

McDoel Historic District Guidelines

Purpose of the guidelines

The purpose of this document, developed by residents of McDoel Gardens and the Bloomington Historic Preservation Commission, is to provide guidelines for maintaining the unique character of the McDoel Gardens Neighborhood. These guidelines only apply to properties located within the district established in 2000. A map is attached. They address potential changes to the appearance from public ways of structures within the neighborhood. **They do not address interior changes or the use of structures**, although other documents may govern them. A Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Preservation Commission is required for any permanent placement or change of the size, shape, placement or surface texture of what can be publicly viewed within the neighborhood, excepting colors or plantings

Introduction and History

The McDoel Gardens neighborhood has historically been a dynamic area. In the late nineteenth century it was mostly farmland and a few residential areas consisting of about 30 families. The early 1900's saw an expansion in housing for working families, the opening of Bloomington Hospital and local industry such as the Monon Railroad, stone mills and the Showers Brothers Company. Up to this point the Gentry family made up the core area of the neighborhood and housed many animals for the Gentry Brothers Circus. As a thriving industry community developed the neighborhood saw new construction, improvements to streets and the completion of McDoel Baptist Church.

In the 1920's houses changed from the early "Gabled-ell" style homes to kit homes and bungalows. Many residents worked in the neighborhood which led to more commercial establishments such as grocery stores, restaurants, retail shops and other businesses. Despite RCA taking over the Showers Brothers Company, the 40's showed a reverse in neighborhood employment and three quarters of McDoel's workforce held jobs elsewhere.

By the 1970's medical offices and hospital supply companies began encroaching on surrounding residential areas, demolishing homes, and replacing them with parking lots. Departure of the railroad and traditional manufacturing jobs left the McDoel area in an economic downturn. Residents saw homes in disrepair or destroyed, an increased number of rentals vs. owner occupied property, traffic issues and an overall degradation of the neighborhood. This saw-toothed nature of the community led to its residents uniting to form McDoel Gardens Neighborhood Association in 1998. The association was named after W.H. McDoel who served as the Vice-President and General Manager of the Monon Railroad.

Subsequently, the neighborhood association, in collaboration with local business owners, and the City of Bloomington, established the McDoel Gardens Conservation District. At its inception in

2001, this Conservation District was the first in Bloomington and had a number of general goals in mind. First, it would preserve the homes from further decline and encroachment of businesses. Second, it would find a balance with nature by establishing "green spaces". Finally, it would ensure the ability of the neighborhood to initiate and maintain relationships between residents and local stakeholders, fostering economic sustainability and enhancing interconnectivity in the community.

As the neighborhood evolved it welcomed the B-Line Trail, community organizations such as the Bicycle Project, and the Switchyard Park. Additional bicycle routes and safer crossings for pedestrians allowed for ease of networking. Higher owner occupancy rates are visible through an increase in gardens and general maintenance of property. Flourishing businesses and additional housing opportunities for new residents have made McDoel Gardens Neighborhood a promising place to live, work and visit.

Since its founding in 1998 McDoel Gardens has successfully worked with the City of Bloomington Housing and Neighborhood Development Department to revitalize the community by accomplishing all established goals and objectives and to develop the neighborhood proposed guidelines for residential structures and areas.

These guidelines were to be interpreted flexibly by the Historic Preservation Commission, and the Commission was to seek the input of neighbors when reviewing proposed projects.

The progression from Conservation District to Historic District gives the McDoel Gardens Neighborhood an opportunity to enhance its voice with the city government, thus keeping the fabric of its historic community strong by building upon current values and maintaining flexible goals. The residents of McDoel Gardens are still mostly working families. The guiding principles are intended to assist property owners in making informed decisions about their homes.

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**Reviewed by Staff*

Guiding Principles

1. The purpose of the McDoel Gardens Historic Preservation District is to avoid major changes to the neighborhood that would significantly and adversely affect the neighborhood structures. The neighborhood is traditionally and dominantly occupied by working-class individuals. It is a diverse population economically and racially. The Historic Preservation District establishes a bordered area in which the guidelines in this document apply.
2. The McDoel neighborhood has always been a mixed neighborhood of residential, commercial, industrial, and religious structures. The creation of the McDoel Gardens Historic Preservation District does not change the architecture and use of structures in the neighborhood. The guidelines in this document are intended to primarily **protect the residential areas but do not seek to inhibit or prevent commercial, industrial, or religious use** in areas where those activities have traditionally taken place.
3. New construction of residential structures should be visually compatible with “contributing” structures found within the borders of the neighborhood. There is diversity among residential structures and permanent foundation non-residential structures in the neighborhood. This allows a wide variety of styles for proposed new residential or non-residential structures. “Contributing” residential structures are those that contribute to the traditional character of the neighborhood. They are at least fifty years old and have not been significantly altered from their original form. (See Appendix for classification definitions.)
4. The intent of the guidelines is to maintain a high quality of life within the neighborhood for residential and non-residential owners alike. Livability should be supported by maintaining affordability and property values, fostering energy conservation, fostering the visual compatibility of the neighborhood, promoting aging in place, and sustaining the character of contributing buildings.
5. The Historic Preservation Commission should interpret the guidelines flexibly rather than rigidly and should seek the input of residential owners when reviewing projects where the guidelines are applicable

McDoel Gardens Design Guidelines

All repair and replacement in kind is exempt from review. No interior changes or use is reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission. Color is not reviewed.

Changes behind the front 1/3 of the house, along the sides and to the rear are not as visible from the street elevation and are not considered significant changes to the house.

The commission specifies the types of applications for minor classifications of work that the staff of the commission is authorized to grant or deny. The staff shall not be authorized to grant or deny an application for a certificate of appropriateness for the following:

- (1) The demolition of any building, structure, or site.
- (2) The moving of any building or site.
- (3) The construction of an addition to a building or structure.
- (4) The construction of a new building or structure. In these guidelines, all other requests are decided at staff level.

If an owner is unsatisfied with a staff decision, he or she may request a hearing of the full commission. Staff may request a full commission hearing as well.

I. Neighborhood Context

This section will be reviewed by staff:

Exterior elements may be present that are not part of the house itself. The impression of a neighborhood can derive from the walls, trees, and sidewalks etc. that comprise its visual character. Only the following items will be reviewed.

FENCING:

Fences in the McDoel neighborhood have functional uses as well as decorative. Indigenous fences are made of wood pickets, vertical board and iron. Privacy fences were generally constructed in the later 20th century, but are common in the area. Vertical board privacy fences are acceptable in the rear yard starting at a point behind the front facade. This is the zoning requirement.

Preferred

Fences in the front yard should be low to avoid obscuring the front façade of the house and should be appropriate to the era of house construction. For instance chain link, is not appropriate. Wood board is preferred. Privacy fences in the rear yard should start 1/3 of the way back from the front façade, or beyond.

Acceptable

Fencing as permitted by relevant Municipal Codes. Please contact the appropriate departments for these regulations.. the Title so of the Municipal Code.

RETAINING WALLS:

Limestone and brick retaining walls are a significant visual feature in the McDoel neighborhood

Preferred

Walls should be repaired or rebuilt with materials matching the original, usually limestone or brick.

Acceptable

Square cut split face concrete block is acceptable. Poured, patterned, or topped concrete block which maintains the vertical plane of the walls are acceptable. Curved face Belgian block which presents an irregular plane to the street should not be used in the front yard as an embankment wall but is acceptable as a garden border.

RAMPS AND EXTERIOR MODIFICATIONS FOR AGING IN PLACE:

Because McDoel has many retirees, the neighborhood prioritizes accessibility.

Preferred

The preferred location of ramps is away from front facade of the house.

Acceptable

Ramps are generally permitted, front or rear of lot.

SOLAR PANELS/ ENERGY RETROFITS:

McDoel supports alternative energy and sustainability goals within the district.

Preferred

Locate solar panels on the house roof at same pitch as the existing roof. Position close to the roof surface and as inconspicuously as possible. Alternatively place solar panels in the backyard or on the garage roof.

Acceptable

Install at elevations not significantly above the roof surface.

DECKS AND PATIOS:

Recreational living space is important in a vital family neighborhood.

Preferred

Flush stone or brick patios, or wood decks should be placed to the rear of the house where visibility from the front is limited.

Acceptable

Wooden decks partially visible in a side yard are acceptable.

SKYLIGHTS:

Preferable

Skylights installed in the roof 1/3 of the way back from the front façade, or beyond, and at the same roof pitch are preferred.

Acceptable

It is acceptable to place a roof skylight 1/3 of the way back, or beyond, from the front facade.

TREES AND LANDSCAPING:

There is no review of landscaping elements

II. Guidelines for Existing Buildings

This section is reviewed by staff

MATERIALS:

The neighborhood has seen many changes through the years and most of the houses have been sided and reroofed at least once in their lifetimes.

Preferred

If underlying original materials are in good condition, match with the same materials.

Acceptable

Use materials that will provide a similar look. This may include vinyl or aluminum or cement- board siding of comparable dimension. Match the house trim details.

ROOFS:

Most roofs in the neighborhood are shingled with asphalt or fiberglass. that determines the character of a house. The street has a distinctive look based upon a repeating pattern of roofs.

Preferred

Maintain the original materials or those used by contributing properties nearby.

Acceptable

Standing seam metal roofs are acceptable but should have non-reflective surfaces to avoid reflection on adjoining properties.

WINDOWS:

Windows are a strong character-defining detail of houses. When considering whether to rebuild or replace windows, attention should be paid to the classification of the house.(See Appendix) Replacement windows should be consistent in appearance with the original design.

Preferred

Retain and restore character-defining windows on Notable homes. Original windows should be insulated with storm sashes.

Acceptable

Replacement windows should leave the size of the opening substantially unaltered and should retain the original configuration and character of the original window.

DOORS:

Original doors on houses classified as notable should be preserved as an integral part of the design. Doors may be widened or replaced to accommodate wheelchairs.

Preferable

Keep doors that are original to the house in place and add storm doors for weatherization. Replacement doors should closely match the design of original doors.

Acceptable

Replacement doors should be the same style and size as the originals. When retrofitting for accessibility, entries may be enlarged.

PORCHES:

The look of open front porches is perhaps the most significant feature of the neighborhood both architecturally and culturally. Although enclosures can be an affordable way to add space, the impact on the neighborhood can be profound and degrading. For this reason porch enclosures should be reviewed by the full commission and damage to the original design and structure assessed.

Preferable

Add living space at the rear of side of the building where it is less visible.

Acceptable

Enclose the porch with a permanent structure that maintains the house design and and maximizes window area.

III. Demolition of Existing Principal Structures

This section is reviewed by the Commission

Guiding principles

In general, all houses within the neighborhood should be kept and maintained.

If the structure is contributing*, that is, it is fifty years old or older and not significantly altered from the original form, and is in good or repairable condition (that is if restoration would cost less than replacement), then a certificate of appropriateness for demolition of the structure will not generally be given. Exceptions may be made if demolition of this structure contributes to the public good of the neighborhood.

If a structure is non-contributing, but is a part of the neighborhood's residential context, a certificate of appropriateness may be given if demolition contributes to the public good of the neighborhood.

*Link to help determine if a structure is contributing:

<http://bloomington.in.gov/media/media/application/pdf/17969.pdf>

IV. Moving of Existing Principal Structures

This section is reviewed by the Commission

Guiding principles

In general all houses within the neighborhood should be kept in place.

Factors to consider

A factor to consider when deciding the fate of a neighborhood house is age. If the structure is contributing*, that is, it is fifty years old or older and not significantly altered from its original form, and is in good or repairable condition (that is, if restoration would cost less than replacement), then a certificate of appropriateness for moving the structure will not generally be given. Exceptions may be made if moving the structure contributes to the public good of the neighborhood.

If a structure is non-contributing, but is a part of the neighborhood's residential context, a certificate of appropriateness may be given if moving the structure contributes to the public good of the neighborhood.

*Link to help determine if a structure is contributing:

<http://bloomington.in.gov/media/media/application/pdf/17969.pdf>

V. New Construction

This section is reviewed by the Commission

PRINCIPAL RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURES:

Guiding principles

New construction of residential structures should be visually compatible with contributing house types found in the neighborhood.

Definition of principal residential structures

A principal residential structure is the residential structure on the lot.

Placement on the lot

The contributing houses in McDoel are generally (although not exclusively) placed in the center of the lot in the side-to-side dimension, and somewhat forward of center in the front-to-back dimension, creating two approximately equal side yards, and a front yard smaller than the back yard. Where feasible this pattern is encouraged in placing new residential structures on their lots. New residential structures should be set back from the street a distance consistent with the set-back depths of contributing houses (that is, within the minimum and maximum set-back ranges; see illustration).

Structure design (size, height, roof line, porch)

Design of new residential structures is encouraged to follow the basic design patterns of the contributing houses found in the neighborhood. These include size (ca. 800-1500 square feet on ground level, typically one to three bedrooms); height (one to two stories); and main roof configuration (gabled roofs, including single gable, two perpendicular gables, and pyramid styles). Roof pitch for new residential structures should be within the range found on houses on that block (see illustration). In cases where a new residential structure is built to replace a house formerly located on the lot, the new structure should follow the same footprint (placement and outline on the lot) as the former house. Exceptions may be made if the original house was placed off center (side to side) or its set-back was not in the range of contributing houses. If the original

house was exceedingly small, the replacement house may be larger but should be within the size range of contributing houses. Front porches are encouraged as compatible with the neighborhood's character.

Parking considerations

Typically, houses with off-street parking in the neighborhood feature straight driveways placed on one side of the house or are accessed by alleys. This configuration is compatible and acceptable in new construction.

Materials

The contributing homes in the neighborhood feature a wide variety of materials. This variety is compatible and acceptable for new residential structures as well. Typically, contributing homes feature a masonry foundation (stone or block) with exterior walls sided in wood, aluminum, fiber, vinyl, or composite materials. Design of the new residential structures is encouraged to follow this pattern.

ACCESSORY STRUCTURES/GARAGES:

Guiding principles

New structures accessory to contributing houses should be visually compatible with existing neighborhood patterns. Review of a new structure accessory to a non-contributing house is reviewed by staff

Definition of accessory structure

Accessory structures are permanent structures that are physically separate from the house and have a below- ground foundation. Examples of accessory structures are sheds (with below-ground foundations), and one and two-car garages. See examples of accessory feature NOT covered by these guidelines above, under "Guideline Application."

Definition of public ways

"Public ways" in the McDoel Gardens Neighborhood are: South Rogers St., South Madison St., West Wylie St., West Dodds St., West Dixie St., West Allen St., West Hillside St., South Fairview St., West Driscoll St., West Wilson St. and local alleys.

Placement on lot

Existing historic accessory structures are generally found within the back yard of the lot. To be compatible with this pattern, permanent new accessory structures should be placed within the back yard where feasible. Existing historic accessory structures placed in backyards are often visible from the public way; this is acceptable with new accessory structures as well.

Structure design

Permanent new accessory structures visible to public view, that is, seen from the defined public ways by casual passers-by, are encouraged to be visually compatible with existing structures. Garages are limited to a maximum two-car size. Roof lines that match the pitch of the main structure on the lot are encouraged.

Materials

There are no material restrictions for accessory structures within these guidelines.

1. GARAGES AND CARPORTS:

Preferable

An added garage should be no larger than 25% of the size of the house and should be compatible with the design and materials.

A carport should be set back 1/3 or more from the front façade of the house.

Acceptable

A garage holding no more than two cars.

2. OUTBUILDINGS:

Preferable

Outbuildings should be placed to the rear of the house where there is little visual access.

Acceptable

Storage buildings that meet zoning requirements and are smaller than 10x16' and not on a permanent foundation, are acceptable.

VI. Additions (New)

This section is reviewed by the Commission

The ability to expand on the lot is important to the changing needs of families and predicts the longevity of ownership in the neighborhood. In McDoel the modest sizes of the houses are valued, but the owners are encouraged to seek ways to adapt the property for current uses while maintaining footprints in keeping with the neighborhood.

Preferable

Additions should be scaled to the size of the existing house. The larger McDoel houses are roughly 1500 square feet on the first floor. Additions should be placed where visibility from the street is minimized. The roof slope should be compatible with the existing house and the peak should be equal in height or lower than the peak of the house gable. Windows should reflect the number, placement and pattern of windows on the house elevations. Materials should closely match those on the existing structure.

Acceptable

Additions should maintain the style and massing of contributing property in the area. Where no other expansion is possible and nearby contributing structures have second floors, a second floor addition may be considered. An addition should be scaled to the existing structure and integral to the design of the original structure.

VII. Non- Contributing Principle Structures and Additions

This section is reviewed by staff

Non-contributing principal structures are reviewed by staff for minor exterior changes. Additions to non-contributing structures and new accessory buildings are reviewed under the guidelines that pertain to contributing buildings. This is to maintain consistent size and massing generally of buildings that are added to the neighborhood.

VIII. Appendix

***The following are survey classifications that assist in determining the significance of your home to the district. Information about your property is available on the city website:**

Outstanding (O) The "O" rating means that the property has enough historic or architectural significance that it is already listed, or should be considered for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Outstanding resources can be of local, state, or national importance.

Notable (N) A rating of "N" means that the property did not quite merit an Outstanding rating, but is still above average in its importance. Further research or investigation may reveal that the property could be eligible for National Register listing.

Contributing (C) A "C" rating was given to any properties meeting the basic inventory criterion of being pre-1960, but that are not important enough to stand on their own as individually outstanding or notable. Such resources are important to the density or continuity of the area's historic fabric. Contributing properties can be listed on the National Register of Historic Places if they are part of an historic district, but would not usually qualify individually.

Non-Contributing (NC) Properties rated "NC" were not included in the inventory unless they were located within an historic district. Such properties are usually either post-1960 or they are older structures that have been badly altered and have lost their historic character or they are otherwise incompatible with their historic surroundings. These properties are not eligible for the National Register.

IX. Procedures for Changing the Guidelines

- 1) Changes to the guidelines, if desired, shall be initiated from and drafted by the McDoel Gardens neighborhood organization.
- 2) The neighborhood organization shall inform the Historic Preservation Commission of the proposed changes to the guidelines.
- 3) All property owners in the Conservation District shall be notified of the proposed changes to the guidelines. They will be given copies of the proposed changes and notice of the time and place of the public hearing on the proposal.
- 4) The neighborhood organization shall provide a system whereby all property owners have the opportunity to cast a vote on the proposal.
- 5) If 51% of the property owners who cast a vote approve the changes, the new guidelines are forwarded to the Historic Preservation Commission for ratification.