

Purpose

Historical Guidelines are criteria and standards that the Memphis Landmarks Commission must consider in determining the appropriateness of proposed work within the Cooper-Young district.

Appropriateness of changes must be determined in order to accomplish the following goals of historic zoning, as outlined in the guidelines and bylaws of the Memphis Landmarks Commission:

- To promote the educational, cultural, and economic welfare of the people of Memphis.
- To preserve and protect the historical and architectural value of buildings and other structures.
- To assure the compatibility within the Historic District by regulating exterior design and arrangement.
- To create an aesthetic appearance which complements the historic buildings and other features.
- To maintain and raise property values.
- To foster civic beauty and community pride.
- To strengthen the local economy.
- To establish criteria and procedures to regulate new construction, relocation, or demolition of structures and other features within the Historic District zone.
- To promote the use of Historic Districts for the education, pleasure, and welfare of the present and future citizens of Memphis.

Design Guidelines for New Construction and Demolition in the Cooper-Young Historic District

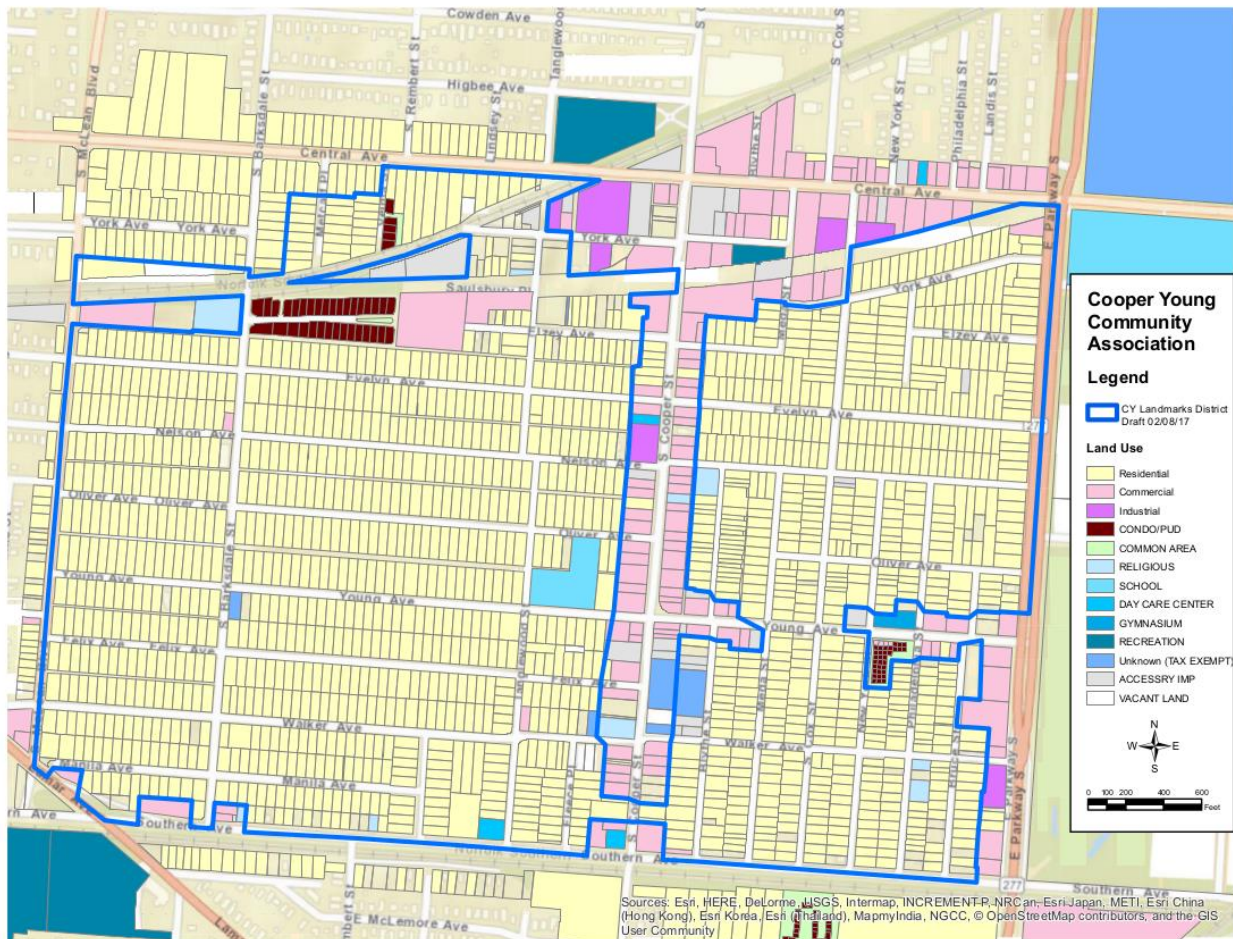
By state law, all design guidelines for historic zoning must comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings:

- A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use which requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building, its site, and environment.
- The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
- Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historical significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
- Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques and examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved as much as practicable.
- Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the original in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
- Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if necessary, shall be undertaken using the gentlest, least-destructive means possible.
- Significant archaeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.

- New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall attempt to preserve historic materials that characterize the property.
- New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would not be impaired.

Cooper-Young Historic District

The Cooper-Young Historic District is defined as the area bounded by Central Avenue on the North, East Parkway on the East, Southern Avenue on the South, and McLean Boulevard on the West. The proposed Cooper-Young Historic Landmark District covers the area within these lines, with two main exceptions: 1) the Northwest portion previously designated as part of the Central Gardens Historic Landmark District; and 2) non-residential parcels, primarily along Cooper Street and Young Avenue, that lie within the district's borders.



Historic Overview and Character-Defining Features

This historic overview is taken, in part, from the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for the Cooper-Young Historic District (1989). Parts of the overview are also taken from the Cooper-Young Neighborhood History, as prepared by Peggy Jemison and Virginia Dunaway (1977).

In the late nineteenth century, the Cooper-Young area was agricultural, containing a number of dairy farms. As Memphis grew, families wishing to escape city congestion moved to the Cooper-Young area. Before the Memphis city limits were extended to Cooper Street in 1899, the Cooper-Young area was known as Fleece Station, named after a stop on the commuter rail system that passed down Cooper and east on Young, terminating at the popular racetrack at Montgomery Park, now known as the Fairgrounds. As more families moved out to Fleece Station, a small commercial area developed at the corner of Cooper and Young Streets to provide retail services. This became an important shopping area for residents, and the area took its name from the corner of Cooper and Young.

The land became more desirable for housing, and in 1907 a portion of the land purchased by William Cooper was subdivided. The majority of the houses in the Cooper-Young area were built between 1910 and 1930. Fleece Station School, since renamed Peabody Elementary, was built in 1910 for the growing neighborhood.

The area boomed in the 1920s, '30s, and early '40s; this time period represent the period of significance for the neighborhood. The basic street grid and lot orientation in the district evolved between 1880 and 1925. The district's street grid pattern and lot orientation are related to two separate periods of subdivision development. The first set of characteristics is commonly associated with those of the "streetcar suburb" pattern - embodied in the district in the form of a pedestrian-oriented regular grid of smaller blocks divided into small lots (20' - 25' frontage) for shotgun cottages, related to a nearby streetcar line serving the transportation needs of most residents, rather than to the larger street pattern of the city.

The resulting overall development pattern in Cooper-Young ran contrary to that of Midtown Memphis as a whole: development began in the eastern portion of the neighborhood and spread west, rather than the city growing eastward.

The second set of characteristics is related to the "automobile suburb" pattern - embodied in the district in the form of longer, more linear blocks divided into larger lot sizes (50' - 60' frontage), related less to pedestrian use and more to the prevalent street patterns of Midtown. Elements of the two patterns are clearly evident in the street and lot pattern of the district. To the west of Cooper is the area that conforms to the pattern of the automobile suburb - the primary street grid runs east/west, with properties facing north and south toward the street.

However, east of Cooper, and especially south of Nelson Street, the axis of principal streets runs North/South, with properties developed facing east and west. The narrower N/S streets include the majority of addresses for this area. These N/S streets also feed the wider Young, Walker and Southern Avenues which few houses face. This particular portion of the district, conforming to the pattern of a streetcar suburb, is known historically as the Mount Arlington subdivision.

The Mount Arlington subdivision possesses physical characteristics and residential house types of a slightly different nature than most of the historic district. House lots range in size from as little as 20' in frontage to 100', with the average being between 50' - 55'. Lot depths range from 100' to 250' deep, most commonly about 150'. Building setbacks vary on the basis of location, from as little as 10' in some of the older, densely developed areas of Mount Arlington, to more than 80' in rare instances. The norm is 30' to 35'.

By the onset of World War II, the area was largely developed as seen today. Residents by that time were middle income families who enjoyed the convenient location, now considered close to downtown and to small shopping areas. However, the early 1950s lead to a decline in the area. The movement toward the suburbs took its toll on all of midtown Memphis, including Cooper-Young. With the rising popularity of the family car and end of the streetcars, families began to move to newer suburbs farther East. The new shopping centers at Lamar and Airways and at Poplar and Highland drew many customers away from Cooper-Young shopping.

By the 1960s, Cooper-Young was filled mainly with working-class and elderly tenants. However, starting around 1980, there began a renewed interest in the neighborhood. Cooper-Young became attractive to young families, nearly all with cars, looking for a pleasant neighborhood with older houses, reasonable housing costs, and proximity to mid-level shopping, dining, and entertainment. Cooper-Young is especially convenient to Overton Square, a then-booming entertainment zone.

The general topography of the district is gently rolling to nearly flat. Some streets, including Cox, Nelson and Oliver, were cut into the rolling topography to lessen their grades; consequently, residences along these streets appear raised on terraces above street grade. Sidewalks were poured throughout the district at curbside, without grass strips. Pedestrian-scale replicated post-top street lighting was reintroduced to the district in 1982 replacing the less-attractive tall street lights employed in the district for many years. Landscaping in the district has been done privately rather than publicly. Given the confinement of lot sizes in the district, yard trees rather than street trees were planted by subdivision developers and homeowners throughout, in regularly-spaced intervals and patterns of species types. Many of these now-mature plantings remain, and include water oak, sycamore, red maple, red gum, holly, magnolia, pecan and tulip poplar. Private plantings such as shrubbery and flowerbeds are generally removed from the street to be closer to the residence.

Outbuildings in the district were largely constructed as free-standing garages in the rear of properties given the narrowness of lots, though numerous other servant's quarters and surviving carriage barns (now converted to garage and/or apartment use) are also seen. Storage buildings, workshops and guest quarters are also found in smaller numbers. Non-historic outbuildings encountered include carports, newer garages and prefabricated metal storage buildings. It is interesting to note that the part of the neighborhood lying west of Cooper contains the greatest number of garages and outbuildings, reflecting a characteristic of the automobile-oriented suburb. Private-use and shared drives connect these outbuildings to the street; many early dual-track concrete drives survive as an indication of early automotive use.

In addition to its housing stock, the district is unusual for its indigenous industrial and food processing base, some of which predate much of the residential stock in the area, and have contributed to the character and vitality of the neighborhood. Also, the contribution made by Christie Cut Stone, a limestone works, is especially notable, since the firm provided most of the stonework seen today in the district's residential, commercial and church buildings.

Commercial retail and service-oriented resources in the district have flourished and waned over the years. While the commercial center for the neighborhood has always been on Cooper Street and the intersection with Young Avenue, other neighborhood commercial resources, including the family-owned corner grocery, used to flourish. Today, the Cooper-Young Business District mainly features mid-to-upscale bars and restaurants, small non-chain retail, and various non-profits.

New Construction and Non-Habitable Additions

General Principles

Construction in the area occurred primarily in the years between 1870 and 1940 and the buildings possess a wide variety of styles and types which reflect both the period in which they were built and the personal taste of the builders.

- N 1. These guidelines shall apply only to the exteriors of residential buildings and to areas of lots that are visible from the public right-of-way (excluding alleys). The public facades – both front and street-visible elevations – of proposed new residential buildings shall be more carefully reviewed than other facades.
- N 2. New residential buildings should be compatible with the other residential buildings constructed during the period of significance on the same street-block in terms of style, height, scale, setback, rhythm, massing, materials and other design characteristics of existing residential buildings on both sides of that street-block. The dominance of that pattern and rhythm of design characteristics must be respected and not disrupted.
- N 3. More weight shall be given to compatibility with existing residential buildings which are the products of the original and predominant period of construction on a street-block as opposed to those residential buildings constructed as infill development after the original period of construction, but prior to the designation of this district as a Historic District.
- N 4. Where the word “discouraged” appears it is intended to demonstrate that, while the neighborhood is open to new approaches to new materials and designs consistent with the period of significance, it also wishes to maintain the general character of the existing neighborhood.

Design Characteristics for New Construction • Residential

New construction should be consistent with the architecture and styling of the existing residential buildings along a street-block in terms of the following design characteristics:

- N 5. Height
 - a) New residential buildings should be constructed with the same number of stories as residential buildings predominant on that street-block.
 - b) The height of new construction should be consistent with the predominant height of the street-block on which it is located.
- N 6. Building Mass, Scale, and Form
 - a) A residential building should appear similar in mass and scale to those residential structures constructed during the period of significance on the same street-block in terms of the height of the foundation wall, porch roof, and main roofs.
 - b) A front elevation should appear similar in scale and width to those seen on the surrounding street-block.

- c) Roofs, dormers, and eave depths should be similar to those of the houses on the street-block constructed during the period of significance. Floor-to-ceiling heights should be maintained in new construction.

N 7. Setbacks and Rhythm of Spacing

- a) The setback from front and side property lines established by residential buildings constructed during the period of significance on the street-block should be maintained.
- b) When a definite rhythm along a street-block is established by uniform lot and residential building width, new construction should maintain that rhythm.

N 8. Orientation

- a) The site orientation of new residential buildings should be consistent with that of existing residential buildings along the street-block, and should be visually compatible.
- b) The front of the residential building should face the street, and the front door should be visible and obvious.

N 9. Building Materials

- a) Masonry materials such as stone and brick that appear similar to that seen traditionally may be used.
- b) Horizontal lap siding may also be considered as a primary building material or as an accent.
- c) Roof materials may be either metal or asphalt composite shingles and shall convey a scale and texture similar to those used traditionally.
- d) Alternate materials are acceptable only if they appear similar to those traditionally used.
- e) The common materials used during the district's period of significance are brick, stucco, clapboard or lap wood siding, stone, split-faced concrete block, and raised metal or asphalt shingled roofing.
- f) New construction materials shall be reviewed by the Commission for their compatibility with materials used during the period of significance prior to approval for use in new construction.

N 10 Relationship of Materials, Textures, and Details

- a) The relationship and use of materials, texture, and details of a new residential building's principal facades should be visually compatible with, and similar to, those of residential buildings on the same street-block.

N 11. Proportion and Rhythm of Openings

- a) The relationship of width to height of windows and doors, and the rhythm of solids to voids in the new residential buildings should be visually compatible with residential buildings on the same street-block.

N 12. Roof Shape

- a) The roofs of new residential buildings should be visually compatible with the roofs of existing residential buildings. This can be achieved by not contrasting greatly with the roof shape, slope, and orientation seen on residential buildings along the same street-block.

N 13. Foundations

- a) New residential buildings should be constructed on a raised foundation that is compatible with the foundation height of existing structures along the same street-block.
- b) Contrasting materials or a belt course should be used to assist in creating the difference between the raised foundation and the body of the structure.

N 14. Architectural Character

- a) New residential buildings should use architectural features common to residential buildings throughout the neighborhood during the period of significance; contemporary interpretations of these styles are strongly encouraged.
- b) Decks should not be seen from the street.
- c) Minimize the amount of hard surface paving for patios, terraces or drives in front yards.
- d) Enclosing a front lawn, such that it is not visible from the street, is discouraged.

N 15. Porches

- a) The inclusion of front porches is highly encouraged, and is consistent with housing stock throughout the district.
- b) Front porches should be consistent with adjacent residential buildings constructed during the period of significance.
- c) Enclosing existing front porches is prohibited.

N 16. Parking

- a) Parking areas other than a driveway should be located to the rear or to the rear side of a residential building and should be consistent in material and size with those along the same street-block.
- b) A front yard parking pad is not compatible with the period of significance and should not be considered.
- c) Ribbon paving is an approved design form, and concrete is an appropriate material for driveways. Driveways should maintain a similar width to those consistent with the period of significance.

N 17. Attached Parking Structures

- a) Attached garages are prohibited on the front of the habitable space for the primary structure. Garages should be secondary in scale and setback at least 25 feet from the front of the habitable space for the primary structure.

Habitable Additions to Existing Structures – Residential

Habitable additions are defined as the addition of heated/air conditioned space to the existing structure. These may include but are not limited to the following: front or side porch enclosures, rear porch enclosures if visible from street, or a new addition.

- H 1. Habitable additions should be located to the rear of existing residential buildings so that they do not disturb the principal facade. New additions to the front of existing residential buildings are not compatible with the structures build during the period of significance and should be avoided.
 - a) Additions not seen from the public right of way will not be reviewed by the Landmarks Commission.
- H 2. Additions should be compatible with the existing residential building in scale, material and texture, and should not contrast with the existing facade.
- H 3. Additions should be subservient in scale and massing to the main structure.
- H 4. Enclosing porches to create habitable space is prohibited.

Non-Habitable Additions to Existing Structures – Residential

Non-habitable additions are defined as additions that do not include heated/air conditioned space but that are still attached to the primary structure. These may include but are not limited to the following: non-enclosed front or side porches, garages, porte cocheres, and car ports.

NH 1. Attached Parking Structures

- a) Porte cocheres are accurate to the period of significance for the neighborhood and are encouraged.
- b) Attached garages are prohibited on the front of the habitable space for the primary structure. Garages should be secondary in scale and setback at least 25 feet from the front of the habitable space for the primary structure.
- c) Car ports should be placed to the side of the primary structure. The front plane of the car port should either line up with the front plane of the front façade of the primary structure or be setback from that plane.

NH 2. Porches

- a) The inclusion of front porches is highly encouraged, and is consistent with housing stock throughout the district.
- b) Front porches should be consistent with adjacent residential buildings built during the period of significance.

Outbuildings and Fencing • Residential

- F 1. Front yard fencing should not obscure the view of the house. Materials used during the period of significance such as wood or iron—or materials with a similar appearance—are encouraged.
- F 2. Backyard and side yard privacy fencing shall be allowed.
- F 3. Carports, garages, sheds, or other similar structures should be compatible with the character and design of the main structure and nearby outbuildings.

- F 4. Freestanding, detached outbuildings are prohibited on the front of the primary structure. Such outbuildings are permitted to the side of the primary structure so long as they are set back at least 25 feet from the front of the habitable space for the primary structure.

Demolition

The term 'demolition' is defined as the complete or partial tearing down of a building or structure, or the removal of a building or structure from the district. The Landmarks Commission must deem such proposed demolition appropriate.

Guidelines for Demolition

- D 1. Since the purpose of historic zoning is to protect historic properties, the demolition of a building or structure is inappropriate if that structure contributes historically or architecturally to the character and significance of the district.
- D 2. Demolition is not appropriate if the proposed reuse and new construction would diminish or detract from the predominantly single-family character of the district.
- D 3. Demolition is appropriate when the structure is shown to be unsound. A professional, written report stating the reasons the property is structurally unsound must be presented for review.

Relocation

Definition: The term 'relocation' is defined as moving a building into or out of the district, or from one site to another within the district. Such relocation of a building or structure shall be considered and reviewed as a demolition of the building or structure.

Guidelines for Relocation

- R 1. A building may be moved into the district if it shows architectural unity with existing structures constructed during the period of significance along the street-block and otherwise complies with the guidelines set forth in this document.
- R 2. A building may be moved from one location to another within the district if it complies with all the requirements set forth above and receives the approval of the Commission.