

Teardowns - By Dona Boley

Battles about teardowns are being waged across the country. Without effective advocacy, teardowns will continue unabated and the future of our neighborhoods will most likely be fashioned by the hands of market forces rather than its residents. Through the publication, *Protecting America's Historic Neighborhoods: Taming the Teardown Trend*, the National Trust outlines the impacts caused by teardowns in four primary ways: **Loss of Historic Houses:** Teardowns often destroy older homes that are part of the community's heritage. **Loss of Community Character:** Without proper safeguards, his-

toric neighborhoods will lose the identities that drew residents to put down roots in the first place. **Loss of Livability:** Neighborhood livability is diminished as trees are removed, backyards are eliminated, and sunlight is blocked by towering new structures built up to the property lines. **Loss of Diversity:** Community economic and social diversity is reduced as new over-scaled houses replace affordable homes. You often lose the ability to have a range of home prices in a community experiencing teardowns. Teardowns can be both

scourge and blessing. Replacement structures that differ dramatically in size, footprint, mass, or height change the dominant vernacular character of

a neighborhood. However, not every older home can or even should be saved and sometimes teardowns are an acceptable approach for redeveloping existing areas. As the teardown trend is likely to continue, we need to find ways to protect our historic neighborhoods and to make teardowns contributors to the character of our other special neighborhoods.

To find out more about teardowns and what other cities are doing to protect their historic neighborhoods check out "Focus on Teardowns" at the National Trust for Historic Preservation web site http://www.nationaltrust.org/teardowns/resource_guide.html.

HERITAGE HIKES

HKCF will present Heritage Hikes of three historic neighborhoods: **The Town of Kansas, The Village of West Port and Quality Hill** on consecutive Tuesdays -- June 10, June 17, and June 24 -- from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. through UMKC's Communiversy program.

Join us! We will view the mighty Missouri River as it flows eastward, walk the first streets of the emerging Town of Kansas, tour the outfitting Village of West Port where wagon trains received supplies for the journey on one of the trails (Santa Fe, California, Oregon) and conclude with the Quality Hill neighborhood offering scenic views of the Kansas and Missouri Rivers. Each hike highlights the architecture and history of the neighborhood. Participants receive brochures with maps featuring historical

and architectural dialogue. Refreshments will be served at the conclusion of each hike. To participate in the three hike series, bring a check for \$25 payable to Historic Kansas City Foundation to the first hike. If you do not wish to take all of the hikes, sign up for each hike separately for \$10.

To register for the hikes, contact Communiversy at 816.235.1448:

- Class registration for three hikes = \$15
- Class registration for one hike = \$ 9

For questions or more information contact Lucinda at Lrpmudg@aol.com or 816.931.8448.

EXPLORING KANSAS CITY, MIS-

SOUR'S FIRST NEIGHBORHOODS

June 10 Return to the Riverfront...The Town of Kansas, convene at the Pedestrian Bridge, where Main Street begins.

June 17 The Village of West Port...the Gateway West, meet in front of the Westport Presbyterian Church, 201 Westport Road.

June 24 Quality Hill...Kansas City's Silk Stocking Ridge, gather at Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral, 13th and Broadway.

MAY IS PRESERVATION MONTH

During the month of May, visitors to the NTHP web site, www.preservationnation.org, can bid on items and help the National Trust for Historic Preservation continue its restoration work in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast.

Compatible Infill Zoning: What it is!

By Dona Boley

Compatible infill is development that makes a positive contribution to the scale and character of a neighborhood's streetscape. It is development that does not diminish the scale, character or privacy of neighboring houses.

Problem?

Many unprotected streetscapes in older areas have been changed significantly by incompatible new development. If important attributes of the neighborhood are not considered in the design and construction of new residential infill development, infill development can have a lasting negative impact on the character of a neighborhood.

Symptoms:

- New construction/additions out of scale with existing development pattern
- Tear-downs – Replacement homes don't fit neighborhood
- Neighborhood frustration – "How did that monster get approved?"

Causes of Infill Development:

- Desirable neighborhoods
- Limited close-in developable land
- Rising land values
- Homes at least doubling in size due to residents desires and needs
- Zoning standards inconsistent with existing development patterns

Potential Impacts of Incompatible Infill:

- Reduced sense of privacy
- Reduction of solar access
- Loss of views/vistas
- Disruption of the established rhythm of the streetscape
- Destruction of the neighborhood character

Compatible Infill Zoning Standards Address:

- New Construction and In-Line Additions
- Setbacks—Front, Side & Rear Yards
- Building—Orientation, Width, Height, Lot Coverage, Accessory Structures
- Parking & Garages
- Design Guidelines—Building Materials, Building Entrances, Windows, Roofs, Side Yard Plane

Regulations for lot size and coverage, bulk, height and setbacks should ensure that infill is sensitive to the development context, but architectural design guidelines should not be too stringent, except where they may apply in historic districts.

City of Westwood Infill Ordinance

The Westwood, Kansas Zoning Code includes a section on New Infill Houses. The regulations are designed to allow redevelopment in existing neighborhoods, using the same traditional lines along which each neighborhood was established. All new development shall reflect, complement, and preserve the nature and character of existing adjacent development. All new residential construction shall conform in street orientation and massing to adjacent homes. No more than 25% of the footprint of all new residential construction shall have a flat roof. The ordinance includes a list of objectives to achieve with new infill housing that is compatible within the existing neighborhood. The list includes proportion, size, mass and height; materials and colors; combinations of vertical and horizontal elements; doors and windows; etc. Section 4.4 New Infill Housing may be found at <http://www.westwoodks.org>. Search *infill*.

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PRESERVATION CALENDAR

April 24– 25, 2008. Hutchinson, KS, Kansas Preservation Conference. Kansas Historical Society www.kshs.org

May 14-17, 2008. Kansas City, MO -30th National Genealogical Society Conference in Kansas City. The NGS conference registration is now available at: www.ngsgenealogy.org

September 11-14 2008. Albuquerque, NM. Preserving the Historic Road

www.historicroads.org

October 21-25, 2008. Tulsa Oklahoma National Trust for Historic Preservation. For information: www.nthpconference.org

The Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area, which covers 41 counties in Kansas and Missouri. For more information about the Heritage Area, go to: <http://www.freedomfrontier.org/>