



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

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Agenda Item Number: 3.

Agenda Date: 10/16/2018

In Control: Arts, Culture and Heritage Committee

DEPARTMENT: Office of Historic Preservation

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Shanon Shea Miller

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: City Wide

SUBJECT:

Adoption of the Mission Historic District Design Manual

SUMMARY:

This memo regards the adoption the Mission Historic District Design Manual. The Office of Historic Preservation, in partnership with the World Heritage Office, has worked with a volunteer steering committee and six focus groups representing stakeholders, community members and consultants, The Lakota Group, Inc., to create the draft of the Mission Manual.

OHP had coordinated a series of meetings with the steering committee, focus groups and community during the development of the draft manual. Engagement and participation opportunities for community members included the distribution of a visual preference survey in English and Spanish, staffed tables at the World Heritage Open House and the OHP Historic Homeowner fair. Additionally, OHP Staff attended neighborhood association meetings to provide progress updates and to seek public input. The draft also includes information collected through oral histories and cultural mapping with members of the mission neighborhoods and mission descendants. The Office of Historic Preservation recommends the adoption of the final Mission Historic District Design Manual into the UDC.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The City of San Antonio's Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) and World Heritage Office (WHO) contracted the Lakota Group, Inc., and Heritage Strategies LLC., to create a "Design Manual" specific to the Mission Historic District and Historic Landmarks within the World Heritage Buffer Zone for the City of San Antonio.

The Manual will act as district-specific design guidelines for the Mission Historic District, serve as a consolidated resource for design requirements within District, articulate the unique and character-defining features of the district, and demonstrate best-practices concerning land development in sensitive areas.

The Mission Historic District Manual guidelines apply to all exterior modifications to buildings and sites that are individually designated landmarks (zoned with an HE, HS, or HL) located inside the boundaries of the World Heritage Buffer Zone; and/or within a locally designated historic district (zoned with an H) located inside the boundaries of the World Heritage Buffer Zone. These properties are currently required to submit changes for design review based on existing zoning overlays and the Mission Manual does not propose any changes to that process. These district-specific guidelines will not conflict with the citywide guidelines; rather they will address more specific items such building setbacks, construction materials, and landscaping elements based on development patterns, historic and cultural context.

The Mission Historic District is the largest of the City’s 30 locally designated historic districts and was created in 1977 in preparation for the area to become a National Historical Park. The district is unconventional because it includes a wide range of construction dates and building types and includes many properties that are considered non-contributing. As intended, the Mission Historic District triggers a public design review process as developments occur, and the City has added layers of design requirements throughout the years. The area that has become known as the World Heritage Buffer Zone was submitted with the World Heritage nomination and includes several zoning overlays which establish a procedure for design review, and when applicable, archaeological investigations for ground-disturbing activities. This includes the River Improvement Overlay district, Mission Historic District, Mission Protection Overlay Districts, and Metropolitan Corridor Districts.

In 2012, the City adopted Citywide Historic Design Guidelines that apply universally to all local historic districts, including the Mission Historic District. The Citywide guidelines established a framework for incorporating additional district specific elements as needed. In anticipation of World Heritage status for San Antonio’s Missions, the City also adopted the Mission Protection Overlay Districts (MPOD) in 2015 which establish a standard for building height based on proximity to each of the four southern Missions. Even with these provisions in place for the Mission Historic District, there is still an identified need for increased clarity in what types of construction activities are appropriate within the World Heritage setting and identifying ways to preserve the authenticity of this fast-developing area.

Concurrently, the City has also recently completed a major comprehensive planning effort (SA Tomorrow) and is in the midst of a World Heritage work plan which includes updates to the following community, neighborhood, and sector plans: Lone Star Neighborhood, South Central Community, Stinson Airport Vicinity, and Heritage South Sector, which fall within the World Heritage Buffer Zone. The creation of a Design Manual which clarifies and strengthens requirements for new construction and the treatment of existing resources in the Mission Historic District will protect the identity of the neighborhoods and will further reinforce the community’s efforts.

The draft manual was released for public review and comment on October 9, 2018. The draft document is available online and a hard copy version and comment box is has been made available at Mission Branch Library and the District 3 Field Office located at Brooks.

The timeline for adoption includes:

August 15	Historic & Design Review Commission Briefing
August 21	Zoning Commission Briefing
October 16	Arts & Culture Council Committee Recommendation
November 7	Historic & Design Review Recommendation

December 4 Zoning Commission Recommendation
December 13 City Council Hearing

The complete draft Mission Manual and online survey are currently available at: <https://www.sanantonio.gov/historic/Programs/Culture>. This link and the in-person locations will remain posted throughout the adoption process.

ISSUE:

The Mission Historic District Design Manual will be applied into the Unified Development Code, to supplement various articles of Chapter 35 of the UDC including Article III, Zoning; Article IV, Procedures; and Article VI, Historic Preservation and Urban Design, and would be applicable to all properties within the historic zoning overlay. The formatting of the document would remain the same, and could be viewable in its original format within the code or as a standalone document. The intent of the document is to supplement and provide clarity to the Historic Preservation Code and serve as an important resource.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Office of Historic Preservation recommends approval for the adoption of the Mission Historic District Design Manual into the Unified Development Code.