

Jonesborough Historic Zoning Commission Property Designation Committee Handbook

[Edited February 28, 2002 to include H-2 Zone]

[Amended by the Historic Zoning Commission February 28, 2002 increasing the number of criteria for contributing to 3 or more.]

[Amended by the Historic Zoning Commission April 27, 2017, Criterion #3, 50 years.]

[Amended by the Historic Zoning Commission October 24, 2024, Criteria improvement/clarification.]

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This handbook is intended to provide the Property Designation Committee with the tools and information needed to review properties in the Historic Zone according to the Historic Zoning Commission's property designation criteria.

An ad hoc committee of Historic Zoning Commissioners and representatives of the Historic Jonesborough Foundation and Jonesborough-Washington County History Museum developed the property designation criteria in 1999, Nancy Jane Baker of the Tennessee Historical Commission advised the committee.

The criteria were developed for use throughout the Historic Zones as a means of determining whether or not a property contributes to Jonesborough's historic character. In developing the criteria, the committee considered the entire Zones H-1 and H-2 and reviewed numerous dissimilar properties in order to determine the overall applicability of the criteria.

PURPOSE AND COMPOSITION OF PREPROPERTY DESIGNATION COMMITTEE

The Property Designation Committee is charged with evaluating all properties, including all buildings on each property, in Jonesborough's H-1 and H-2 overlay zones as to whether each property contributes to the character of the respective Historic Zone or District consistent with the provisions in the unnumbered introductory paragraphs of Section 11-517 (H-1 Zone) and 11-517A (H-2 Zone) of Jonesborough's General Provisions Relating to Zoning, Chapter 5.

Approximately one-fifth of the properties in both Historic Zones shall be reviewed each year, and all properties in both Historic Zones will be reviewed at least every five years.

The secretary of the HZC shall notify property owners if the status of their property is being considered for a change in status after the initial review. Before a change from contributing or non-contributing status, the property owner will be given the opportunity to discuss the status with the property designation committee.

The Property Designation Committee is also charged with reviewing properties as they are added to the Zones and conducting special reviews as requested by the Historic Zoning Commission.

The Historic Zoning Commission will arrange for appropriate training and review of the Property Designation Committee's duties, methods, and criteria at least every five years or any year in which half or more of the committee members will be in their first year of service on the Property Designation Committee. Appropriate trainers may come from the Staff of the Tennessee Historical Commission, the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions, or other sources deemed qualified and suitable by the Historic Zoning Commission.

In carrying out its purposes, the Property Designation Committee will utilize the methods and criteria adopted by the Historic Zoning Commission, as described in the Property Designation Committee Handbook.

After completing all reviews, the committee shall report its findings and recommendations to the Historic Zoning Commission for the Commission's consideration, discussion, and possible adoption. The Property Designation Committee's findings, recommendations, and proposed designations shall not become effective until approved and adopted by a majority vote of the Historic Zoning Commission in a regularly scheduled meeting.

The Property Designation Committee shall have no less than four and no more than six members. At least one-third of the committee's members shall come from outside the Historic Zoning Commission. Every effort should be made to have an architect serve on the committee.

A file shall be maintained for each property and made available to the public as requested. Each file shall contain all property designation worksheets and reports for that property including, but not necessarily limited to, photographs of the property taken at the time of each review and any other supporting information considered by the Property Designation Committee at the time of the respective review. The Property Designation Committee chairperson shall be responsible for maintaining the files, which shall be housed in the offices of the Town of Jonesborough.

APPLYING THE CRITERIA

THE YEARLY REVIEW

The purpose of the yearly review is to ensure that all properties in the H-1 and the H-2 Zones are reviewed every five years without reviewing the entire Zones in a single year. Approximately one-fifth of the properties in both Zones taken together should be reviewed each year. It is not necessary for the review in any one year to include properties in both zones so long as all properties in each zone are reviewed once in any five-year period.

Most properties' status will not change. Particular attention should be given to properties that have been significantly altered since the last review.

A new property designation report should be issued for each property reviewed. Property files should be updated to include new photographs and any information about the property that has been obtained since the last review.

SPECIAL REVIEWS

The PDC is responsible for reviewing properties as they are added to the H-1 and H-2 Zones. The review should be done as soon as possible after the properties are added. The PDC is also responsible for reviewing any property for which a contributing or noncontributing designation has not been made before the Commission will consider approval of its demolition.

PROCEDURE

Each PDC should develop its own organizational procedure for reviewing properties. Before submitting final reports, however, the committee chairperson must be sure that a majority of the committee members agree with the final reports.

All committee members should read and understand the criteria before beginning the review. The following explanation is intended to help clarify the criteria and should be consulted as often as necessary.

A property's land use zoning and ownership are not to be considered in conducting a review.

THE CRITERIA

Criterion 1: Property is a natural feature having an association with an event or person significant to the history of Jonesborough, the State of Tennessee, or the United States, or which is significant because of size, condition, uniqueness, location, or setting.

Natural features like old trees, open spaces, waterways, rock formations, and distinct landforms like hills, glades, and valleys are an integral part of the overall feel of an area. Quite often they are associated with persons or events of historical significance. Examples:

1. A spring which was the primary source of water for the community, or a segment of it.
2. A meadow or other open area in an otherwise developed area.

Criterion 2: Property includes an outbuilding embodying or providing for a given use, period, style, and/or setting and is compatible with the primary structure considering placement, size, materials, and design.

Jonesborough once had a multitude of outbuildings. Many of them have been lost as the town has shifted away from an agrarian-based economy. Examples:

1. Of outbuildings providing for a given use: well houses, dairies, hen houses, barns, smoke houses, outhouses, etc.
2. Which embody a given period or style: mail-order garages from the 1920's, Victorian conservatories, outbuildings utilizing materials primarily associated with a specific time or architectural movement, e.g. garages built in the 1950's with aluminum casement windows and asbestos siding.
3. Providing for and/or embodying a given setting: outbuildings built to accommodate or utilize natural features like rock outcroppings or springs, or which are constructed of materials readily available in a particular location but not elsewhere, e.g. buildings constructed of river rock next to a waterway.

Criterion 3: Property is a historical or cultural resource that was constructed fifty (50) years ago or earlier.

A moving 50-year time of construction recognizes that more structures are becoming historically significant as time passes.

Criterion 4: Property contains one of more buildings which embody distinguishing characteristics of a single or combination of architectural types or styles or are representative of a recognized architect's or craft person's work that retains its architectural integrity.

Some building additions have become important historic character defining elements that should be recognized, valued, and preserved. Such additions include nineteenth and early twentieth-century porches such as 119 W. Main (Cunningham House), 200 W. Main (May House), or Sisters Row. Expansion of living space may also have become important depending on its design compatibility with the residual, such as 415 W. College. Review report narratives should mention the importance of such combinations of originals and additions.

Architectural integrity can be considered by asking whether a person who knew the building shortly after construction or who knew it well after the character-defining addition would still recognize it now.

Another way to consider architectural integrity is to list all the exterior features that completed its design and made it what it was during its dominant architectural period. If too many of those features are missing, it may not have retained its architectural integrity.

Vernacular architecture is an architectural style that is designed based on local needs, availability of construction materials and reflects local traditions.

Criterion 5: Property or structure is a key focal point or provides important continuity or contribution to the visual quality of the area or streetscape.

A property or structure is considered a key focal point if its size, location, mass, height, and/or situation accentuates its presence in the overall appearance of a street, area, or zone and does not detract from most surrounding properties. Generally, focal point properties tend to be larger, set apart from neighboring properties, and more visible from a distance.

When considering whether or not a property or structure is a key focal point, one may want to photograph and consider several views of the area and imagine the area without the property or structure. If removing a structure would leave a void in the streetscape, it should be considered to provide important continuity or contribution to the streetscape.

Criterion 6: Property is an historical or cultural resource that is identified with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the cultural history or development of Jonesborough, the State of Tennessee, or the United States.

Whether or not a person or persons significantly contributed to the cultural history or development of a place can often be determined only with the passage of time. Careful consideration must be given to how the person contributed, the nature of his/her contribution, and the longevity of the contributor's significance.

1. A house that was the retirement home of a former U.S. president, state governor, university president etc.
2. The home of a person who brought about significant changes to local institutions like school systems, city governments, primary industries, etc.

Criterion 7: Property is an historical or cultural resource that is the site of a significant historical event.

As with historical persons, the significance of an event is often not realized until well after the fact. The significance of the event must be carefully determined. Every effort should be made to obtain clear documentation of the event that occurred on the site.

Criterion 8: Structure was constructed of durable, high quality materials appropriate for the period during which it was built.

Structures constructed of wood, brick, or stone built to last in the era they were built are valued. Quickly assembled structures made of inexpensive materials not representative of the era built are not valued as highly. Examples: Structures made primarily of cinderblock, plywood, or vinyl are not as highly valued as other more durable materials.

Criterion 9: Property served the public and was or is a valued resource to the community.

Property served and/is serving many members of the public and therefore is or has been and important and memorable location for the community. Examples: A store, a schoolhouse, a wedding venue, an inn, a movie theatre, a church, etc.

DATE _____

ADDRESS

CONTRIBUTES
DOES NOT CONTRIBUTE

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DESCRIPTION:

PROPERTIES THAT MEET 3 OR MORE CRITERIA ARE CONTRIBUTING.

1. Property is a natural feature having an association with an event or person significant to the history of Jonesborough, the State of Tennessee, or the United States, or which is significant because of size, condition, uniqueness, location or setting.

Describe the natural feature: _____

2. Property includes an outbuilding embodying or providing for a given use, period, style, and/ or setting.

What was/ is the historical use, style, and/ or setting of the outbuilding? _____

3. Property is a historical or cultural resource which was constructed 50 years ago or earlier.

Is the period or date of construction known with reasonable certainty?

If _____ so, what date or period?

Is your opinion of the age of the resource based on style and/ or materials?

What is the basis or the source of the above date or period?

4. Property is a building or buildings which embody distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type or style or are representative of a recognized architect's or craftsman's work that is not substantially altered.

List the distinguishing characteristics: _____

What architectural style and/ or person do they represent?

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5. Property is a key focal point in the visual quality or character of the neighborhood, street, area, or zone.

What are the features that make this property a key focal point?

From what position or views is this property a key focal point? _____

6. Property is a historical or cultural resource that is identified with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the cultural history or development of Jonesborough, the State of Tennessee, or the United States.

What person or persons?

What is the documentation of the association? Please list references or attach appropriate exhibits.

7. Property is historical or cultural resource which is the site of a significant historic event.

What event? _____

What is the documentation of the event? Please list references or attach appropriate exhibits. _____

8. Property was constructed of durable high quality materials appropriate for the era it was built.

9. Property served the public and was a valued resource to the community.

COMPLETED BY: _____

ADDITIONAL NOTES OR OBSERVATIONS: (Use additional paper if necessary)