



HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Date: November 2, 2011
To: Planning Commission Members
From: Jonathan B. Mabry, Historic Preservation Officer

SUBJECT: West University National Register Historic District: Overview of Impacts on Historic Properties as Result of Proposed West University Transition Area

The Tucson Historic Preservation Office was asked to respond to a query by a Planning Commissioner related to the Proposed West University Transition Area. The questions were: "How many contributing historic properties might be removed from the West University National Register Historic District, and how would this affect the historic district?"

To answer these questions, staff in the Historic Preservation Office prepared this overview, including information about the contributing properties and effects on the District's status in relation to the two options under consideration, and under two different scenarios.

Summary Response

In short, Table 1. shows that the minimum impact under both Option 1 and Option 2 for the Proposed Transition Area is that there would be no *immediate* change in the number of contributing properties to the West University National Register Historic District.

Table 1. Minimum Impact (No Immediate Change)

	Current Counts: The WU Historic District's current counts, since its designation in 1980	% of Total
Properties	747	
Contributors	643	86
Non-contributors	49	7
Demolished	55	7

However, the proposed policy changes will allow for higher density development and will remove protections against demolitions of buildings with historic designation contributing to West University Historic District. The maximum possible impacts to the West University National Register Historic District could occur under Option 2. The two scenarios in Table 2. below are included for comparative purposes, to convey the maximum possible impacts under Option 2.

Table 2. Maximum Impact (Loss of All Contributing Properties in Proposed Transition Area)

	Current Counts: The WU Historic District's current counts, since its designation in 1980		Scenario A: All Contributing Properties in Proposed Transition Area are demolished in the N. R. Historic District			Scenario B: All Properties in the Proposed Transition Area are Completely Removed from N. R. Historic District		
	Total	% of Total	Changes	New Total	% of Total	Changes	New Total	% of Total
Properties	747		0	747		-55	692	
Contributors	643	86	-29	614	82	-29	614	89
Non-contributors	49	7	0	49	7	-3	46	6
Demolished	55	7	+29	84	11	-23	32	5

Background and Scenarios

The following presents details informing the projections in the Summary Response.

Two Types of Historic Designation – There are two types of historic designations that currently apply to the Proposed Transition Area: 1) the National Register Historic District, which is designated at the national level and does not in itself protect historic structures or otherwise regulate property uses, and ; 2) the City of Tucson Historic Preservation Zone (HPZ), which is a locally designated zoning overlay that regulates demolitions, exterior repairs and rehabilitations, and designs of new construction.

Contributing Properties – The term “contributing property” means a property meets all of the criteria of the National Register of Historic Places, and contributes to the historical significance of a historic district. Contributing properties have historic designation and are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. To maintain its designation, a minimum of 51% of all the developed properties within the boundaries of a National Register Historic District must have “contributing” status. The contributing properties in the HPZ overlay are based on the contributing properties in the National Register Historic District.

Current Numbers of Historic Properties and Possible Scenarios – The proposed amendment to the West University Neighborhood Plan does not remove the HPZ overlay within the Proposed Transition Area; *however, it is the necessary first step to changing the HPZ boundary and enables that boundary amendment to be initiated in order to implement the West University Transition Area as currently proposed.*

Contributing Properties in the Transition Area – There are currently 29 contributing properties to the National Register Historic District (and the HPZ) within the Proposed Transition Area.

Significant Contributors in the Transition Area – Of the contributing properties that would be impacted by the Proposed Transition Area, 6 were described as 'significant contributors' - of a total

of 114 properties called out as such - in the district nomination. These historic properties have a higher level of historical significance than other contributing properties in the district.

The following is a list by address with the corresponding Site Survey number in parentheses: 811 E 1st St (WU-347), 803 E 1st St (WU-348), 820 E University Blvd (WU-705 and WU-708)
*Geronimo Lodge, 876 E University Blvd (WU-711), 915 E 4th St (WU-716)

Scenario A: Demolition of All Historic Properties within the Proposed Transition Area – This scenario assumes:

- 1) An amendment of the HPZ boundary to remove the HPZ Overlay from the Proposed Transition Area,
- 2) No change to the boundaries of the National Register Historic District, and
- 3) Demolition of all 29 contributing properties and all 3 non-contributing properties within the Proposed Transition Area.

To clarify, there would be no *immediate* impact to the National Register Historic District with respect to the number or percentage of contributing properties in the historic district. The numbers of properties and their historic status in the district will remain the same, as indicated in the Current column in Table 1 (86% contributing properties). However, properties removed from the Historic Preservation Zone boundaries will no longer be regulated in terms of demolition or design guidelines.

In this scenario, preservation would be only voluntary for owners of properties contributing to the National Register Historic District within the Proposed Transition Area. Owners of contributing properties would have the option of demolishing their historic structures. Table 3. shows that if all contributing properties within the Proposed Transition Area were demolished, that would result in a loss of 29 contributing properties in the National Register Historic District, and a 4% reduction in the percentage of contributing properties in the district (from 86% to 82%). In addition, the loss of these historic buildings will diminish the historic fabric of the National Register Historic District and, therefore, would be a significant and tangible adverse effect on the district.

Figure 1. Contributing Properties in HPZ Areas of the Proposed Transition Area

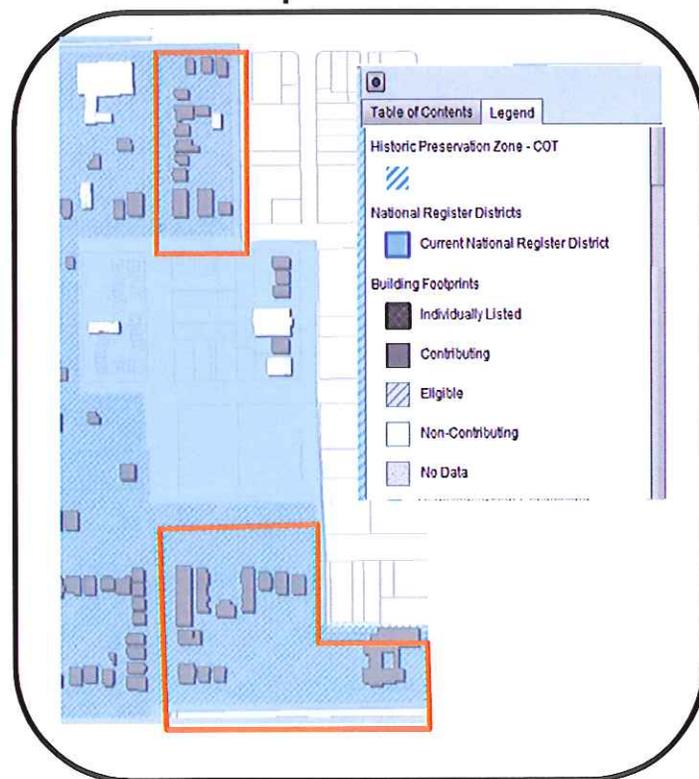


Table 3. Scenario A

	Current: The WU Historic District's current counts, since its designation in 1980		Scenario A: All Contributing Properties in Proposed Transition Area are demolished in the N. R. Historic District		
	Total	% of Total	Changes	New Total	% of Total
Properties	747		0	747	
Contributors	643	86	-29	614	82
Non-contributors	49	7	0	49	7
Demolished	55	7	+29	84	11

Scenario B: Amend the Boundary of the National Register Historic District to Exclude the Proposed Transition Area – This scenario assumes that the boundaries of the National Register Historic District – as well as the HPZ Overlay – are reduced to exclude the Proposed Transition Area. The formerly contributing and non-contributing properties in the Transition Area would no longer be part of the historic district or the HPZ. This scenario is highly unlikely for the foreseeable future, but is included for comparative purposes.

A reduction in the boundaries of the National Register Historic District would only be considered by the State Historic Preservation Office and the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places if there are no remaining contributing properties in the Proposed Transition Area. Even if a single contributing property to the National Register Historic District remained in the Proposed Transition Area, those agencies would not support a boundary change that would cause that property to lose its historic designation entirely. If only non-contributors remained, those agencies would consider a boundary change.

Table 4. Scenario B

	Current: The WU Historic District's current counts, since its designation in 1980		Scenario B: All Properties in the Proposed Transition Area are Completely Removed from N. R. Historic District		
	Total	% of Total	Changes	New Total	% of Total
Properties	747		-55	692	
Contributors	643	86	-29	614	89
Non-contributors	49	7	-3	46	6
Demolished	55	7	-23	32	5