

ORDINANCE 21-32

**TO AMEND TITLE 8 OF THE BLOOMINGTON MUNICIPAL CODE, ENTITLED
“HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND PROTECTION”
TO ESTABLISH A HISTORIC DISTRICT
Re: The Thomas Smith House Historic District**

WHEREAS, the Common Council adopted Ordinance 95-20, which created a Historic Preservation Commission (“Commission”) and established procedures for designating historic districts in the City of Bloomington; and

WHEREAS, on May 2, 2021, the Commission held a public hearing for the purpose of allowing discussion and public comment on a proposed historic designation of the Thomas Smith House, located at 1326 South Pickwick Place; and

WHEREAS, at the same hearing, the Commission found that the Thomas Smith House meets the historical and architectural significance that merits the protection of the property as a historic district; and

WHEREAS, at the same hearing, the Commission approved a map and written report which accompanies the map and validates the proposed district by addressing the criteria outlined in Bloomington Municipal Code 8.08.010; and

WHEREAS, at the same hearing, the Commission voted to submit the map and report to the Common Council which may recommend local historic designation of said property, for its consideration; and

WHEREAS, the report considered by the Commission at this hearing notes that the main house is a two story brick, federal style I-House built in 1828 by Thomas Smith who was a leading member of the early Covenanter church in Bloomington, a philanthropist, and a purported conductor on the Underground Railroad. The other building on the lot is a detached garage built in 2003 and is considered a “non-contributing” resource.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY ORDAINED BY THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BLOOMINGTON, MONROE COUNTY, INDIANA, THAT:

SECTION 1. The map setting forth the proposed historic district for the site is hereby approved by the Common Council, and said historic district is hereby established. A copy of the map and report submitted by the Commission are attached to this ordinance and incorporated herein by reference and two copies of them are on file in the Office of the Clerk for public inspection.

The legal description of this property is further described as:

015-54950-00 PT SW SE 3-8-1W 1.80A; PLAT 155 in the City of Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana.

SECTION 2. The property located at 1326 South Pickwick Place shall be classified as “Notable”.

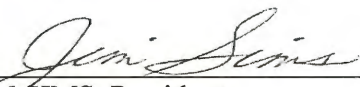
SECTION 3. Chapter 8.20 of the Bloomington Municipal Code, entitled “List of Designated historic and Conservation Districts,” is hereby amended to insert “The Thomas Smith House” and such entry shall read as follows:

The Thomas Smith House	1326 South Pickwick Place
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SECTION 4. If any section, sentence, or provision of this ordinance, or the application thereof to any person or circumstances shall be declared invalid, such invalidity shall not affect any of the other sections, sentences, provisions, or applications of this ordinance which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this ordinance are declared to be severable.

SECTION 5. This ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage by the Common Council of the City of Bloomington and approval of the Mayor.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Common Council of the City of Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana, upon this 1 day of September, 2021.




JIM SIMS, President
Bloomington Common Council

ATTEST:



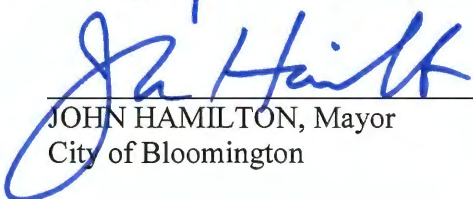
NICOLE BOLDEN, Clerk
City of Bloomington

PRESENTED by me to the Mayor of the City of Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana, upon this 2 day of September, 2021.



NICOLE BOLDEN, Clerk
City of Bloomington

SIGNED and APPROVED by me upon this 2^d day of September, 2021.



JOHN HAMILTON, Mayor
City of Bloomington

SYNOPSIS

This ordinance amends Chapter 8.20 of the Bloomington Municipal Code entitled "List of Designated Historic and Conservation Districts" in order to designate "The Thomas Smith House", parcel number 53-08-03-400-008.001-009, located at 1326 South Pickwick Place, City of Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana, as a historic district. Built in 1828, The Thomas Smith House is one the earliest examples of the I-House form in Bloomington. The home is only one of a handful of Covenanter brick farmhouses from the early settlement period of Bloomington that still stand and it maintains a high level of historic integrity due to the unaltered state of the original portion of the house. The house is associated with Thomas Smith, a member of the early Covenanter Church in Bloomington, a philanthropist, and a purported conductor on the Underground Railroad.

Distributed to: Clerk, Council Attorney, Legal, Mayor, Planning & Transportation, HAND

HD-21-01

Thomas Smith House

Staff Report:

Bloomington Common Council

The property at 1326 S. Pickwick Place, qualifies for local designation under the following highlighted criteria found in Ordinance 95-20 of the Municipal Code (1) a // (2) e, g.

Financial Impact:

There is no anticipated fiscal impact associated with this Ordinance.

(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) Architectural:

- 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**

Background: The proposed single-property district at 1326 S. Pickwick Place consists of two buildings on a 1.8 acre parcel. The main house is a two story brick, federal style I-House built in 1828 by Thomas Smith who was a founding member of the Bloomington Reformed Presbyterian Church. The other building on the lot is a detached garage built in 2003 and is considered a "non-contributing" resource. The property, which was once a bucolic country farm, is now hemmed in on all sides by subdivisions. It is currently owned by Edward Morris who submitted a building permit to construct an attached garage to the historic home. The case went through a demolition delay review because the scope of work was considered a "partial demolition" of a

structure rated as “notable” on the Bloomington Historic Sites and Structures List. The Bloomington Historic Preservation Commission made a motion to begin formal designation proceedings at the April 22nd, 2021 meeting and asked staff to prepare this report.

Historical Significance:

(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.

Thomas Smith was a leading member of the early Covenanter church in Bloomington, a philanthropist whose donation helped keep Indiana University in Bloomington, and a conductor on the Underground Railroad.

In 1827 Thomas Smith purchased 160 acres and established a farm about two miles southeast of the courthouse square. He built the two story brick home that is 1326 S. Pickwick Place in 1828. Smith was a highly respected member and elder of the Reformed Presbyterian (Covenanter) congregation, a small, tightknit religious group of Scotch/Irish who relocated to Bloomington from South Carolina because of religious opposition to the institution of slavery.

In addition to being a successful farmer Thomas Smith was a philanthropist. His congregation worshipped at the Blair farmhouse on West 10th Street until Smith donated land near the intersection of Moores Pike and South High Street so that a church and cemetery could be established. The cemetery is still there. Smith also donated \$500 to the state in order to keep the State Seminary, which later became Indiana University, in Bloomington. Due to his generous contribution he was given a paper stating that his heirs could attend the seminary free of tuition.

It is purported that Thomas Smith also harbored escaped slaves on his property and helped transport them north on the Underground Railroad. In an article titled “The Underground Railroad in Monroe County”, Henry Lester Smith, great grandson of Thomas and a dean at Indiana University from 1917-1946, asserts that members of the Covenanter congregation conducted a section of the Underground Railroad that ran through Monroe County. According to Smith’s article, leading Covenanter families such as Faris, Cathcart, Blair, and Smith sheltered escaped slaves from Tennessee and Kentucky at their homes and transported them northward to the next station which was the Quaker settlement of Mooresville. Thomas Smith in particular was named as a leader in the movement and was said to have hidden people in the barn loft and root cellar.

Architectural Significance:

(E) Contains any architectural style, detail, or other element in danger of being lost.

The Thomas Smith House is part of an increasingly rare and important class of buildings built by successful farmers during the early years following Bloomington’s establishment as a county seat. These homes were built from brick that was hand made on site and their construction is a

testament to the hard work, ingenuity, and self-reliance of Bloomington's early pioneers. Built several miles from the town center, which in the early nineteenth century was considered rural, these brick farmhouses were accompanied by a collection outbuildings such as barns, root cellars, smith shops, and spring houses. Since the postwar expansion of suburbs and subdivisions, these once isolated farmsteads have been hemmed in by new infill and their bucolic setting eroded away. As parcels of the farms were sold off, outbuildings were either destroyed or converted. In the case of the Thomas Smith property, the large barn with a gambrel roof was converted to a residence which is still used today. Originally a 160 acre parcel littered with a dozen agricultural buildings, fruit orchards, and wagon roads, only the brick farmhouse situated on 1.8 acres remains today. For reference, the Indiana Bat is considered an endangered species and its habitats are monitored and protected by the federal government. Their population is estimated to be over 200,000. The Thomas Smith House is one of only a handful of brick I-houses from its period of significance left in Monroe County—endangered is an understatement.

(G) Exemplifies the built environment in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style.

Built in 1828, the Smith House is one the earliest examples of the I-House form in Bloomington. The I-House was constructed by gentleman farmers and was symbol of economic prosperity and was traditionally two-stories tall, two rooms wide, and one room deep. The style was prominent in Indiana from 1820 to 1890. It should be noted that the Smith House is not a typical I-House and is differentiated through its fenestration and use of two front doors. Rather than a central door flanked by two evenly spaced windows on either side such as found on more traditional I-Houses such as the Faris House or Cochran-Lindley House, the Smith House bucks symmetry by incorporating a second door where one would expect a window. While intentional, this gives the appearance that the house is missing a section. This is likely an influence of southern architecture, where the use of two front doors was utilized in the Hall and Parlor form. The Smith House also boasts simple Federal architectural detailing through the use of narrow mullions on the transom windows and limestone sills and lintels.

The house is built from handmade brick which means that it was dug and fired on site. The flat brick arches over the windows are characteristic of early houses in Monroe County, such as the Glassie/Henderson House which was built in the 1830s. According to a detailed analysis of the house written in 1975 by Elizabeth Warren, floor joists are small logs still covered with bark and the undersides of the ash floorboards have straight marks on them from a water-driven saw. Also, several doors were built with mortise joints held with pegs and wedges and the hardware on the doors is cast iron with a patent date that reads 1847.

Despite such a high degree of original architectural detailing on the home, there have been several additions to the original I-House. The brick addition to the south was likely added in the late 19th century while the wood framed and lap sided addition to the east was added in 2003. The southern addition has gained historical significance in its own right, but the east addition threatens the architectural integrity of the home. Any further addition to the home would endanger the historic building's integrity and should be carefully designed so as to avoid removing or obscuring any of the original fabric that remains.

Recommendation: Approval

Staff recommends property parcel 53-08-03-400-008.001-009 (The Smith House) be designated as a local historic district. After careful consideration of the application and review of the Historic District Criteria as found in Ordinance 95-20 of the Municipal Code, staff finds that the property not only meets, but exceeds the minimum criteria listed in the code.

The property meets Criteria 1(a) because of its association with Thomas Smith, a member of the early Covenanter Church in Bloomington, philanthropist, and purported conductor on the Underground Railroad.

The property meets Criteria 2 (e) because the home is only one of a handful of Covenanter brick farmhouses from the early settlement period of Bloomington that still stands.

The property meets Criteria 2(g) because it one of the oldest brick I-house form buildings in Bloomington and maintains a high level of historic integrity due to the unaltered state of the original portion of the house.



Location: 1326 S Pickwick
Place, Bloomington, IN



Lot
Structures



