

Historic Overlay Advice

By Sean Martin, Open Door Architecture and Resident

Due to the number of queries on the 4th & Gill listserv on what is and isn't allowed in the historic overlay, Sean Martin has volunteered to pen a column in our newsletter addressing concerns and providing information. This first article provides helpful background information that Sean will build upon in subsequent shorter articles. Welcome Sean! — *Editor*

HISTORIC ZONING: AN OVERVIEW

In 1999, an Historic Zoning Overlay was approved for our neighborhood by the City of Knoxville. The primary purpose was to make it much harder to demolish historic buildings, since many had been lost in the previous decades and to prevent the loss of the exterior architectural features that make our homes unique and special. It proved useful almost immediately when it helped prevent many homes along Eleanor Street from being demolished as part of TDOT's Smart-Fix40 (a rebuilding of Interstate 40 that was designed around 2000 and was built in 2008–2009).

Most buildings in the Fourth & Gill neighborhood are protected by the overlay, which requires that any exterior repairs or changes must be compatible with the Fourth & Gill Historic Neighborhood Design Guidelines (you can find a link to them at knoxplanning.org/historic or on our website, fourthandgill.org/homes-designs).

WHAT'S THE PROCESS?

First, determine if your house is covered by the overlay. You can check www.kgis.org/KGIS-Maps/ (click on the MAP tab, and then click on "zoning"). You can also contact the helpful staff person at Knoxville Planning who manages the Historic Zoning process: Lindsay Crockett (865-215-3795). She will walk you through the application and approval process and help determine if your project is a Level 1, 2, 3, or 4. Applications are reviewed by the Historic Zoning Commission (HZC) at their monthly meeting, which is typically on the third Thursday of each

month. If approved, a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) is issued, and you can proceed with getting your building permit.

WHAT'S COVERED?

The guidelines and the overlay only cover the *exterior* of your home; no changes to the *interior spaces* require approval by the Historic Zoning folks.

- ✿ **Level 1** changes can be approved by the staff person (Lindsay), rather than the full Commission. These are typically small items like routine repairs (example: replacing a rotten fascia board with a new board in the same material), or items that do not remove or alter any historic character (example: installing storm windows and storm doors).
- ✿ **Level 2** changes require approval by the HZC. This includes additions to homes and new outbuildings, as well as more major repairs & replacement (example: replacing a rotted porch column, replacing a window, or removing & replacing a large area of siding). If you want to paint brick that has not previously been painted, this will also be a level 2 application.
- ✿ **Level 3** is the construction of a new house or building and it requires approval by the HZC.

- ✿ **Level 4** is the relocation or demolition of a primary structure considered to be "contributing" to the historic district. This requires approval by the HZC. (Lindsay will determine what is "contributing" and what isn't).

MYTHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS!

Over the years I've heard lots of confusion and misconceptions about what is covered by the historic guidelines, so I will try to put those to rest now.

Paint colors do *not* need to be approved; you can paint your house bright pink with green polka dots if you wish!

Landscaping is also not covered; whether you choose native or non-native plants is between you and Woolly Bears.

Flags Also not covered; let that American flag / Pride flag / Vols flag / Packers flag, etc. flap in the warm East Tennessee Breeze!

Porch furniture Go as tacky or tasteful as you want... historic zoning doesn't care!

Trout-shaped mailbox If it's okay with the Post Office it's okay with the historic folks.

Until next issue when I'll dive into a specific topic, such as windows, building materials, etc. All the good stuff!

GOOD INFO TO KNOW

- 1 Always call 911 if a crime is being committed (this is the case no matter who is involved). If you feel someone needs help or intervention, 311 is the community support number. Social workers and police work together to help in these situations.
- 2 To stay up to date on what's going on with neighbors and in the neighborhood, join the Fourth and Gill listserv. To be added, contact Jen Mowrer at jen@mowrerpower.com or go to www.fourthandgill.org, top of homepage, [click here to get neighborhood updates](#).
- 3 If you're new to the neighborhood, we'd like to welcome you with a gift. To let us know, please contact Nina Reineri at ninareineri@gmail.com.

Summer Bulletin Board

New Renters and Homeowners

The Welcome Committee is looking for you! If you are new to the neighborhood in the past few months, please send your name and address to ninareineri@gmail.com. We promise you'll find a treat on your doorstep one day!

June Porch Hop

75+ neighbors, some of them new to 4th & Gill, enjoyed an evening together on June 10. Thanks to Liz Upchurch, Jonathan Nicolosi, Barry Bruce, Roz Miltenberger and Catherine Abbott and the BNC for hosting and providing good vibes!

Congratulations Melynda Whetsel

Recipient of the Knoxville Garden Club's (KGC) Van Gilder Award. In addition to being an all-round good neighbor, Melynda is a skilled horticulturist, photographer, historian, floral designer, botanical artist, teacher, judge, and mentor. Throughout her years as a KGC member, she has received multiple Garden Club of America (GCA) awards in these areas. The Van Gilder Award is the highest honor bestowed by the KGC.



ABOVE Melynda and her award



TOP Neighbors at the Porch Hop



RIGHT Black Atticus and friends



New Knoxville Poet Laureate Has 4th & Gill Connection

Joseph Woods, aka Black Atticus, (in yellow shirt and glasses) is Knoxville's fourth poet laureate. Black Atticus is a rap/spoken word artist who has been a mainstay in Knoxville's hip-hop community for

years. He is a founder of the Good Guy Collective, a consortium of local rap artists, and Po'Boys & Poets, a monthly open mic night at the Boocherie. Black Atticus and the Good Guys Collective have been renting and performing at the Birdhouse Neighborhood Center for over 10 years. Look for another performance by him and Rhea Carmon, the previous Poet Laureate, at the BNC soon.



Kayaking on the Tennessee

What better fun on a hot summer evening than a paddle on the water. Even better with a full moon. This outing occurred June 1. Who knows when another impromptu gathering of the Gillbilly Yacht Club will convene. Keep your eyes and ears open!

President's Report

The Board has had some recent changes. Two members, Julie Braude and Cody Farmer, resigned because of exciting changes in their lives that are taking them out of the neighborhood. We are very grateful for their service. The Board has chosen to fill one of these positions that has 18 months remaining with an appointment. We're excited to announce that Chris Ivey has accepted the Board's invitation to fill that vacancy. Chris is a local attorney and lives on Gratz St. He brings a lot of skill, knowledge and leadership to our organization.

This year's Tour of Homes, held April 30, was the most successful

tour we've ever had. Fourth & Gill hosted almost 800 tour attendees who visited some amazing houses and gardens. The addition of "secret gardens" to our tour has given the tour a boost. And the Tour of Homes Committee, led by Jeff Johnson, worked tirelessly to pull in sponsorships for the tour. (See this year's sponsors on page 4.) The tour is our only source of income as a neighborhood organization, and the financial success of this event means so much to us.

Many neighbors and those attending the tour have asked what we do with the profits. The Neighborhood Organization has worked

hard this past year to create a solid budget that funds our neighborhood events such as the Halloween Party, porch hops, Christmas open houses, and the school fundraiser. We also use funds to maintain and water our public gardens along Gill and the Traffic Circle. A shout out to Parks and Beautification Committee members for taking turns watering the beds over the summer. We also have committed funds to our Communications Committee, which creates and publishes our newsletters, maintains our website, and social media. We believe that all of these enhance and build a strong community.

This year, for the first time, we created an endowment that should help fund our neighborhood efforts, even if we have an unsuccessful or non-existent Tour of Homes (as happened during Covid). A percentage of the profits from this year's tour were added to the endowment. We hope this creates a financial cushion for the future of our neighborhood. I appreciate our strong Board of Directors for making this happen.

— Gabrielle Boudreau

BNC Parlays Grants into Art and Music Events

The Birdhouse Neighborhood Center (BNC) has had a busy beginning of summer, holding family game nights, First Friday events, the June Fourth & Gill Porch Hop, and the Birdhouse Summer Party, along with hosting 20+ rentals each month! And we are still getting the ball rolling with hosting our own events!

Recently, the Birdhouse received three grants. First, the Birdhouse received \$3,275 from Knoxville City Council Community Improvement (202) Funds for capital improvements. With this money, we've purchased a new set of folding chairs, a new gallery lighting system, and additional gallery art hanger railing. Second, we received \$4,100 from the Tennessee Arts Commission for a public arts program called RUMBA (Rich Urban Multicultural Birdhouse Arts), which will be held on the second Saturday of each month through June 2024. Lastly, we received \$17,500 from the American Rescue Plan through Knoxville's Arts & Culture Alliance, which is earmarked for combined music and art events throughout 2023-25.

We hope you'll join neighbors and friends at the Birdhouse's upcoming art exhibitions, music shows, crafting events, and so much more! Mark your calendar for September 9, when Knoxville's current and past Poet Laureates, Black Atticus (part of the Good Guy Collective, who rent a room in the Birdhouse) and RheaSunshine, will be sharing some of their work!

Check the Birdhouse's website to see what's happening next! www.fourthandgill.org/birdhouse-neighborhood-center

ABOVE AND RIGHT Music events at the Birdhouse Neighborhood Center



4 & G UPCOMING EVENTS

September 18
Board Meeting

September 22
Fall Porch Hop

October 7
Fall Neighborhood Clean-Up

October 16
Board Meeting

October 31
Halloween Party

December 11
Board Meeting

January 27
Campfire, Cocoa and
Cocktails
*(Replaces the Holiday
Open Houses in December)*

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