



The Blue Grass Trust
for Historic Preservation
Monday, January 14, 2013

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The Honorable Mayor James N. Gray and
The Honorable Members of the Lexington Fayette Urban County Council
Lexington Fayette Urban County Government
200 East Main Street
Lexington, KY 40507

Dear Mr. Mayor and Members of the Urban County Council:

The Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation (BGT) writes this letter of support for the Ashland Park Historic District Designation.

The members of the BGT Board and its Advisory Committee, listed on this letterhead, support the Ashland Park Historic District Designation. We believe it is vitally important the Council let stand the designation as approved by the Board of Architectural Review and the Planning Commission.

You, the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Council, already adopted Article 13 of the zoning ordinance and by doing so you:

declared, as a matter of public policy, that the preservation, protection, perpetuation and use of historic districts; landmarks; sites; neighborhoods; areas; places; structures; improvements; and geological and archaeological sites having a special, unique, or distinctive character or a special historic; aesthetic; architectural; archaeological; geological or cultural significance or value; and which serve as visible reminders of the history and heritage of this county, state or nation, are public necessities. The protection of these is required in the interest of the economic well-being, prosperity, health, safety and general welfare of the people.

The Lexington-Fayette Urban County Council has an ongoing affirmative duty to fulfill the spirit and intent of the Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2007. Specifically, the Plan states:

the success of the 2007 Comprehensive Plan will be measured in part by the application and practice of the principles that form its foundation-the Mission Statement and Goals and Objectives-as well as the implementation of programs and projects identified throughout all the elements.... the theme of preservation, both in literal and figurative terms, is repeated in many of the 2007 Plan's Goals.

The Office of Historic Preservation staff report, which documents the Ashland Park designation, further lists Goal 3, Goal 5, and Goal 15 from the 2007 Comprehensive Plan as your directive to encourage the protection and enhancement of existing neighborhoods. The report goes on to note the adoption of Goals and Objectives for the 2012 Comprehensive Plan which specifically call for "Growing Successful Neighborhoods" and "Improving a Desirable Community."

The report prepared by the staff is exhaustive in its analysis, thorough in its review of the criteria for inclusion of an area into a historic district and is in our view indisputable. It historically and accurately tells the importance of the Ashland Park. It showcases the Clay family, the McDowell family, the work of the Olmstead brothers and a variety of architectures in this unique neighborhood. It also explores the important aspect of property values in a historic district. We can confidently predict that no one in attendance at the hearing set for January 22, 2013, will factually dispute any of the findings presented by the Historic Preservation Office staff.

But, you will hear objections to an H-1 overlay by a few mis-informed (but sincere) individuals who incorrectly believe it to be an undue burden on them as property owners.

You will also hear requests for removal of certain properties from the H-1 designation.

The Blue Grass Trust believes the Ashland Park Historic District is a pristine neighborhood with most of the architecture being developed around the early 1900's. Unlike the other 14 Historic Districts, this one begins with over 90% of its historic fabric present and in impeccable condition. If you grant the H-1 zoning overlay in its entirety, you guarantee the preservation of this neighborhood for generations. The citizens supporting the expansion recognize the fabric of their neighborhood as special, but, more importantly, they see it as their cultural and social responsibility to preserve and protect the character of the neighborhood. They want to do this for the good of the whole community.

Over the years, as evidenced by the report, the adoption of a historic overlay has contributed significantly to the economic value of historic neighborhoods and has preserved them from inappropriate development that only serves to decrease the value of the neighborhood. The BGT asks Mayor Gray and every member of the Council to adopt the Ashland Park Historic District as presented.

Sincerely,

Linda Carroll, President

Tom Meng, Vice President

cc: The Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation Board
The Blue Grass Trust Advisory Committee