

*Editor's note. The KEF website pages have been partially reproduced below in the order of their web page organization at the end of July 2016. They were reviewed for content and accuracy and found to contain extensive misrepresentations that deserve to be corrected as noted in the associated "comment" highlighted in yellow.*

## We Oppose the Creation of the Eastmoreland National Historic District

Eastmoreland is our home. It has evolved since the early 20th Century, from a field of stumps to a neighborhood of mixed styles from every decade, featuring an impressive tree canopy and two neighborhood schools.

Spending neighborhood resources to create a historic district without the consent of the majority of residents will make this neighborhood less affordable, less inclusive, and place substantial obstacles to everyone's ability to improve their homes as they see fit.

comment

The Board is given the authority to allocate and spend contributions in the interest of the neighborhood as a whole. Neighborhood dues are voluntary as is service on the Board and attendance at monthly meetings. Everyone has a voice. The ENA historic district proposal has evolved during the past four years in an effort to regain some control over our future in a neighborhood that has become a target for speculative tear down and remodeling developers taking advantage of zoning code entitlements. The recent changes in zoning regulations were not written with the approval of even a small minority of its residents. After four years of seeking reforms to preserve the neighborhood livability, affordability and architecture with quarterly reporting in the ENA newsletter, eblasts, letters, and the largest gathering of neighbors in memory, the Board decision was made with care and thoughtful measured steps. To date, the level of support for protecting the urban canopy, our wide variety of characterful historic homes, green space, and the environment has been overwhelmingly supportive.

Historic Design Review is a "confusing, time-consuming and expensive process"  
— Harris Matarazzo, Former Portland Historic Landmarks Commissioner

comment

We have learned from the individual cited that this quote was used without his permission and taken out of context.

## COSTS

- 1 Portland's Historic Design Review fees [start at \\$250 for small projects and increase to \\$5,000.](#)  
(comment: Irvington reports that almost all reviews are at the \$250 level of cost. The point is that design review does protect the neighborhood and does cost money)
- 2 Many property owners will need to hire architects .....
- 3 As far as our neighbors in Buckman could tell, [there is no property value increase associated with the Irvington Historic District.](#)  
(comment: But Irvington was not an historic district until 2010 and the data is from earlier. Note that the information is from Keep Buckman Free.)
- 4 Individual historic properties that also qualify for and chose to enroll in Oregon's Special Assessment of Historic Property Program, which freezes tax assessments for 10 years (with an additional 10

year extension) to help offset the cost of restoration, will be reassessed at full market value at the end of the period. (comment: This is a market effect, not an historic district effect.)

- After a remodeling project is approved by the city, neighbors can appeal the approval, adding further delay and costs.

(comment: See FAQ on the purpose and value of the appeal process.)

## DESIGN RESTRICTIONS

- No solar panels, skylights, or ecoroofs visible from the street.

(comment: An “ecorooft” is a roof, generally flat with grasses and ground cover on top. It is not a popular roofing material and because of its weight is likely to cause a lot of damage in an earthquake. Solar panels and skylights are likely to be allowed in most situations as they are now.)

## CREATES WINNERS AND LOSERS

comment

The sentences in this section are pure conjecture.

## Will The Historic District Save Our Tree Canopy?

**No.** Eastmoreland’s impressive tree canopy is a significant contributor to our neighborhood character.

The primary threats to this urban forest are:

- 1 An aging tree canopy. ....

comment

An historic district would, indeed, preserve and enhance the tree canopy in two significant ways;

1. New and replacement street trees would be chosen from a select list that preserves the character of the original large canopy street tree pattern consistent with the work of the ENA Tree Committee.
2. Greatly Reduced Demolition and scale of house provisions will help to protect existing private yard trees from being crowded out by oversized houses and unmitigated infill.

.....Finally, removing residential trees almost always requires re-planting – sometimes with even more new trees than those taken out – ensuring that the overall tree canopy is at least maintained.

comment

There is no equivalency between a few 2” trees used in new construction and 60 to 100 year old evergreens and large canopy trees.

## Will The Historic District Stop Demolitions?

We all care when a perfectly good and more modest home is demolished, especially if it is replaced with a much larger and more expensive home. However, the historic district designation is overkill for this because in the last 12 years, only 16 out of 1674 homes in Eastmoreland were demolished.\* This is **less than 1% of the homes in Eastmoreland** that were affected by demolitions.

comment

This claim seems intuitively wrong to anyone who has been watching the demolition derby. The writer is intentionally misleading the reader by using the term "demolition" in a narrow sense that crosses the common sense line. In this application leaving a few studs standing and a bit of foundation is termed as "major renovation". Although we don't have definitive numbers yet we estimate the demolitions in the dozens.

# What Happened in Other Historic Districts?

## SALE FAILURE

"As a realtor, one of my home listings sale failed in Irvington due to the Historic District. The prospective buyer of 1730 NE Brazee St discovered during due diligence that it was unlikely he would be able to add a dormer to the rear of the house. After learning he would not be able to make the changes he wanted to the home, he backed out of the purchase."

Dana Griggs – Realtor

comment

It seems unlikely that a rear dormer would have been impossible to approve. It is equally possible that the prospective buyer found another house that that they preferred. Was the house unsellable?

## PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

"My home is on the Historic Register and I participated in the tax abatement program 19 years ago. However, when my home came to the end of the 15 year tax abatement, it was revalued and I pay substantially more property tax than if I would have not gone the Historic Register. The tax savings over the 15 year period have virtually been wiped out in last 4 years and I pay double the property tax compared to my neighbors. If I would have NOT participated in the program, I would have been protected by the 3% max yearly increase."

Rob Lloyd – Buckman Home Owner

comment

This story is not the result of the house lying in an historic district but as a designated landmark structure. The point of the tax credit is not to freeze taxes forever but to freeze them for a period that allows to owner to recoup the cost of restoration work. After the freeze period is over the house will off course be revalued as other remodels are valued.

## CRAFTSMAN PORCH ON A CRAFTSMAN HOUSE

This story should serve as a concrete example of what people should expect if they elect to establish a historic district. .... The house, a 1911 craftsman, has a stoop but no porch, which was something we were looking for. My wife and I decided that we would build a porch, which would essentially be an extension of the stoop to the sides. ....I ended up speaking with David Skilton, who is in charge of historic reviews for the city. ....

Jeffrey La Rochelle – Irvington Home Owner

Comment from Irvingtonian familiar with the house.

Nobody would look at this house and say it had only a "stoop". It has a full fledged porch with a large, Craftsman Style gabled roof... it just doesn't happen to go the full width of the house. Each contributing house in a Historic District brings to the party its own architectural and historic character which together make up what is valuable about the district. Anyone looking at this house would agree that it is a handsome example of a Craftsman Style house and, as such its architectural contributes to the District... changing it to something different would diminish the historic integrity of the District. . The costs cited have since been reduced. David Skilton no longer works for the city.

## Frequently Asked Questions

## WHAT IS A HISTORIC DISTRICT, AND WHY SHOULD I CARE ABOUT WHETHER EASTMORELAND BECOMES ONE?

The National Park Service (NPS) determines if a neighborhood is a historic district after evaluation of an application that can be submitted by any individual or group. The Eastmoreland Neighborhood Association (ENA) is in the process of gathering all the necessary information in nominating all or part of our neighborhood for designation as a historic district.

Living in a historic district will have a direct impact on the exterior renovations/repairs you can make to your home; as a homeowner, this will fundamentally change your property rights as you know them today.

### Comment

Living in an historic district may have a direct and positive impact on the exterior renovation you can make to your home. It will not have an impact on repairs and maintenance projects that maintain the character of the house. There will be additional regulation but clearly it will not fundamentally change your property rights as you know them today.

## HOW WILL MY PROPERTY RIGHTS BE AFFECTED IF EASTMORELAND IS DESIGNATED AS A HISTORIC DISTRICT?

Many exterior alterations, remodeling, land development and other changes to the structure of the home will have to go through a city process of historic resource review.

Also, these exterior alterations may be subject to two separate sets of design guidelines, one imposed by the City, and one determined by the ENA.

In the historic review process, the City and interested neighbors (including the ENA in larger renovation projects) will have the ability to comment on and object to your renovation project; neighbors, including the ENA, may also be able to appeal decisions made by the City.

### comment

There is one process recognized by the federal, state and city- not two. Guidelines that the ENA participates in developing will complement or supersede the default city regulations.

## WHAT IS A HISTORIC RESOURCE REVIEW, HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE, AND HOW MUCH WILL IT COST ME?

Almost all exterior alterations are subject to Portland's historic resource review code. This governs both how you must go about making changes to your home, as well as what changes you can make to your home.

### comment

Significant exterior alterations require a building permit...

This will cost you an added fee, above and beyond whatever building permits you need today.

This will also add to the amount of time that it will take to complete your home renovation project.

The timing and fee will depend on the type of change you want to make to your home, but starts at \$250, with a minimum 2 week review period; the fee can go up to thousands of dollars with much longer (months, not weeks) review periods.

comment

Irvington reports that nearly all of their reviews are Type 1 with a cost of \$250.

#### WHAT TYPES OF CHANGES TO MY HOME MUST GO THROUGH THE HISTORIC REVIEW PROCESS?

Exterior alternations, such as dormers, replacing windows, expanding the foot print of the house, adding a kitchen sink bay window, remodeling a front entryway that alters the exterior, solar panels, skylights, and ADUs if they are not in the inside of the house.

Building a new structure.

Non-standard improvements in the public right of way. This requires an additional approval from the City Engineer.

comment

For example: a highway interchange that removed parts of the neighborhood?

#### WHAT CRITERIA WILL THE CITY USE TO EVALUATE MY APPLICATION FOR MY HOME RENOVATION PROJECT?

Two different sets of criteria will be used to evaluate an application, a City Historic District Criteria and District Specific Design Guidelines.

Comment

There is one process recognized by the federal, state and city- not two. Guidelines that the ENA participates in developing will complement or supersede the default city regulations.

#### WHY SHOULD I CARE ABOUT THESE DISTRICT SPECIFIC GUIDELINES?

These guidelines can have real financial impact on changes you want to make to the exterior of your house, including interior changes that affect the exterior of your house. For example, replacing your drafty single pane windows with the most cost and energy effective option may not be permitted by the guidelines, forcing you to a higher cost window replacement option or forego the replacement altogether due to cost.

Potential homebuyers may be turned off by the restrictions imposed on a historic district, and therefore may be less inclined to purchase a home that needs repair due to the additional time and cost imposed on the design review process. This could also adversely affect the price of your home at the time of sale.

comment

Anything is possible, but this assertion is not supported by research on a national or local level. Google "does a house in an historic district lose value?" to find the academic research on this point. The research shows that protected within an historic district the value of your house is likely to be more valued rather than less.