



C H A T H A M C O U N T Y - S A V A N N A H

METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

"Planning the Future - Respecting the Past"

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: FEBRUARY 20, 2018
TO: THE MAYOR AND ALDERMEN OF THE CITY OF SAVANNAH
FROM: METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION
SUBJECT: MPC RECOMMENDATION

PETITION REFERENCED:

Text Amendment to the City of Savannah Zoning Ordinance

Re: Create Article Q. Conservation Overlay District

File No. 17-007079-ZA

Petitioner: Ardsley Park-Chatham Crescent-Ardmore Neighborhood Association

MPC ACTION:

Approval of the zoning text amendment to create Article Q: Conservation Overlay District.

MPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approval of the zoning text amendment to create Article Q: Conservation Overlay District.

MEMBERS PRESENT: 9 + Chairman

James Overton, Chairman
Ellis Cook
Joseph Ervin
Roberto Hernandez
Karen Jarrett
Lacy Manigault
Tanya Milton
Linder Suthers
Joseph Welch
Tom Woiwode

PLANNING COMMISSION VOTE: Approve Staff Recommendation (10-0)

APPROVAL Votes: 10	DENIAL Votes:	ABSENT
Overton Cook Ervin Hernandez Jarrett Manigault Milton Suthers Welch Woiwode		Branch Coleman Coles Smith

Respectfully submitted,



Melony West
Interim Executive Director

/jh

Enclosure

cc Luciana Spracher, Interim Clerk of Council
Brooks Stillwell, City Attorney
Lester B. Johnson, Assistant City Attorney
Jennifer Herman, Assistant City Attorney
Beth Barnes, Department of Inspections

2/14



Chatham County - Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission

February 20, 2018 Regular MPC Meeting

Title

D4 - TEXT AMENDMENT | Create Conservation District Overlay Ordinance | Ardsley Park-Chatham Crescent-Ardmore Neighborhood Association, Petitioner | File No. 17-007079-ZA

Description

The Ardsley Park-Chatham Crescent-Ardmore Neighborhood Association has filed a petition to amend the zoning ordinance creating an overlay district for the area within the neighborhood association's boundaries to include the areas known as Ardsley Park, Chatham Crescent and Ardmore. The proposed overlay (Article Q) is intended to require that proposed demolitions of historic buildings within this area be reviewed by the Metropolitan Planning Commission prior to the issuance of a building permit.

For the purposes of the current petition, the overlay applies to two defined geographic areas delineated in the associated map amendment. The two areas include the Ardsley Park-Chatham Crescent overlay boundaries and the Ardmore overlay boundaries (see file no. 18-000225-ZA). The overlay, however could be applied to other geographic boundaries in the future.

Recommendation

MPC staff recommends **approval** of the zoning text amendment to create Article Q: Conservation Overlay District.

Contact

Ellen I. Harris

Financial Impact

Review Comments

Attachments

- 🔗 [Staff Report-17-007079-ZA.pdf](#)
- 🔗 [Proposed Conservation Overlay District Ordinance.pdf](#)
- 🔗 [Maps.pdf](#)
- 🔗 [Conservation District Map.pdf](#)
- 🔗 [Letters of support 2-20-18.pdf](#)



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FROM: The Planning Commission
DATE: February 20, 2018
SUBJECT: Text Amendment to the City of Savannah Zoning Ordinance
Re: Create Article Q. Conservation Overlay District

File No. 17-007079-ZA

Petitioner: Ardsley Park-Chatham Crescent-Ardmore Neighborhood Association

Ellen I. Harris, Project Planner

ISSUE:

The Ardsley Park-Chatham Crescent-Ardmore Neighborhood Association has filed a petition to amend the zoning ordinance creating an overlay district for the area within the neighborhood association's boundaries to include the areas known as Ardsley Park, Chatham Crescent and Ardmore. The proposed overlay (Article Q) is intended to require that proposed demolitions of historic buildings within this area be reviewed by the Metropolitan Planning Commission prior to the issuance of a building permit.

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BACKGROUND:

Ardsley Park was laid out 1909-1910 with a regular gridiron layout and landscaped squares at regular intervals. Inspired by Oglethorpe's Plan, the area was developed by Harry Hays Lattimore and William Lattimore, principal partners of the Ardsley Park Land Corporation. Development continued through the 1930s, when it was largely built-out. The original boundaries of Ardsley Park were Victory Drive to 54th Street and Bull to mid-block of Abercorn and Habersham Streets. In 1916, the Lattimores acquired additional land to the south through 55th Lane which can be considered an extension of the original development.

Chatham Crescent, historically referred to as the Granger Tract, was also laid out 1909-1910 and has a Beaux-Arts inspired plan with a grand mall, crescent-shaped avenues and small circular parks. Harvey Granger developed this subdivision through 1930s. The original boundaries of Chatham Crescent went from 39th Street to 52nd Street and from the mid-block of Abercorn and

Habersham Streets to Waters Avenue.

Both neighborhoods feature intact residential, commercial, and civic buildings with excellent examples of Neo-classical, Georgian and Colonial Revival, Dutch Colonial, Tudor Revival English Cottage and Craftsman/Bungalow styles. Many of Savannah's leading architects are represented including Henrik Wallin, Hyman Witcover, Henry Urban, Olaf Otto, E. Lynn Drummond, Percy Sugden,

The area was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1985 as the Ardsley Park-Chatham Crescent Historic District. It is significant locally and on the state level for planning, architecture, landscape architecture. The boundaries reflected the original boundaries of the 1910 plat and did not include the 1916 expansion south to 55th Lane.

In 1925, the Lattimore brothers began work on the Ardmore subdivision. Similar to Ardsley Park, the neighborhood was advertised as a "highly restricted residential subdivision" with many amenities including city sewers, a park, and telephones. New construction was steady from the late 1920s through the early 1940s.

The architecture of Ardmore is, generally, more modest than that of Ardsley Park and Chatham Crescent, with more bungalows and cottages, likely due to the Great Depression. The Lattimores made a concerted effort to provide a feeling of continuity between Ardsley Park and Ardmore through tree plantings. The original boundaries of Ardmore were 52nd Street to 55th Lane, and mid-block Habersham and Battey Streets to Atlantic Avenue.

The area to the west of Ardmore was known as Chatham Terrace and was developed in a similar timeframe as Ardmore in the late 1920s and 1930s. Architecturally the two areas are very similar. Ardmore is currently in the process of pursuing designation as a Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places.

FINDINGS:

1. Listing on the National Register of Historic Places provides no protection of historic resources, provided that federal funds and/or permits are not involved. Property owners are able to alter and even demolish historic buildings without restriction.
2. The proposed Conservation Overlay District is intended to protect older and established neighborhoods from unnecessary demolitions of historic resources without the creation of a full local historic district, similar to the Savannah Historic District, Victorian District, etc. The Conservation Overlay District is limited in its to the evaluation of demolitions only.
3. Other neighborhoods could apply for Conservation Overlay protection in the future as a map amendment.
4. Boundaries: The proposed boundaries are consistent with the Ardsley Park-Chatham Crescent-Ardmore Neighborhood Association boundaries.

5. Public Notice: Mailed notice was sent to all property owners within the proposed district.
6. Review Process: All demolitions would be reviewed by the City Historic Preservation Officer prior to the issuance of a building permit. Any demolition of a contributing building, or a building eligible for contributing status, would be referred to the Planning Commission for review.
7. Contributing vs non contributing: A building must meet one or more of the following criteria to be considered a contributing building:
 - a. The building is identified as contributing on the National Register Historic District or Property map;
 - b. The building is at least 50 years old; possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association; and:
 - i. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
 - ii. Is associated with the lives of significant persons in our past; or
 - iii. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
 - iv. Has yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory;
 - c. The building has achieved significance within the past 50 years if it is of 'exceptional importance' as defined by the National Park Service.
8. The Planning Commission can only approve the demolition of a contributing building in two situations:
 - a. The demolition is required to alleviate a threat to public health or public safety; or
 - b. The demolition is required to avoid exceptional practical difficulty or undue hardship upon any owner of any specific property. If the difficulty or hardship claimed is economic, the applicant shall be required to submit sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the application of the standards and regulations of this section deprives the applicant of a positive economic use or return on the subject property.However, the Planning Commission may also determine that a building is non-contributing.
9. Public Notice: The proposed ordinance requires that the building proposed to be demolished is posted 15 days in advance of the public hearing.

Policy Analysis:

The creation of a Conservation Overlay District will be a tool available to older, historic