

# PUBLIC NOTICE

## **Historic Overlay Task Force Formed To Implement The Expansion of St. John's & Chimborazo Old & Historic Districts to Boundaries North of Broad Street In Church Hill.**

### **ADDITIONAL SUPPORTERS NEEDED!**

In November 2005, a group of about a dozen Church Hill neighbors, both north & south of Broad Street, met for the first time to form a task force to implement the expansion of a city designated Old & Historic District overlay.

Renewed interest in this initiative (which was attempted almost 20 years ago), came from concerns that becoming the "neighborhood du jour" brings out the real estate speculators in droves - all of them hoping to cash in on the latest boom at the expense of losing the historic fabric of a community. Speculators are building and renovating at a frenzied pace without regard for appropriate in-fill, building materials used, or the historic context of existing structures.

The causes of the present debacle can be traced back to years of neglect. Some specific factors are: The city's inability or unwillingness to enforce building codes on delinquent properties. The "slash and burn" that took place into the mid-1990's that left a huge number of vacant lots. Slumlords (most living in the suburbs) who have been exploiting the poor and disenfranchised for years.

Never has there been a more urgent time to push for an expansion of the city designated historic district that encompasses unprotected areas north of Broad Street. North of Broad residents deserve the same benefits and protection that south of Broad residents have enjoyed for so many years.

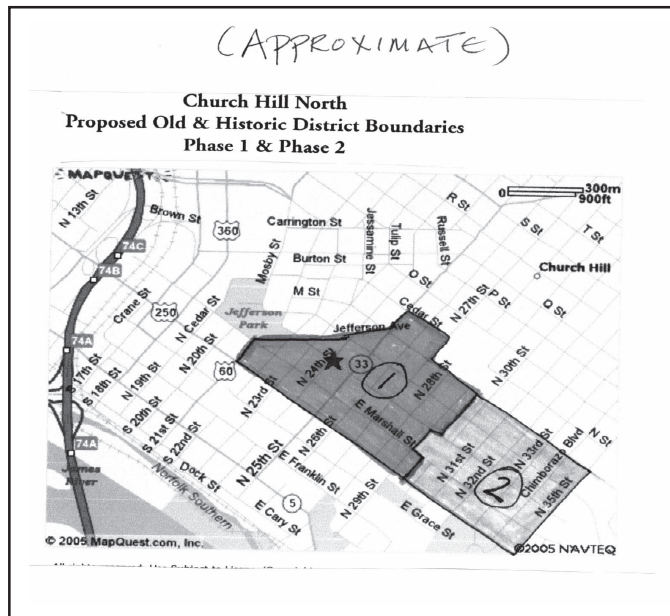
Without some kind of historic protection in place, our neighborhood will suffer greatly. Many single-family and R-53 properties (multi-family residential) will be built or restored without consideration for density, design, materials, or proper parking. We will have little or no say over anything a developer wants to do.

We are not proposing a draconian plan that would police every property owner, and drive out poor, old, or black people as some would like to suggest. On the contrary. We need to keep the fabric of our neighborhood intact with a plan that can work for all its different inhabitants, and prevent unscrupulous development by outsiders.

The task force, with the help of Saul Gleiser, a planner with the Housing and Neighborhood Preservation division of the Department of Community Development, has determined the boundaries that are most likely to ensure the project's success. The boundaries have been divided into 2 phases with the possibility of both areas to be designated simultaneously.

Phase 1 is the proposed area for expansion of the St. John's Old & Historic District which includes N.21st Street to the alley east of N. 29th Street bounded by Jefferson/M. Street (with a short jog to Cedar Street on N. 26 & N. 27th Streets) to E. Broad/ Marshall Streets. Phase 2 is the proposed area for expansion of the Chimborazo Old & Historic District which includes the alley west of N.30th Street to N.36th Street bounded by E. Broad/Marshall Streets to M Street.(See diagram on following page )

(Historic district cont.)



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**I've heard that having a historic district will increase my taxes. Is that true?** No. Property taxes will not go up as a result of becoming a historic district. Currently, our area is being taxed at the same rate that St. John's & Chimborazo Old and Historic Districts are being taxed.

**Will I have to spend a lot of money fixing up or changing my property to fit with the historic district guidelines?** No. No one has to make changes to their properties when the area goes historic. Current paint colors and structures are considered "grandfathered," meaning that what existed before the historic district designation can remain the same. Only when you decide to change the color or structure of your home do you need to get approval from the Commission of Architectural Review, who oversees enforcement of historic guidelines.

**Why is a historic district so important?** As stated previously, historic districts keep developers in check which is good for current inhabitants and keeps the character/fabric of the neighborhood intact. The majority of neighbors in a proposed area must agree to the designation for its success.

**How do I find out more about historic districts?** Hopefully the CHA editor has included the CAR brochure on historic districts and the Procedures for the Establishment of Richmond Old And Historic Districts documents in this newsletter. Otherwise contact Laura Daab at 649-1913 or [info@mysterydinner.com](mailto:info@mysterydinner.com) for copies.

**How can I get involved and support this initiative?** Easy! There's already over a dozen neighbors involved now. We have met twice, and will meet again in the near future. If you live within the boundaries (phase 1 or 2) shown above, or you already live in a historic district in Church Hill and want to help out, contact the following people:

### PHASE 1 CONTACT

(Expansion of the St. John's Old and Historic District)

Laura Daab

649-1913

[info@mysterydinner.com](mailto:info@mysterydinner.com)

### PHASE 2 CONTACT

(Expansion of the Cimborazo Old and Historic District)

Jason Creech

726-9956

[jcreecher@comcast.net](mailto:jcreecher@comcast.net)

### CITY CONTACT

Saul Gleiser

Planner, Department of Community Development

646-6313

[gleisers@ci.richmond.va.us](mailto:gleisers@ci.richmond.va.us)