

To: City of Naperville and Naper Settlement

Fr: Johnson Lasky Architects

### Methodology

Four survey areas were identified by the City of Naperville (City) and Naper Settlement (NS) for inclusion in the windshield survey: the areas were referred to as the “North Area / North of the Railroad” the “West Area / West of Downtown” the “Southeast Area / Southeast of Historic District” and the “Central Business District / Downtown.” The boundaries are shown on the enclosed *Map #1: Survey Area Boundary Map (Attachment A)*. The survey team did not survey the structures within the existing Historic District, although we did drive through it to familiarize ourselves with the building types represented in that area.

A survey team from Johnson Lasky Architects (JLA), consisting of two persons, drove up and down all streets in the identified areas during the month of November, 2006, and marked (by hand) the following information for each property on plat maps provided by the City’s GIS mapping department:

1. Assumed decade of construction (based upon observation, not upon historic research)
2. Whether the property was:
  - a. “+” - a particularly good example of a type within the surrounding area (noteworthy)
  - b. “0” - a typical, or “contributing” example of a type within the surrounding area
  - c. “--“ - a negative contribution to the surrounding area
  - d. “L” - If a structure was particularly noteworthy, it received an “L” designation, denoting its Landmark potential

This information was recorded in an excel spreadsheet, included as Appendix 1 with this document.

### Data Collected

The survey data collected by the Johnson Lasky Team was then transferred to maps generated by the City of Naperville GIS Department. Fifty-two maps were generated, representing the following:

1. A Construction Era Overall Map showing eras of construction for all areas surveyed.
2. A Significance Overall Map showing not only the eras of construction for all areas surveyed, but within each time period, the significance indicators: contributing, non-contributing or significant.

3. For each of the four surveyed areas, the following types of maps were generated:
  - a. Location Map showing the surveyed area within an overall map of Central Naperville
  - b. Construction Era map indicating each era of construction for that particular area
  - c. Significance Indicator maps for each period of construction:
    - i. Greek Revival (1830s/40s/50s)
    - ii. Italianate (1870s-1880s)
    - iii. Victorian (1860s-1890s)
    - iv. 1900s/1910s
    - v. 1920s
    - vi. 1930s/1940s
    - vii. 1950s
    - viii. 1960s
    - ix. 1970s
    - x. 1980s/90s/2000s
  - d. Significance Map showing not only the eras of construction for that particular area, but within each time period, the significance indicators: contributing, non-contributing or significant.

In preparation for making recommendations, the survey team identified clusters of building types within any particular area that might represent a cohesive neighborhood for each era of construction surveyed.

Note that the survey team typically drove into the surrounding neighborhoods to the north, east, south and west of the identified survey areas in order to discern whether the housing stock in the neighborhoods immediately bordering the survey area should be included with the survey area. Modern housing tracts (1980s – 2006), found mainly on the outskirts of the survey areas, were reviewed but not surveyed intensely. *Map #2: Building Type Cluster Map* shown in **Attachment B**, together with the map in **Attachment A** show distinct clusters and areas of interest based upon our observations.

We have included as Attachments, the following historic late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Atlas maps for comparison with the maps generated by Johnson Lasky Architects and the City of Naperville GIS department.

Attachment C: 1874 Naperville Atlas Map  
Attachment D: 1876 Naperville Union Atlas Map  
Attachment E: 1904 Naperville Plat Map

Comparison between the existing building stock and the historical development patterns should aid the planning department in understanding the City's development and remaining early buildings.

## Observations

### **North Area**

Washington Street serves as a clear dividing line between the East and West halves of the North Area. The homes in the East half are smaller in scale than those found in the West half. Based on the location of the Kroehler Factory, the residents of the East half may have been employed by Kroehler or other local business manufactories.

#### North Area: West half

1. The Survey team referred to the West half of the North Area as the “Estate District” while the East half had more modestly scaled homes, which became smaller in scale the further east they were located from Washington St.
2. Several large-scale well-designed 1920s brick homes are positioned on prominent lots on the west side of the North area, most notably at the corner of 8th and Main. The scale, setback, materials and building types of these structures should be respected as new construction enters the neighborhood.
3. A small grouping of what appear to be workers cottages are extant along the south side of W. 5th Avenue just west of Kendall Park. These are atypical to the district and may be tied to industry that was once located along the river (quarry workers cottages?) **(Photo 1)**

#### North Area: East half

1. The entire district is dotted with Cape Cod cottages, but they seem to be more concentrated in the far eastern quarter of the North Area. **(Photo 2)** Cape Cods are difficult to date because they were a common building style both in the 1940s and the 1960s.
2. A number of good examples of 1920s/1930s brick homes, typically in the Arts & Crafts or basic Prairie style were found in the central part of the district, mainly along Brainard St.
3. There are fine examples of Victorian, Greek Revival and Arts & Crafts mid-size wood frame homes in the central part of the district, between Washington and Ellsworth Streets, from the Burlington tracks on the south to just north of 8<sup>th</sup> Street.

#### North Area: South of the Burlington Tracks

1. The neighborhood immediately north of the existing Historic District (south of the Burlington Tracks) has a number of structures that maintain high integrity that are the same type and style as those found in the Historic District. It would be appropriate to expand the Historic District northward to the Burlington tracks between Center St. on the west and Columbia St. on the east. **(Photo 3)**
2. A cohesive group of Greek Revival, Victorian and Arts & Crafts homes, located on the south side of the Burlington Tracks along 4th Street, should be preserved and maintained.

## West Area

The River serves as a clear division between the north half and south half of the West area. The north half is comprised primarily of mid-sized Greek Revival, Victorian and four-square frame homes, interspersed now with new construction of varying degrees of scale. The neighborhood south of the river (mainly south of Aurora) has homes that are more modest, smaller in scale, and which have undergone a greater number of revisions over time.

### West Area: North half

1. N. Eagle Street was chosen as the division between the Commercial District to the east and the residential West Area to the west. In fact, the residential border extends at least one block east to Webster – the border is relatively “jagged” here
2. While American Four Squares can be found throughout the West Area, there is an interesting concentration of them on W. Douglas Av. Between Eagle and Webster. While Victorians from the same era (assume 1910s) are mixed in with them, nearly all the structures on that block are of the same scale, material and setback. This has potential for being a mini-district of note.
3. The survey team was impressed by the number of Greek Revival residential structures that are located in the north half of the West Area. These are interspersed with wood frame Victorians, Four Squares and Arts and Crafts structures of similar material, size and scale. Most Greek Revivals received a noteworthy designation (“+”) although many have been altered considerably. These buildings relate directly to the history and development of the City of Naperville.
  - a. Upon observation of the distribution maps by era, there is a concentrated area of structures dating from 1830 through 1920, between Eagle and West streets, from Jackson on the south to Ogden on the north. This “district” extends about one block westward from West St. on both Jackson and Jefferson.
4. New construction was particularly egregious in this neighborhood. The quality of the neighborhood is at risk if the character-defining structures are not maintained. New construction should respect the scale, height, type and setback of the 1830s-1930s structures. A historic district should be considered to protect these 19<sup>th</sup> / early 20<sup>th</sup> century structures that recall the early history of Naperville.
5. 1950s, 1960s and 1970s residential structures fill the westernmost portion of the North half – mainly flanking Fremont St. and to the west of it. A nearly intact neighborhood of 1970s homes of moderate design integrity can be found on the far western border, west of Douglas. An interesting cluster of what appear to be early post-war homes (assume 1950s) can be found on Douglas near Laird St. and then scattered in the surrounding neighborhood. **(Photo 4)** These were likely built by the same developer and represent a unique type. They vary in integrity (due to changes through time) but several

are quite intact. These should be recorded photographically and their locations noted before new development results in their demise.

#### West Area: South Half

1. The residential neighborhood north of Naper Settlement has evolved in to a commercial district. Several noteworthy Greek Revivals line Aurora between Webster and Washington.
2. The residential neighborhood southeast of Naper Settlement contains homes that are smaller in scale than those found (for instance) north of the River or in the Historic District. The southern portion of the neighborhood, flanking Hillside, contains some non-exemplary 1950s-60s structures. However, both Webster (north of Porter) and Main St. (between Hillside and Aurora) contain a fair number of noteworthy Greek Revivals, Victorian cottages and four squares. We identified several potential landmark structures, most noteworthy 639 S. Main Street. **(Photo 5)** Brick masonry Greek Revival Structures are rare in Central Naperville – one was found here, and several in the eastern half of the North Area, particularly one on the east side of Columbia St. between 5<sup>th</sup> and Monticello.

#### **Southeast Area**

The southeast area is comprised predominantly of 1950s, 1960s and 1970s residential structures. The East Highlands neighborhood, developed by Moser is located in the southwest corner of the district. Similarly, Shiffler Brothers' Oak Hills I a neighborhood on the east side, surrounding Sylvan court between Prairie and Elizabeth Streets. Charleston woods is a 1980s development just south of Chicago, west of Charles St. and Fontenaix is a similar 1980s development north of Chicago, west of Charles.

#### Southeast Area: East of the historic district

1. Many homes immediately opposite the historic district, along Julian, are similar in type and style to those found in the Historic District. The district boundaries should be reviewed and possibly enlarged to include these structures. A number of homes along Huffman, however, are quite smaller in scale and appear to be small Cape Cod homes built for GI's immediately after WWII. There is a cluster of these on the east side of Huffman between School and Franklin. These should be photographically recorded. **(Photo 6)**

#### Southeast Area: South of the historic district

1. The neighborhood immediately south of the Historic District has a number of structures that maintain high integrity and are the same type and style as those found in the Historic District. It would be appropriate to expand the Historic District southward to Highland Avenue between Brainard St. on the west and Julian St. on the east. We have referred to this area as the "historic district overflow" on Map #2.

Southeast Area: Anne Rd. and Elizabeth St. off of Charles

1. This is a cohesive neighborhood of 1970s and 1980s homes. Structures were found to be contributing but not noteworthy. (**Photo 7**)

Southeast Area: Schiffler Brothers, Oak Hills

1. Cohesive neighborhood of 1950s, 1960s, 1970s homes surrounding Sylvan Court. Structures found to be contributing but not noteworthy.

Southeast Area: Central area

Between Highland on the North, Prairie on the South, Loomis on the west and Julian on the west, the homes date from the 1950s through the 1970s with a few 1920s arts and crafts homes interspersed.

1. This neighborhood maintains the street grid – likely laid out before some of the homes were constructed based on early 20<sup>th</sup> century (1920s?) development plans. A few noteworthy homes were found, but not enough to comprise an exemplary neighborhood.

Southeast Area: East Highlands

The East Highlands separated in to north and south neighborhoods by the River. We note a distinct difference between building types.

North half of East Highlands

1. Most notable are the curved streets found in the East Highlands. Many typical building types of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s can be found here. A few clusters were identified, and are indicated on Map #2.

South half of East Highlands

1. A distinct neighborhood was found south of the River, north of Washington. While part of the East Highlands, the 1960s and 1970s homes found here are of distinct types. They do not appear to be developer homes. Many are distinct in design, rather than of a repeated design, as found north of the River.

**Downtown Area**

The downtown district was identified as the commercial area to the east and west of Washington Street, extending three blocks to the west of Washington and one block to the east. A reproduction of a map mounted for the public in the commercial district is included here, for reference (**Illustration A**). We will refer to blocks A through K as shown on this map to explain some of our points.

The Central core of the downtown is bounded by Benton on the north, Chicago on the south, Washington on the east and Webster on the west (blocks A, B, E F, I, J, N and P). Beyond these borders are a mixture of building types, which vary in type and scale.

- Both the east and west sides of Washington north of Benton are lined with residential structures that are typically being used commercially. (**Photo A**)

- The east side of Washington between Jefferson and Washington is lined with historic institutional buildings (the old public library and YMCA). The presence of these, in particular the old library, must be maintained and celebrated. The old library forms a direct link to Central Park, behind it.
- The presence of North Central College becomes apparent rather quickly as you travel east of Washington Street. There are a few highlight buildings that are of significance within this “downtown” district, most notably the Jefferson Hill shops on east Jefferson Avenue and a stately arts and crafts residence across from it.
- The north and west boundaries of the downtown are lined by residential structures that are intact and maintain their residential character despite their proximity to large modern commercial buildings and fields of parking. **(Photo B)** These homes line the west side of Webster most notably, as well as the north and south sides of Benton. The cluster of residences west of Webster really should be considered part of the West Area, as they are more in keeping with residential than they are with commercial in scale and building type. We consider these peripheral residential blocks to be endangered by commercial encroachment. These areas are noted in purple on the attached map in Illustration A.
- Note that some existing commercial on the west edge takes place in either renovated residential structures or commercial designed to resemble residential. This is a positive precedent for the west and north edges. **(Photo C)**

The “historic core” of downtown Naperville is the area south and west of the intersection of Jefferson and Washington Streets (blocks F, J, N, the north edge of P and the west edge of K). One experiences the unique nature of downtown Naperville as soon as they pass the old Library, going southward on Washington, until they reach the intersection at Chicago Avenue. Going west on Jefferson, Jackson and Chicago and similarly, north on Main Street between Chicago and Jefferson enhances the experience of this core.

Nearly the entire block bounded by Jefferson on the north, Jackson on the south, Washington and Main (Block J on the map) retains its original buildings and provides the visual precedent for most of the new development. Similarly, both the north and south side of Jefferson between Washington and Main retains its original character. **(Photo C)** Several of the adjacent blocks (the south half of Block F and the west edge of Block K as well as the north edge of block P help “contain” the core. **(Photos D, E and F)**

It is essential that this so-called “historic core” be maintained and preserved. If you lose this, you lose the essence of downtown Naperville. New development has occurred in all directions surrounding the “core.” Some of the new buildings are better than others at maintaining the scale and materials that are established by the original buildings in the “core”.

There are a few “landmark” structures in the “core”. We recommend that those buildings constructed entirely of limestone be honored with local landmarks status due to their rarity and significance to the history of Naperville. **(Photos G, H and I)** In close proximity to these in most cases are Italianate brick masonry buildings with decorative window hoods. These are particularly well represented on Main Street just south of Jefferson. These, too, are worthy of some sort of “distinguished” status. Mixed in with these are similarly scaled 1920s brick buildings that are in keeping with the nature of the area. If buildings are to be sacrificed for new development, only those that are out of scale or built completely out of the 1830-1920s era should be considered for replacement.



## Recommendations

1. Distinct clusters of particular building types should be documented as soon as possible. Documentation at the very least should be comprised of mapping and exterior photographs of all extant examples of that type. Expanded documentation would include interior photographs of a particularly intact example. If monies allow, measured drawings could be undertaken of the most intact exemplary structure. Examples:
  - a. 1950s cluster in West Area (**Photo 04**)
  - b. Workers Cottages in North Area (**Photo 01**)
  - c. Cape Cods in North Area (**Photo 02**)
  - d. G.I. Housing in Southeast Area
  - e. Workers Cottages on north edge of Centennial Park in West Area
  - f. Exemplary 1950s, 1960s and 1970s types identified in Southeast Area (**Photos 7 through 16**)
  - g. Split Levels on Parkside Rd. (**Photo 17**)
  - h. Limestone and Italianate masonry buildings in Downtown. (**Photos G, H and I**)
2. Some clusters are worthy of special note, or possibly of National Register designation.
  - a. Four Squares on Douglas Avenue (**Photo 18**)
  - b. District north of Centennial Park, West of the Business district, South of Spring Av. Comprised of exemplary intact Greek Revival, Victorian Cottages and Arts and Crafts cottages
  - c. The particularly intact row of period homes that face 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue just south of the Burlington tracks. (**Photo 19**)
  - d. “Historic core” of downtown Naperville: south edge of block F; nearly the entire block J; the west edge of block K and the north edge of block P, represented in part in **Photos D through I**
3. One area of exemplary mid-century homes should be considered for local landmark district designation (not sure if qualifies for NR district):
  - a. The East Highlands, south of the River and north of Washington St.
4. The boundaries of the existing Historic District should be reviewed. The existing boundaries appear to have been based on the location of busy thoroughfares rather than on building types and dispersion.
5. Several structures were identified that exemplify extraordinary architectural design integrity for the area of Naperville and should be considered potential Local Landmarks and/or National Register structures. Among these are several early Greek Revival, Italianate or Victorian structures, particularly those constructed of brick or masonry.
6. It is recommended that the City of Naperville revisit existing design guidelines for new residential construction in current or new districts to factor in existing height, setback, scale, material and style of existing neighborhoods in order to maintain the unique atmosphere of the areas surveyed.

7. Downtown Area:
  - a. An effort must be made to retain is left of the original historic character of commercial Downtown Naperville from the River northward to Van Buren; flanking Washington St.; and east of Washington along Jefferson. This may mean creating incentives for developers to re-use rather than replace existing buildings.
  - b. Because commercial Downtown Naperville is expanding, the immediately surrounding residential neighborhoods are in danger of encroachment. Alternatives should be explored which would involve creating incentives for building owners to retain existing buildings while incorporating vibrant businesses in the existing residential structures.

### **Priorities**

Priorities are suggested below, which recognize that greatest priority should be put upon those structures which are of highest integrity yet are most endangered.

Priority1: The Greek Revival, Victorian and early 20<sup>th</sup> century structures located north of the river, and west of Downtown are endangered. These should be photo-documented as soon as possible. Photographs should be taken of those elevations that can be viewed from the public way. Select structures should be more thoroughly documented, in the form of interior photographs and, if possible, measured drawings – this depends, of course, on owner consent. We are of the opinion that a Local or National Register Historic District should be formed north of the river, west of Downtown, and that there should be restrictions set on the quantity and quality of infill structures.

Priority 1: Design guidelines should be developed for the downtown and incentives created for re-using rather than demolishing existing historic structures.

- A focus should be put on the “historic core” described above

Priority 1: Individual landmarks should be identified and nominated as individual landmarks, particularly the limestone, brick Italianate and Greek Revival buildings that are located throughout the survey area. They can either be designated as local landmarks or National Register properties.

Priority 1: Design guidelines should be developed for new structures within existing neighborhoods. These guidelines must reflect the type and scale of buildings in that particular neighborhood.

Priority 2: Develop National or Local Historic District nominations for the three districts identified in Recommendation #2

Priority district 1: District north of Centennial Park, West of the Business district, South of Spring Av. Comprised of exemplary intact Greek Revival, Victorian Cottages and Arts and Crafts cottages

Priority district 2: The particularly intact row of period homes that face 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue just south of the Burlington tracks.

Priority district 3: Four Squares on Douglas Avenue




- Priority 2: Document photographically (and complete measured drawings, if possible) of the seven building type “clusters” identified in Recommendation #1.
- Priority 3: The existing National Register District borders should be revised.
- Priority 4: Create local Mid-Century district in the East Highlands. As an alternative, increased notoriety of these buildings (through newspaper articles, tours, etc.) will help establish them as something important within the community.



# City of Naperville DOWNTOWN



## 1920s

-  Significant
-  Non-Contributing
-  Contributing



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