

**BLOOMINGTON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

**Showers City Hall**

**McCloskey Room**

**Tuesday November 29, 2011**

**4:30 P.M.**

**SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA**

- I. CALL TO ORDER**
- II. ROLL CALL**
- III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
- IV. HISTORIC DESIGNATION**
  - A. HD-02-11  
700 North Walnut Representative Travis Vencel Owner B Venturas LLC & Joseph Christine LLC & Cosmo-Tech Inc
- V. DEMOLITION DELAY**
- VI. NEW BUSINESS**
  - A. Commission web design revision: Emily Brown
- VII. OLD BUSINESS**
- VIII. COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS**
- IX. PUBLIC COMMENTS**
- X. ANNOUNCEMENTS**
- XI. ADJOURNMENT**

Next meeting date is Thursday, December 8, 2012 at 4:00 p.m. in the McCloskey Room

**Posted: November 22, 2011**

- (1) **Historic:**
  - a. Has significant character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the city, state, or nation; or is associated with a person who played a significant role in local, state, or national history; or
  - b. Is the site of an historic event; or
  - c. Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, or historic heritage of the community.
  
- (2) **Architecturally worthy:**
  - a. Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural or engineering type; or
  - b. Is the work of a designer whose individual work has significantly influenced the development of the community; or
  - c. Is the work of a designer of such prominence that such work gains its value from the designer's reputation; or
  - d. Contains elements of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation; or
  - e. Contains any architectural style, detail, or other element in danger of being lost; or
  - f. Owing to its unique location or physical characteristics, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the city; or
  - g. Exemplifies the built environment in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style

#### Case Background

A permit for demolition was filed on this property and notice for demolition was made on August 5, 2011. The owner's representative explained that they were researching a possible move of the building. Over the course of the delay period. The representative offered several possible sites for relocating the house away from its Walnut Street location. The owner wishes to sell the property for development and proposes no new buildings at this time. The house on the corner was listed in the 2004 Interim Report publication. As such, its setback possibly affects the setback for the new construction. The owner also wanted to provide another access to the site besides the on possible on Walnut Street.

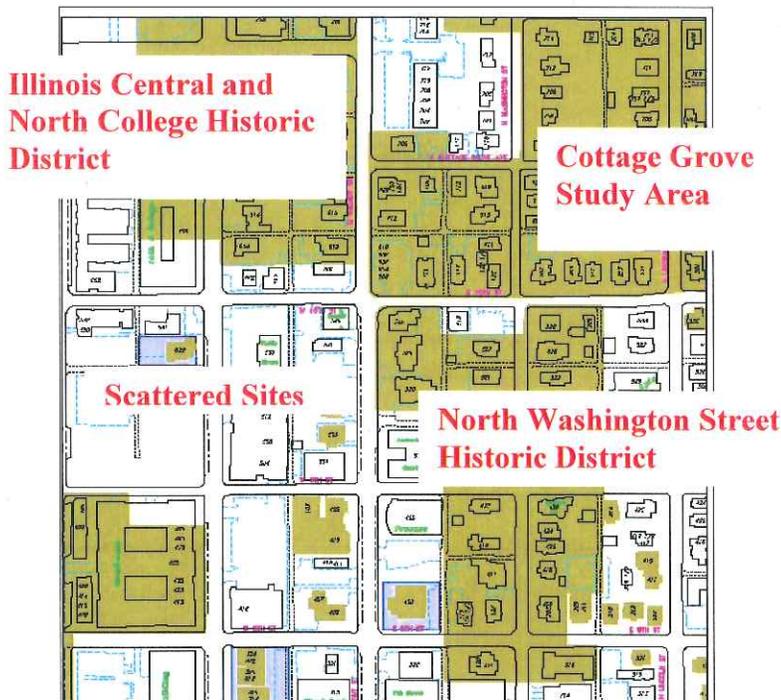
The house was identified as a "contributing" property in the Cottage Grove Historic Study Area, which is located east of Walnut and north of 10<sup>th</sup> Street. Properties on the west side of Walnut, north of 10<sup>th</sup>, are located in the Illinois Central and North College

Historic District. South of 10<sup>th</sup> Street several properties on the east side of Walnut are located in the North Washington Historic District, which is also listed in the National Register of Historic Places. South of 10<sup>th</sup> on the west side are several individual properties that are listed as scattered sites.

105-055-61063 C 700 House; **Craftsman/ Dormer Front Bungalow, c.1915**

Development History

The area was platted and subdivided in unusual ways. None of the plats cross Walnut Street. This was probably the reason that the corridor was not identified as a unique historic corridor in the survey. Historic development along the corridor, however, was consistently residential on both sides of Walnut and were the homes of Bloomington’s prominent businessmen and industrialists of the late nineteenth and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. In the 1920’s this fabric began to break down, initially with gas stations displacing houses on corners, and larger institutional uses as in the 1938 Elks Lodge which displaced the home of Henry Gentry. A Standard Oil station, rumored to be the first in Bloomington, was located on the SE corner of 8th and Walnut. Both the Walnut Street homes of William and James Showers (the Showers Brothers) were demolished as well as the notable mansion of General Morton Hunter in 1974 on the site of the High Point Office Park now proposed for demolition. This loss of this house, precipitated the historic preservation movement in Bloomington, resulting in our local ordinance in May of 1974.



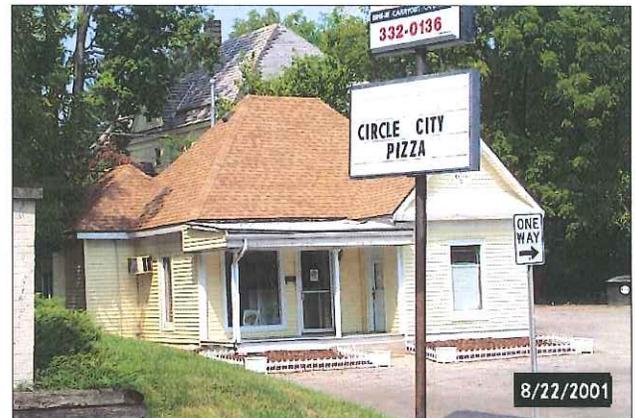
In 2005 a demolition delay ordinance was passed to address the issue of further losses

along these corridors (College Avenue) which continue to be under pressure for redevelopment.

From 8<sup>th</sup> Street to the viaduct there are 23 contributing properties remaining along Walnut Street. These are properties that have some value either architectural integrity or historic significance. They vary from modest homes on the north end to many grander residences that have been successfully adapted for office use.



#### Notable properties in the 600 block



#### Contributing properties in the 800 block

Along this corridor (400-800 block) , surveyed properties include: 2 Outstanding, 9 Notable, 9 contributing and 6 non-contributing.

This report addresses the criteria sequentially

**Historic**

**a. Has significant character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the city, state, nation; or is associated with a person who played a significant role in local, state or national history.**



The original owner of this home was Roy Burns, a prominent local grocer. There was newspaper coverage of its construction. His family resided there from 1928-1946. Burns, a businessman in early twentieth century Bloomington, successfully developed a chain of local grocery stores in Bloomington. This was during an era of smaller square footage neighborhood groceries that

succeeded the dry goods and specialty green grocers and butchers of the late nineteenth century. A good example of an early dry good store building in Bloomington is located on 10<sup>th</sup> and Grant. Although it started its life as a dry goods store, it was reopened by Burns as a neighborhood grocery in 1915.



Burns was born in 1898 and admittedly enjoyed a Horatio Alger-like biography. As a young man he worked at the Sowders Grocery store, the building for which still stands at 4<sup>th</sup> and College Avenue. A 1981 Herald Times Article states that Burns first store was at 6<sup>th</sup> and Morton Streets which he opened at the age of 23. This store enabled the opening of his

major facility at 6<sup>th</sup> and Walnut. Some reporters attribute Burns with the introduction of “wait on yourself” groceries or supermarkets in 1934, but they were not preferred by his customers , and he did not continue with the concept.

Other Burns locations included :

105 South Rogers

400 East 3rd

712 North Indiana  
1101 North Walnut  
1610 West 8<sup>th</sup> Street

A Roy Burns Grocery on South Rogers Street in McDoel



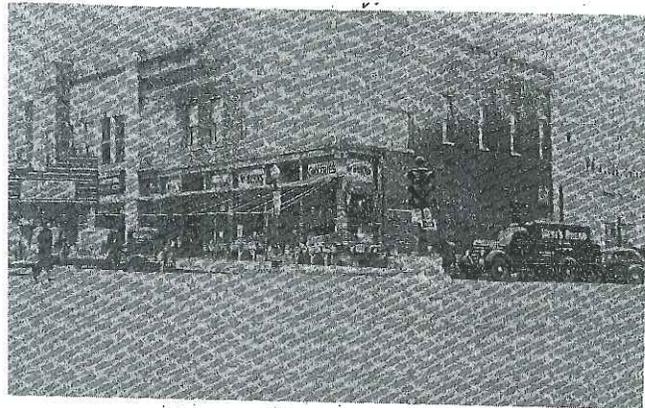
A Roy Burns Grocery on 4<sup>th</sup> and Rogers in Prospect Hill



Burns also owned a store in Franklin, two in Columbus and two in the Indianapolis area.

**c. Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historic heritage of the community or**

Burns fortune's followed the national trends in retail of his era. As a young man he rode



Burns store No. 1 on downtown square

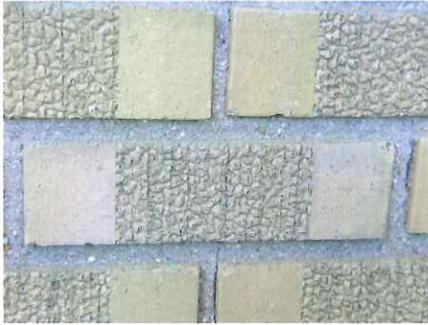
a "huckster" wagon and served farmers in areas around the county. For this he was rewarded with dinners and fresh produce. Drygoods, vegetable and fruit stands and butcher shops were closing to make way for 'groceries' that consolidated the purchase of food in one location. Burns' flag ship store was in the Odd Fellows Building on North Walnut (Walnut and 6th). At the time Joe Natale was still selling fruit across the Street, in the Old Betty Jean building. This was a transitional era between full service dry goods stores that was familiar in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Consumers waited for goods to be

packaged by clerks behind counters, which required far smaller store space. When the self service era of individually packaged goods arrived, the floor space for groceries were enlarged, but they were still small enough to be comfortably accommodated in residential areas. Roy Burns was part of the transition to "super markets" in an era when up to 50 grocery stores were operating in Bloomington neighborhoods. They were gradually replaced by the big retailers like Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company. Roy Burns, who owned up to 14 stores in his heyday, wisely retreated into the wholesale business in which he continued until 1948.

**Architecture**

**a. Embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural or engineering type: or**

The house is a brick dormer front bungalow with limestone detailing. Although its scale and placement on the lot are significant to the corridor, it is more notable for its materials than its general design. Tapestry brick work is unusual in Bloomington but several examples remain which are identified below. On each individual brick, the stretcher is pebbled in the center and smooth at either end. The tinted mortar is dark rose in color.



The brick work is identical to treatments on a house located on 1206 E. Wylie Street and the commercial building at 1300 South Walnut. There are perhaps 5 more examples in town. The house on Walnut is wrapped in stretcher course with belts of soldier course patterning. There is also interesting brick work wrapping the porch arches and in the shouldered chimney design.





**e. Contains any architectural style, detail, or other element in danger of being lost; or**

Residential buildings along the Walnut Street and College Avenue corridors are still threatened by development pressure. If one analyzes the sequence of events on South College, where there are literally a handful of houses left from what was the principal neighborhood of faculty residences for the original Seminary, one can observe how resources can be lost and nothing equivalent replacing them for decades. The two corridors in the 600 block on North Walnut and College in 1927 contained the homes of Frank Mathews, A. K. Helton, J.H. Huntington, Charles Bollenbacher, Earl Wylie, Charles Barnhill, John Wylie, Charles Matthews and Nate Hill.

**g. Exemplifies the built environment in an era of history characterized by a distinct architectural style.**



The house is an excellent example of Craftsman style bungalow with very good integrity. The most serious alteration on the house is on the rear elevation. At some point, a low shed roof that may have contained a long ribbon window was enclosed. Because the house is brick, it easy to ascertain that everything around the first floor footprint is original material. Other details of interest include a stone wall and stone steps with brick rails approaching the front porch. The embankment wall which surrounds the property on two sides, lacks integrity. The wall along Walnut is later poured cement and the side wall switches from dressed to rock-faced ashlar.

The windows are double hung and casement style with true divided lights in a rarer pattern that is associated with both Arts and Crafts and Prairie style architecture. These windows are visible in the photograph to the left. They are obscured at most locations by tinted mirror glass storms. With a few exceptions the original windows are in place in the entire building at this time.

In addition to the unusual brick patterning, the house has limestone detailing on the window lintels and sills. It also has a limestone water table (a belt course around the sill plate.)

In terms of the carpentry details, there are 8 blind or closed knee brackets beneath the eaves along either gable end. The verges are notched, a style which is seen on many Arts and Crafts homes in Bloomington.



Staff recommends approval with a classification of “Notable.”

Staff also recommends interim protection be placed upon the properties until the final action of Common Council and the Mayor.