

Roosevelt Addition Historic District
April 6, 2006 Neighborhood Presentation Attendee Questions
[Twenty Questions](#)¹

On April 6, 2006, Tempe Preservation met with stakeholders from the Roosevelt Addition to discuss the benefits of and process for historic district designation and listing in the Tempe Historic Property Register. The speakers were;



Bob Gasser,
Tempe Historic
Preservation
Commission
Chairman;



Vic Linoff,
Past Chair
Mesa Historic
Preservation
Committee;



Joe Nucci,
City of Tempe
Staff, Historic
Preservation
Officer
480.350.8870.

Attendees asked the following questions as recorded by Vic Linoff. Compilation and online posting of these questions provides convenient hypertext links to City of Tempe and other online historic preservation references and resources provided in the endnotes of this text.

1) Regarding the protection of properties, what is the difference between local and national designation?

Tempe historic property designation is designed to complement listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Listing in the National Register honors a historic place by recognizing its importance to the community, the State, or the Nation. However, under Federal law, owners of private property listed in the National Register are free to maintain, manage, or dispose of their property as they choose provided that there is no Federal involvement. Local historic property designation is one of the strongest forms of protection for historic properties. Local designation applies overlay zoning to the historic property and thereby makes benefits and protections provided by the [Tempe Historic Preservation Ordinance](#) available for resource conservation.²

2) How many properties are listed on the National Register?

(I'm Sorry I Haven't A Clue) The National Register of Historic Places is the Nation's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation. Authorized under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the [National Register of Historic Places](#) currently includes nearly 79,000 listings.³

3) Regarding flood irrigation: Does the City of Tempe review flood irrigation costs and maintenance in their budget from time to time?

The Tempe flood irrigation program is managed by the Tempe Water Utilities Department. The Water Department is currently conducting a study of the residential flood irrigation program to identify opportunities to improve service and reduce operating costs for the program.⁴

4) If Roosevelt Addition is designated a Local Historic District, will that protect our rights to flood irrigation?

Tempe historic property designation brings many advantages including advocacy for the conservation and enhancement of neighborhood character by the Tempe Historic Preservation Commission with other City Agencies and programs. The flood irrigated landscape is an important character defining feature in many of Tempe's historic-eligible neighborhoods. Tempe Preservation is working with the Water Department to identify water conservation strategies and incentives appropriate to the conservation and enhancement of historic landscapes.⁵

5) Regarding the disposition of Lot #3: The proposed new home is too large for the lot. It also has too many bathrooms and bedrooms - Will the construction of this home be a back-door way of getting multi-family development into our neighborhood?

Tempe General Plan 2030 recognizes the Roosevelt Addition, along with 31 other candidate historic districts, as Cultural Resource Areas. Areas identified on the GP2030 density map are considered culturally significant to the character of Tempe, based on the [2001 Post World War II Subdivision Study](#) (Solliday 2001). GP2030 states it is desirable to maintain the character of these areas and that the existing zoning should remain the highest appropriate density for these areas, with a projected density to match the zoning at the time the plan was adopted on December 4, 2003. This provides a substantial basis for staff to approve proposed compatible development and to deny development that would have an adverse effect on neighborhood character within the limits of current zoning development standards.⁶

6) Is existing zoning already protecting the neighborhood?

Unlike many potentially eligible historic districts, zoning in the Roosevelt Addition agrees with historic development of the neighborhood; R1-6 (single-family residential). However, development standards constantly change over time. Current R1-6 standards allow 4 dwelling units per acre, with a 6,000 sf. minimum net site area per dwelling and 45% maximum lot coverage. An overlay district may modify the above standards (see [Tempe Zoning and Development Code](#) Part 5), however, there is no overlay district currently in place for this neighborhood, so we can compare existing construction to these current standards to form an opinion about zoning protection. The average existing lot size is 10,000 square feet, so combining lots will not significantly increase the number of dwelling units allowable under R1-6. Average home size is 1,100 sf. (10% lot coverage). Compare this to the 45% maximum lot coverage whereby the average permitted home size is 4,623 square feet and you realize that the characteristic pattern of small homes on large lots could be substantially impacted without a variance from current development standards. One way this change is accommodated is through decreased setbacks. Current R1-6 setbacks are: 20 feet front yard (15 feet open structures), 15 feet rear, and 5 feet side. When you consider that existing front yard setbacks in the Roosevelt Addition are 35 feet, it is easy to understand that new construction of large homes can encroach by as much as 20 feet into as-built front yard alignments again without a variance from current development standards. The open space between homes can be similarly diminished. Owners of properties in historic districts listed in the Tempe Historic Property Register are empowered to create design guidelines specific to their district. These guidelines can include modified development standards to balance changing zoning entitlements with preservation objectives to assist in conserving and enhancing neighborhood character.⁷

7) Could a majority of rental / absentee property owners go as a bloc to the city to have underlying zoning changed?

An application could be made, and be considered on its own merits by the Development Review Commission and City Council. The purpose of historic property designation is to provide protection for significant properties which represent important aspects of Tempe's heritage; to enhance the character of the community by taking such properties and sites into account during development, and to assist owners in the preservation and restoration of their properties. Through the process of historic designation, awareness of neighborhood interest in their history is broadcast throughout the community, to city agencies, and to Mayor and Council. As mentioned earlier, the Historic Preservation Commission is empowered to advocate for protection of designated historic properties, and with designation Staff have additional tools to assist in the conservation and enhancement of neighborhood character. As with Cultural Resource Area designation in [Tempe General Plan 2030](#), historic property designation provides a strong basis to resist rezoning in historic districts.⁸

8) Can you apply for designation on just one property?

The [Tempe Historic Property Register](#) includes individual properties, landmarks, and historic districts. In fact, Roosevelt Addition already has an individually listed property; the historic 1888 Centennial House (Sampson-Tupper House) located at 601 W. 3rd Street. Interestingly, this house is not a contributing property to the Roosevelt Addition Historic District because it dates to beyond the district period of significance (1946-1950). So yes, properties can be individually listed, however, districts consist of individually eligible properties, as well as others which contribute generally to the overall distinctive character of the area and are united historically or visually by plan or physical development. Properties can qualify as contributing to districts without possessing the level of integrity or significance necessary for individual designation. In Roosevelt Addition the significance derives from the overall integrity of the district.⁹

9) Is it more difficult to just list my individual property?

The process for listing individual properties, landmarks, and historic districts, in the Tempe Historic Property Register is designed to be a straight-forward process that can be completed by the property owner with assistance from City Staff. The same forms and procedures are used for all historic designations and there is no cost to the property owner. The test for significance is, however, more rigorous for a property proposed for individual designation than it would be for a property considered to be contributing generally to the overall distinctive character of an historic district.¹⁰

10) How many property owners in the subdivision have to sign the historic designation nomination (How many property owners have to apply for designation)?

The [Tempe Historic Preservation Ordinance](#) states an application for designation of a landmark, historic property, or historic district, shall be made by the owner of the property, or of property located within the boundaries of a proposed district, or by any department, board, commission or the city council. The Tempe ordinance does not require a majority of owners to sign the nomination.¹¹

11) Can absentee owners or landlords stop the HD designation?

Reasonable and fair regulations are included in the [Tempe Historic Preservation Ordinance](#) as a means of balancing the rights of property owners and the value to the community of preserving significant properties and sites. The Tempe Historic Preservation Ordinance states that if the owners of 20 percent or more of the area of the parcels included in a proposed historic district or of those abutting within 150 feet file a protest in writing against a proposed designation, it shall not become effective except by the favorable vote of $\frac{3}{4}$ (6) of all members of the City Council. The ordinance requires protests to be filed with the city clerk prior to or at the time of the public hearing of the council.

12) Concerns were expressed about the notification process about a neighborhood's potential HD eligibility. The impression was that it is the City's responsibility to inform neighborhoods of their historic importance.

In 2005, Tempe realized the designation of Tempe's first historic district, the [Borden Homes Historic District](#) located within the northwest corner of Apache and McClintock. The Commission has evaluated six other post World War II subdivisions as currently eligible for the Tempe Register of Historic Properties. To date the Commission has contacted residents of all but one of these subdivisions and provided information on what it means to be on the Tempe Register. The Commission is currently looking at another 24 subdivisions to identify the best examples.¹²

13) Regarding noise abatements in Roosevelt Addition homes: most homes have taken advantage of the City of Phoenix Airport Noise Abatement program even though there are liens, encumbrances or other restrictions placed on properties. Does changing out windows for noise abatement affect eligibility as a Contributing property?

The [Tempe Historic Preservation Ordinance](#) establishes criteria for local historic property designation which are similar to national criteria and which recognize that historic properties must evolve over time to maintain their viability. The effect of changes on historic integrity depends on what is being changed as well as how the changes are made and to what extent. In this case, steel casement windows are a character-defining feature of the Early/Transitional Ranch style house, therefore how changes occur is important. Changes to the street side of the house should be avoided to maintain overall district character, and replacement windows on the back and sides should fit the original wall openings and look similar to the originals to preserve as much architectural integrity as possible. Finally, the idea of incremental changes is used to evaluate whether a property continues to contribute to overall district character. In other words, you could change only the windows or you might only add a stucco finish, or only construct a carport and leave everything else original and still have a contributing property. However, if you change windows, add stucco, and construct a carport, at some point these incremental changes combine to sufficiently diminish the integrity or eliminate character defining features to the point where the property becomes non-contributing.

14) Does being sandwiched in between non-contributing properties affect the eligibility of my property?

Tempe evaluates properties in a proposed historic district to be contributing or non-contributing on an individual basis. The overall integrity of a district is based on the proportion of contributing properties and other integrity considerations, however, there is no minimum ratio of contributors specified to determine district eligibility. Integrity in the Roosevelt Addition Historic District is fragile because the number of properties in the subdivision is very small. With a candidate field of only 21 parcels, each property represents roughly 5 percent of the district. Past studies indicate the majority of district properties continue to maintain sufficient integrity to act as contributors, but any change will have a significant impact overall.¹³

15) Does Local Historic designation prolong or make additions to my property more expensive?

It is the intent of the city to make ownership of a landmark, historic property or property within an historic district as beneficial as possible. Historic designation provides an enhanced process for building permit review, whereby the skills and expertise available through Tempe Preservation can be made available to owners contemplating changes to their historic properties. From discussions above, it can be seen that historic properties can be adapted to modern lifestyles in many ways. The Commission is made up of architects, landscape architects, and other preservation professionals that are dedicated to assisting property owners with their preservation objectives. Preservation Staff is charged with assisting owners in the preservation and restoration of their properties, and the [Tempe Historic Preservation Ordinance](#) states “It is the intent of the city to make ownership of a landmark, historic property or property within an historic district as beneficial as possible.” Grant monies for historic preservation are available at the Federal, State and local levels, and can often provide substantial financial assistance to owners seeking to make improvements to their historic properties.¹⁴

16) What kinds of grant monies are available and how do they work?

As stated above, grants for historic preservation are available at the Federal, State and local levels. One substantial benefit is provided to designated historic districts right away. Currently, the Tempe Community Development Department will pay for listing designated Tempe historic districts on the National Register of Historic Places. Districts listed in the Tempe Historic Property Register are empowered to create design guidelines for their districts. Historic District Design Guidelines operate by first identifying character defining features of the neighborhood that date to the period of historic significance, and then providing mechanisms for their protection and conservation. Nomination of a district to the National Register also starts with identifying these features as the basis for listing. Given the similarities between these processes, Tempe has agreed to combine them, if property owners so desire, to simultaneously produce both guidelines and a national nomination. This benefit has a cash value of more than \$10,000 (depending on district complexity and extent) and is currently provided to district residents at no cost by the Community Development Department. Once a district has been listed in the National Register, a wide range of tax benefits, cash grants, and other programs become available for historic preservation.¹⁵

17) Can landlords charge more rent for properties in a Local Historic District?

Housing rental rates in Historic district rents are determined by market force as Tempe does not control rent through the historic property designation process. An observable trend associated with historic district designation is an increase in property values. Although this is proven to occur nation-wide, local real estate professionals indicate even higher rates of increase in Valley area historic districts based on locally favorable supply and demand conditions. Several factors account for this phenomenon, including increased pride of ownership in designated historic districts, protection of neighborhood character through design guidelines, and overall improvement in the level of property maintenance. A corollary effect of increased property values is the trend toward increased owner occupancy. Landlords often react to increased market demand for historic properties by cashing in their investments at a profit and adding additional units of lesser value to their inventory in other locations.^{16 17}

18) Do absentee owners / landlords have to do much to their properties in terms of clean-up etc., after designation?

The City of Tempe protects neighborhood quality through the Community Development Department [Neighborhood Enhancement Section](#). This group is responsible for enforcement of a variety of municipal codes, ordinances and rehabilitation programs which were created to promote the health, safety, and welfare of our citizens. The enforcement of codes and use of rehabilitation programs enhance the quality of life in our city and help to maintain healthy neighborhoods free of unsightly or hazardous conditions that can have a negative impact on surrounding property values. In addition, the [Tempe Historic Preservation Ordinance](#) includes provisions requiring the owner of a designated property to maintain it to avoid disrepair or deterioration of any significant exterior feature which would have a detrimental effect on the distinctive character of the property itself or that of the overall district.^{18 19}

19) There were several questions and concerns expressed about preventing teardowns such as on Lot 3.

The City of Tempe has embraced a new urban vision through revisions to the general plan and the zoning ordinance. Historic designation is available to select neighborhoods to provide a balance between the quest for economic development and the continued existence of our heritage manifest in community cultural resources. Preservation can mean profits to developers, and homeowners, and bankers, but it can also generate profits for neighborhoods, community activists, visitors, and the city at large.

20) What is the next step?

Tempe Preservation thanks the residents for their interest in community history and for their work in organizing this neighborhood presentation. Stakeholders are encouraged to bring a nomination for historic property designation and listing in the Tempe Historic Property Register for the Roosevelt Addition Historic District. *[Note that HPO received a nomination for historic designation from the neighborhood the following day, on Friday, April 7, 2006.]*

ENDNOTES:

¹ Twenty Questions, a popular spoken parlour game for two or more players was turned into a popular radio game show by the BBC in the late 1940s, and a TV version was also made by Associated-Rediffusion in the early 1960s. The game encourages deductive reasoning and creativity, play online at: <http://www.20q.net/>

² Tempe City Code Chapter 14A – Tempe Historic Preservation Ordinance online at: <http://www.tempe.gov/citycode/14aHistoricPreservation.htm>

³ National Park Service National Register of Historic Places online at: <http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/about.htm>

⁴ Memorandum City of Tempe Financial Services Department Date: September 15, 2005, to Mayor and City Council From: Tom Duensing, Deputy Financial Services Manager Subject: Flood Irrigation Program Review http://www.tempe.gov/clerk/history_03/20050915irsfs01.pdf

⁵ Tempe Historic Preservation Commission Meeting Minutes from December 8, 2005 <http://www.tempe.gov/historicpres/Minutes/120805.pdf>

⁶ Scott Solliday 2001 - Tempe Post World War II Subdivision Study: 1945-1960 online at: <http://www.tempe.gov/historicpres/PostWWII/PostWWIISubdivisionsGP2030.pdf>

⁷ Tempe Zoning and Development Code online at: <http://www.tempe.gov/zoning/zdc.htm>

⁸ Tempe General Plan 2030 online at: <http://www.tempe.gov/tdsi/GP2030/default.htm>

⁹ Tempe Historic Property Register online at: <http://www.tempe.gov/historicpres/register.html>

¹⁰ Tempe City Code Chapter 14A – Tempe Historic Preservation Ordinance: Sec. 14A-4. Designation of landmarks, historic properties and historic districts. online at: <http://www.tempe.gov/citycode/14aHistoricPreservation.htm>

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Bob Gasser 2005 – Tempe Historic Preservation Commission Chairman's Message online at: <http://www.tempe.gov/historicpres/EVHPC.html>

¹³ HPO Staff Report 6 April 2006 – Roosevelt Addition Historic District Preliminary Determination of Eligibility online at: <http://www.tempe.gov/historicpres/RooseveltAdditionHPOPreliminaryDeterminationNM040606-LtHd.pdf>

¹⁴ Tempe City Code Chapter 14A – Tempe Historic Preservation Ordinance: Sec. 14A- 6. Guidelines, standards and process for review of alteration or new construction online at: <http://www.tempe.gov/citycode/14aHistoricPreservation.htm>

¹⁵ State Historic Preservation Office online at: <http://www.pr.state.az.us/partnerships/shpo/shpo.html>

¹⁶ Donovan Rypkema – Culture, Historic Preservation and Economic Development in the 21st Century online at: <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/china/DRPAP.html>

¹⁷ Donovan D. Rypkema – The Economic Power of Restoration online at: http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/hp/smartgrowth/economic_power_of_restoration.pdf

¹⁸ Tempe Neighborhood Enhancement online at: <http://www.tempe.gov/codee/aboutus/codecompliance.htm>

¹⁹ Tempe City Code Chapter 14A – Tempe Historic Preservation Ordinance: Sec. 14A-9. Maintenance and repair online at: <http://www.tempe.gov/citycode/14aHistoricPreservation.htm>