

How did this effort get started?

The [CYCA's Five-Year Plan](#), which involved surveys, focus groups and meetings with CY residents, revealed that many neighbors wanted to explore options to protect the integrity and "funkiness" of Cooper-Young homes through historic designations. Based on this interest, the CYCA organized a call-out meeting for all interested parties early in August 2016. The plan for the meeting was to discuss what it means to be a landmarks district and to determine if there were enough interested residents to start a committee. This initial meeting was well attended and, on August 22nd, 2016, the volunteer-led CY Landmarks Committee formed and met with Nancy Jane Baker of the Memphis Landmarks Commission to hear more details about the process of seeking Landmark Status in Cooper-Young. From there, the committee has worked to develop proposed guidelines and to keep the rest of the neighborhood involved, through public hearings, written and digital communication, mailers, newspaper articles, public signage, a voluntary vote, phone calls and in-person meetings.

Did you hold a vote on whether or not the neighborhood wanted to become a Landmarks District?

We did. We had a 14% turnout rate, higher than many elections, and 86% of voters voted in favor of applying to become a Landmarks District. This was a completely voluntary and in-good-faith process. The city attorney found no legal requirement for a community vote.

How were the guidelines created?

The group of volunteers who formed the Landmarks Committee used the Rozelle Annesdale guidelines as a loose template for the original CY guidelines. They then made multiple revisions to those guidelines based on public input given via phone, email, in-person meetings and on social networking sites like Nextdoor.

Where are you in the process?

After more than a year of neighborhood meetings and a voluntary neighborhood vote on the topic, "Landmarks" is now in the City of Memphis public hearing stage. The Memphis Landmarks Commission voted at their regularly scheduled October meeting to recommend the proposal to City Council. Next, the application will be heard by the Land Use Control Board (LUCB) during their regularly scheduled meeting at 10 a.m. on Thursday, Dec. 14, in City Council Chambers. Finally, the proposal will be heard by the Memphis City Council over three meetings in the first couple months of 2018, which have yet to be scheduled. Council will vote to approve or deny the overlay during the third hearing.

What do the Cooper-Young guidelines include?

Because Cooper-Young is an eclectic, diverse community, the guidelines proposed are the *least restrictive* guidelines out of all of the 13 existing Historic Districts in Memphis. Referred to as "skinny" guidelines by one Office of Planning and Development employee, the *only* alterations that are covered in the proposed CY guidelines are:

- New construction
- Habitable additions to existing structures
- Non-habitable additions to existing structures
- Outbuildings and new fencing
- Demolition
- Relocation

If you are not doing any of those alterations to your house, the guidelines do not apply, and no fees or applications for a Certificate of Appropriateness (permit) are required. Based on confusion generated by the table of fees included in the first mailing from the city, in October 2017, Section 5.8 was added to the proposed guidelines for clarity and reads as follows:

“Certificates of Appropriateness are only required for the improvements described in these guidelines. All other improvements not covered by these guidelines, including, but not limited to: change of paint color, installation of solar panels and roof, window and door replacements, shall not require a Certificate of Appropriateness.”

Please see the complete proposed Cooper-Young Historic Overlay District guidelines and the proposed district boundaries [here](#).

What benefits would Landmarks District status bring to Cooper-Young?

First, Landmarks District status would protect our quirky and historic residential structures by making it more difficult to demolish existing homes. Second, the proposed guidelines also encourage developers to pull ideas from the existing palette of Cooper-Young, ensuring that new housing is consistent with the community in which we have all invested. Third, the process involved with new construction would include a stronger opportunity for community members to make their voices heard in shaping the future of our neighborhood.

Will this negatively impact growth, density and infill?

We don't think it will. We simply want to ensure that developers are doing everything they can to preserve the historic homes in this neighborhood and, when they do build new construction, that their design incorporates some of the historic, identifying features of the neighborhood. The guidelines are just that -- guidelines for the way new construction should be built. They do not disallow new construction.

How do the proposed guidelines impact commercial properties?

The proposed guidelines only include residential properties in Cooper-Young; for this reason, there is little to no direct impact to development in our business district, other than protecting the historic, eclectic character that bring people to the neighborhood and its businesses. We chose to focus only on residential properties for two reasons: 1. We were advised that many business owners were content with the protections offered by the Midtown District Overlay, and 2. Recent years have seen an increase in tear-downs of historic residential properties. We do believe that local businesses will share in the benefits of protecting the historic residential structures that annually draw so many new residents and visitors to our community.

Will this mean excessive home repair fees for residents?

No, our guidelines focus predominantly on new construction and demolition and explicitly omit maintenance and repairs. The only alterations that are covered in the proposed CY guidelines are:

- New construction
- Habitable additions to existing structures
- Non-habitable additions to existing structures
- Outbuildings and new fencing
- Demolition
- Relocation

If you are not doing any of those alterations to your house, the guidelines do not apply, and no fees or applications for a Certificate of Appropriateness (permit) are required. Based on confusion generated by the table of fees included in the last mailing from the city, Section 5.8 was added to the proposed guidelines for clarity and reads as follows:

“Certificates of Appropriateness are only required for the improvements described in these guidelines. All other improvements not covered by these guidelines, including, but not limited to: change of paint color, installation of solar panels and roof, window and door replacements, shall not require a Certificate of Appropriateness.”

Won't this hurt our low-income neighbors or make it so only people with money can do work on their houses?

We believe this designation will do exactly the opposite, actually. The guidelines will encourage renovation of existing properties, with no fees for repairs and maintenance. This means that low-income homebuyers will have more of an opportunity to buy a "fixer upper" in Cooper-Young and to keep their money in the district by working with local contractors instead of handing historic homes over to developers who are building in all parts of the city and its suburbs.

What other Memphis neighborhoods are Landmarks Districts?

Today, 13 Memphis-area neighborhoods have Landmark status:

- Annesdale Park ([map](#))
- Annesdale-Snowden ([map](#))
- Central Gardens ([map](#))
- Collins Chapel ([map](#))
- Cotton Row ([map](#))
- Evergreen ([map](#))
- Gayoso-Peabody ([map](#))
- Glenview ([map](#))
- Lea's Woods ([map](#))
- Maxwellton ([map](#))
- Rozelle-Annesdale ([map](#))
- South Main ([map](#))
- Victorian Village ([map](#))

What is the process for obtaining a Certificate of Appropriateness?

First, a homeowner consults the guidelines. If the proposed activity does not fall within the guidelines, no certificate is needed and no fee is paid. If the activity does fall under a proposed guideline, the homeowner reaches out to the Office of Planning and Development, which decides whether the proposed activity is exempt or needs a Certificate of Appropriateness.

If OPD decides the proposed activity is exempt, there is NO application and NO fee. OPD may be able to decide during the phone call, from email, or meeting. Otherwise, OPD will usually notify the owner/etc. in less than a week. If OPD decides the proposed activity does fall under the guidelines, the application and fee schedule on the Explanation of Fees chart apply. These applications are reviewed by MLC and review takes about a month. A schedule of fees can be found online from the Memphis Landmarks Commission and will vary depending on the type of work. These fees are minimal and range from \$25 to \$250.

Can exceptions be made to the guidelines?

Guidelines are not hard-and-fast rules and may be applied to individual cases based on need. For example, a homeowner could enclose a portion of the porch because a family member in a wheelchair needs a specially-created area.

What can I do to support or speak against the guidelines?

Those who wish to speak for or against the proposal are encouraged to attend the meeting and voice your opinions. If you can't attend, you may email or call Brian Bacchus (brian.bacchus@memphistn.gov or 901-636-6601) at the Office of Planning & Development (OPD) stating the reason(s) for your support or opposition to the request for Historic (H) Overlay District. You can also contact the CYCA at info@cooperyoung.org, 901.272.2922, or 2298 Young Avenue.

