opportunity to preserve the strong historic context that has been lost to the east.

On 4<sup>th</sup> Street there are four large homes zoned commercial that present the possibility for development as a west side version of Restaurant Row. But less of this historic fabric exists elsewhere which presents a puzzle for redevelopment.



Batman House



L.C. McDaniel Coal Yard



Monon Depot (looking toward Bundy's Hotel)



Howe House

## COMMITTEE COMMENTS

Efforts should be made to celebrate Bloomington's substantial railroad heritage in this area that is still shaped by the ghosts of removed buildings like the Monon Depot. This could be done in a variety of ways, from simple signage to a more subtle architectural reference to the missing forms. But an agreement to preserve the area as a public gathering spot is appropriate. The location of the Wonderlab Museum as a successful focal point will be helpful in this respect.

### Strengths

- B-Line Trail
- Link to the Near West and Prospect Hill neighborhoods
- Close to a variety of businesses and shops
- Pedestrian and bike friendly
- Remaining historic resources are of high quality
- Bloomingfoods' location is an asset
- Kirkwood streetscape project
- Focus for alternative culture

### Opportunities

- Large open areas welcome infill
- Under-utilized structures
- Sidewalk and brick streets remain as infrastructure resources
- Ripe for redevelopment

### Weaknesses

- Un-surveyed or under-protected resources
- Old industrial corridor
- Open parking areas located next to B-Line
- Lack of overall vision

### Threats

- Heavily modified resources may be lost
- Not fully surveyed
- Fifty-foot-tall structures permitted by zoning ordinance may overwhelm historic anchor properties

## STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Erect informational signage at the former Monon Station site at Kirkwood and Morton.
- Recognize public nature of the former Monon Station.
- On the Monon Station lot consider something like a beer garden that acknowledges existing uses in the area and references the former use, perhaps through an architectural feature like the bell-cast roof seen on the former depot.
- Encourage architectural diversity that complements the historic resources.
- Carefully protect views from the B-Line.
- Identify and utilize ways to have input in the redevelopment of the area.
- Promote the reuse of some possibly significant but modified buildings, most notably the former location of Middle Way House.
- Consider designation of outstanding resources such as the Batman House and John East House.

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# SURROUNDING CORE NEIGHBORHOODS

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## Historic Background and Urban Design Characteristics

Planning documents have long touted the advantages of Bloomington's small-town character and affordability, illustrated best in its core neighborhoods. And it is in these neighborhoods that the sense of place is most personal. But only recently has the community begun to appreciate the sustainable lifestyles that these neighborhoods also encourage. There is demonstrated value in living on small urban lots, in modestly sized housing, flanked by alleys, that are readily accessible to downtown. The values they support are inherent: thrift, health and pedestrian orientation.

The local boom in housing construction is driven by Bloomington's success as a community but also the increase in students at IU – over 4,500 new students in the last five years. New construction projects continue to materialize in the downtown and in areas adjacent to the university. The intrinsic affordability of core neighborhoods also makes them vulnerable to inappropriate redevelopment. To an extent, zoning protects them, but in areas under market pressure, a discerning eye must evaluate the historic significance of what might be lost. For 35 years, the Commission has played this role, amid changing tastes and policies.

In 1995, the Commission obtained the statutory authority to implement phased historic districts called conservation districts. These have proven useful tools. Since 2001 over 600 buildings have been designated in this kind of district. A conservation district regulates only demolition, new construction, and moving structures. In both mature conservation districts, McDoel Gardens and Prospect Hill, owners have elected to continue with this light regulation rather than elevate to a full historic district. Frequently, it is politically acceptable among

neighbors to form a conservation area within a neighborhood, although this may not always be the best path for individual historic properties. While conservation districts have strengthened and encouraged neighborhoods, the regulation does not protect the exterior details of a building, so it is not a true preservation tool. Over time, a pattern of characteristics in conservation districts have developed:

- Buildings need not be of extremely high architectural value;
- Development pressure is increasing;
- Many owners prefer not to have review of all exterior changes.

The limitation of this kind of district is that exterior details on existing buildings are not reviewed for their appropriateness by the Commission: out-of-scale additions, enclosures and enlargements can occur. Removal of existing historic fabric is also unregulated. It is best to clarify the difference between districts and to continually educate owners about good design. But, a known benefit of conservation districts is that owners often spontaneously restore their homes, and good design decisions are infectious.



For areas of high architectural value, a full historic district is the correct regulation. The craft and artistry of details are protected. Characteristics of historic districts include:

- Areas eligible for National Register
- Areas where design and materials are of high quality
- Landmark buildings which illustrate local history

Another issue of concern in the core neighborhoods is insufficient exterior maintenance. This issue is shared broadly among owners and landlords. There are multiple causes including neglect, lack of access to rehabilitation money, and lack of expertise and education. A coordinated effort to address maintenance is lacking. Some highly marketed but misunderstood issues like window replacement continue to threaten historic districts by reducing the quality of what is left to be preserved.

Core neighborhoods are a major resource long acknowledged in planning documents as a way to retain the character and affordability of our town. They are where the experience of place is the most personal and urgent.



## STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ask for budget line for advisory architect to be made available to citizens to provide design guideline advice.
- Conduct design workshops on appropriate additions.
- Institute the use of a non-binding review in Conservation Districts.
- Encourage new neighborhood preservation plans.
- Address the problems of demolition by neglect and deferred maintenance by those of limited means and the elderly.



## COMMITTEE COMMENTS

The popularity of Conservation Districts has prompted questions about the scope of their effectiveness. The lack of review for exterior changes to existing buildings is a limitation. Since these kinds of reviews are not required in Conservation Districts, design education is essential to the health of a district. How an educational agenda should be pursued in Bloomington is less clear but a method of communicating appropriate design to contractors and owners is needed and a comprehensive program should be considered. In some communities non-binding reviews are implemented or free architectural advice dispensed as an incentive. Workshops, brochures and web sites are additional considerations.



### Strengths

- Community consensus regarding the importance of core residential neighborhoods
- Most are either National Register listed or surveyed
- Active citizen participation and representation by neighborhood associations
- Consistency of residential streetscape
- Much of the historic fabric is protected by Conservation or Historic Districts
- Protection by Demolition Delay through historic survey

### Weaknesses

- Condition of some houses
- Lack of clear boundaries
- Use of conservation district instead of full historic districts in areas of high architectural value
- Preservation of native architectural forms versus desire for increased square footage

### Opportunities

- Nonbinding reviews
- Preserving affordable scale
- Preserving sustainable form
- Resurvey to begin in 2012

### Threats

- Inappropriate additions in Conservation Districts
- Lack of stability discourages reinvestment

## Current Issue in Preservation: Economic Development

The recession and changing downtown demographics have brought unmistakable change to downtown Bloomington. Businesses have always come and gone, but turnover recently has accelerated. In the last year, a large number of businesses on or near the Courthouse Square have closed shop or announced their intention to do so. Among them: a national clothing store, several banks, a cooking supply store, a title company, a copy shop, a craft store, and several restaurants. Businesses geared toward “town and tourist” as opposed to college students seem particularly hard hit.

In times like these, owners of historic downtown buildings need the Commission to be an effective partner. Simply put, the economic benefit of preservation needs to outweigh regulatory burdens. Accordingly, the Commission should make economic development more of a focus in the future.

Fortunately, preservation has a proven track record of stimulating economic development. Programs like Bloomington’s façade grants initiative and preservation tax credits improve the look and feel of downtown, which in turn helps draw people who spend their money in shops and restaurants.

Nationally, preservation has a proven track record as an economic development tool. The National Trust for Historic Preservation has an over thirty-year track record of using its Main Street program to assist communities in using preservation to improve their economies. The National Trust’s economic development strategy is to organize stakeholders around preservation, promote central business districts, encourage quality design, and facilitate economic restructuring and related building when necessary.

Despite the ongoing restructuring of Bloomington’s downtown economy, the area continues to grow and thrive. The City is blessed with

quality building stock and a great group of mostly local owners who view themselves as community builders, and not just investors. And unlike most other Indiana courthouse towns, Bloomington is unique in that its past leaders had the foresight to route its state highways around rather than through its downtown. The result is a far more livable and pedestrian-friendly downtown than most other Indiana downtowns.

In summary, the distinct nature of Bloomington’s downtown - the notion that it is a special place – is what draws shoppers, restaurant patrons, office users, and tourists. That reality aligns well with the Commission’s core mission: to revitalize historic areas by promoting community pride, good design, and the productive use of Bloomington’s architectural heritage.

In the years ahead the preservation community and the business community should explore how we can better work together to improve Bloomington’s economy.

### STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Form an economic development task force or committee, which collaborates with other City Departments and community stakeholders.
- Evaluate preservation incentives, and determine if there may be other incentives available, such as preservation easements.
- Provide education on available incentives.
- Create preservation tourism opportunities.

## Current Issue in Preservation: Signage and Awnings

Signage and awnings fall into a gray area of the Commission's regulatory purview. On the one hand, they are, for all intents and purposes, only temporary appurtenances to buildings. With few exceptions, the signs themselves are not what the Commission wishes to preserve. On the other hand, signs and awnings are highly visible. In fact, unlike other "temporary" building components – roofs, HVAC systems, etc. – the very purpose of signage and awnings is to draw the eye. Poorly chosen signs and awnings can significantly diminish historic districts.

Commercial signage and awnings create a unique set of issues for the Commission. Among the issues:

- Building signage and awnings change with new occupants;
- Sign and awning technology evolves;
- The signage and awnings on new buildings influence what gets put on nearby historic buildings;
- Business owners often need swift approval of proposed signage so they can open for business;
- Consistent branding has become increasingly important to some users, regardless of context and location.

To date, the Commission has largely taken a "hands off" approach to signage and awnings. There is no mechanism in place to allow for staff level or commission level review of signage in the downtown core, including Courthouse Square, unless a Certificate of Appropriateness is required. The Commission does not have sign and awning design

guidelines, and has not formally commented on the City's sign and awning ordinances.

Meanwhile, there is at least a perception that downtown Bloomington's unique "sense of place" is threatened by change. For example, some have proposed regulating business practices often associated with chain stores in some areas of downtown, in part because their standardized sign and awning packages are often incompatible with the character of an area.

Thus, the Commission is faced with the question: has the time come to develop a policy approach to signage and awnings? If so, what would its policies be?

### STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Create a sign and awning study group to review the City sign code, learn about available sign technology, learn what other cities are doing, and draft sign and awning design guidelines;
- Work with planning to disseminate friendly, educational, and non-binding guidelines, and education outreach to sign companies and property owners;
- Advocate for BUEA grants to encourage the use of high quality signage and awnings. One idea might be to have five-year forgivable loans which require an annual compliance check;
- Authorize staff review of Certificates of Appropriateness to expedite the processing of signage permits.

## Current Issue in Preservation: Sustainability

Broadly speaking, sustainability programs consist of three components: social, economic, and environmental. Historic preservation is an integral part of all three.

Preserving historic neighborhoods is socially sustainable. Bloomington's historic residential and commercial areas are all compact, which promotes walking and interaction with neighbors. Pedestrian-friendly environments create a sense of place and sense of community. Additionally, keeping core neighborhoods healthy reduces the pressure to expand on the urban fringe.

Restoring and retrofitting existing structures is economically sustainable, as well. Because restoration is more labor-intensive than new construction, it keeps more local workers on the payroll. Furthermore, investment in preservation leverages secondary economic benefits as it enhances the experiences of locals and tourists alike.

Lastly, the environmental benefits of preservation are clear. Many historic properties, built in the pre-oil age, already allow for natural ventilation and light, which reduces energy consumption. Most are built of good original, non-petroleum-based materials that have years of life left in them without any new carbon cost, or the addition of building materials to landfills.



### The True Cost of Replacement

When all or part of an existing building is removed, all of the embodied energy that went into construction is lost. The energy used to demolish and haul it away adds to the carbon debt.

According to a study published in 2007 in the UK, it takes between thirty-five and fifty years before the savings derived from a new, energy efficient home equals the energy loss suffered through the demolition of an existing building (Source: Empty Homes Agency; *New Tricks with Old Bricks*). The new construction consumes a tremendous amount natural resources and fossil fuels (including the carbon debt incurred by every piece of lumber, steel, each appliance, and every truck used by each worker). By offering an isolated solution to an isolated problem, the overarching goal of conservation is missed. This is a compelling argument for adaptive reuse.

We cannot possibly build our way out of this energy problem. But we may be able to conserve our way out. For example, windows are often targeted for replacement as a quick and inexpensive way to increase energy efficiency and stop heat loss. But the society-wide energy savings from replacing old windows has been calculated to take over 200 years to recover, as opposed to five years for simple repair and the purchase of storm windows. So what looks like energy savings is really not.

Maintaining and restoring, or recycling existing buildings remains the most efficient solution to the energy crisis. The greenest brick is the one that stays in a restored structure.

The perceived tensions between preservationists and sustainability advocates are generally overblown. Both movements are harmed by inflexibility and parochialism. And both benefit when they learn and share. For example, “green” cities including Portland, Oregon have worked through the placement of solar collectors and wind turbines. Such cooperation makes neighborhoods stronger while benefitting the environment. Such common-sense policies should be used as a model in Bloomington.

## COMMITTEE COMMENTS

In the lengthy discussions about Bloomington’s 2009 Green Building Ordinance, it was concluded that conserving and retrofitting existing buildings is the most sustainable and practical construction goal. But the Commission continues to be a peripheral contributor to the City’s important sustainability discussion. The need is apparent for more thorough analysis and broader-based support of practices that encourage building reuse and neighborhood conservation.

By implementing design guidelines that encourage alternative energy use, the Commission may make it easier for citizens in historic neighborhoods to reduce their individual carbon footprints.



## STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Create/amend design guidelines for sustainability in historic neighborhoods.
- Sponsor workshops in critical subjects like window replacement, paint adherence and alternative energy sources.
- Coordinate continuing education agendas.
- Create consciousness of Bloomington’s track record in preserving important landmarks.
- Enter the local discussion more visibly.



## Current Issue in Preservation: Education and Research

The Commission's effectiveness depends heavily on education, outreach, and research. Preservation initiatives require public buy-in regarding often complicated issues, and that requires education of key stakeholders. In addition, Commission work requires significant expertise and knowledge from its members, as well as quality research and survey work.

The Commission's first outreach effort occurred over 23 years ago with the publication of the first five Walking Tour brochures. Now there are 13 tours of historic neighborhoods and buildings in Bloomington. All are electronically available on the Commission website, and many are revised in full color with new information about revitalization strategies for neighborhoods ([www.bloomington.in.gov/bhpc](http://www.bloomington.in.gov/bhpc)).

In the past the Commission's education and outreach have been primarily composed of a website, lectures, awards, and walking tours. The new thrust of this effort may be to solidify logical partnerships with other similarly interested entities like the Monroe County Preservation

Board of Review, Parks Department, the Monroe County History Center, Bloomington Restorations, Inc. or the Sustainability Commission. This may magnify the voice of historic preservation in our community.

The Commission would benefit by seeking broader educational opportunities that are less fraught with controversy than the regulatory obligations of the Commission. Opportunities include events like the Parks Department's 100-year anniversary and the popular Farmer's Market.

Over the years, the Commission has done well in providing high-quality speakers and events to its constituency. To this end, nationally renowned economist Donovan Rypkema, prominent planning consultant Nore Winter, and Ball State Graduate Program in Historic Preservation director Duncan Campbell have all been asked to speak to strategic areas of interest. These programs have been very popular, well-attended and influential. Bloomington's interest in a Downtown Vision Plan can be traced to the design workshop, "What's Good About New" that was held in 2002.

Many communities have non-binding review of certain issues not covered by their ordinance. The development of voluntary design guidelines will help sensitize people to better design and treatment of historic properties, even when the Commission has no regulatory authority. Promoting and discussing good design should be the constant role of individual members of the Commission.

The Commission's work sometimes suffers from lack of coordination with other City departments and initiatives, and conflicting policies and rules. Better coordination and communication is necessary. More consistent Commission presence and attendance at Common Council, Plan Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals meetings can advance the cause of good design as well. These "teachable" moments have



been missed in the past. Awards and editorials highlighting best practices can provide needed contact with the public.

The Commission should also explore the broad array of electronic opportunities now available using the web. YouTube videos, comment pages and social networking have all been embraced by the general population. Capitalizing on new forms of communication is crucial to the new generation of preservationist.

Lastly, Commission business depends heavily on research. Among other things, this plan identifies numerous opportunities to update existing survey work, and supplement it with the survey of new areas. For example, there are several predominantly commercial areas that have significant historic resources which have not been adequately surveyed, including the Showers Furniture Factory Area, stretches of West Kirkwood, and parts of South College and Walnut. The Commission can't protect what it hasn't researched and surveyed.

## STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Update the 2001 Interim Report to include previously omitted properties and areas.
- Expand outreach to find logical partnerships: Parks 100-Year Anniversary, schools, etc.
- Consider attending the Farmer's Market or re-establishing a connection with the Monroe County Visitors Bureau.
- Establish periodic routine visits with the Monroe County Review Board, Bloomington Restorations, Inc and other like-minded organizations.
- Find ways to survey best practices in appropriate design.
- Reestablish a departmental annual report.
- Develop non-binding design guidelines in Conservation District.
- Find a way to inform and schedule members to appear at other public hearings of concern: assign meetings to Commissioners.
- Explore other creative means of communication on the Web or on Facebook.
- Develop review process for sustainable design issues.

City of Bloomington, Housing and Neighborhood Development Department



Presents a lecture by:

**Donovan Rypkema**

***“The Economics of Historic Preservation”***

*Cornelius O'Brien Lecture Series*

Tuesday, October 11, 7:00 p.m.  
Common Council Chambers  
City Hall



"The effective reuse of a city's historic built environment is a significant component of any strategy that claims to be 'sustainable economic development.'"  
- Donovan Rypkema

*This event is free and open to the public*





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[www.bloomington.in.gov/bhpc](http://www.bloomington.in.gov/bhpc)