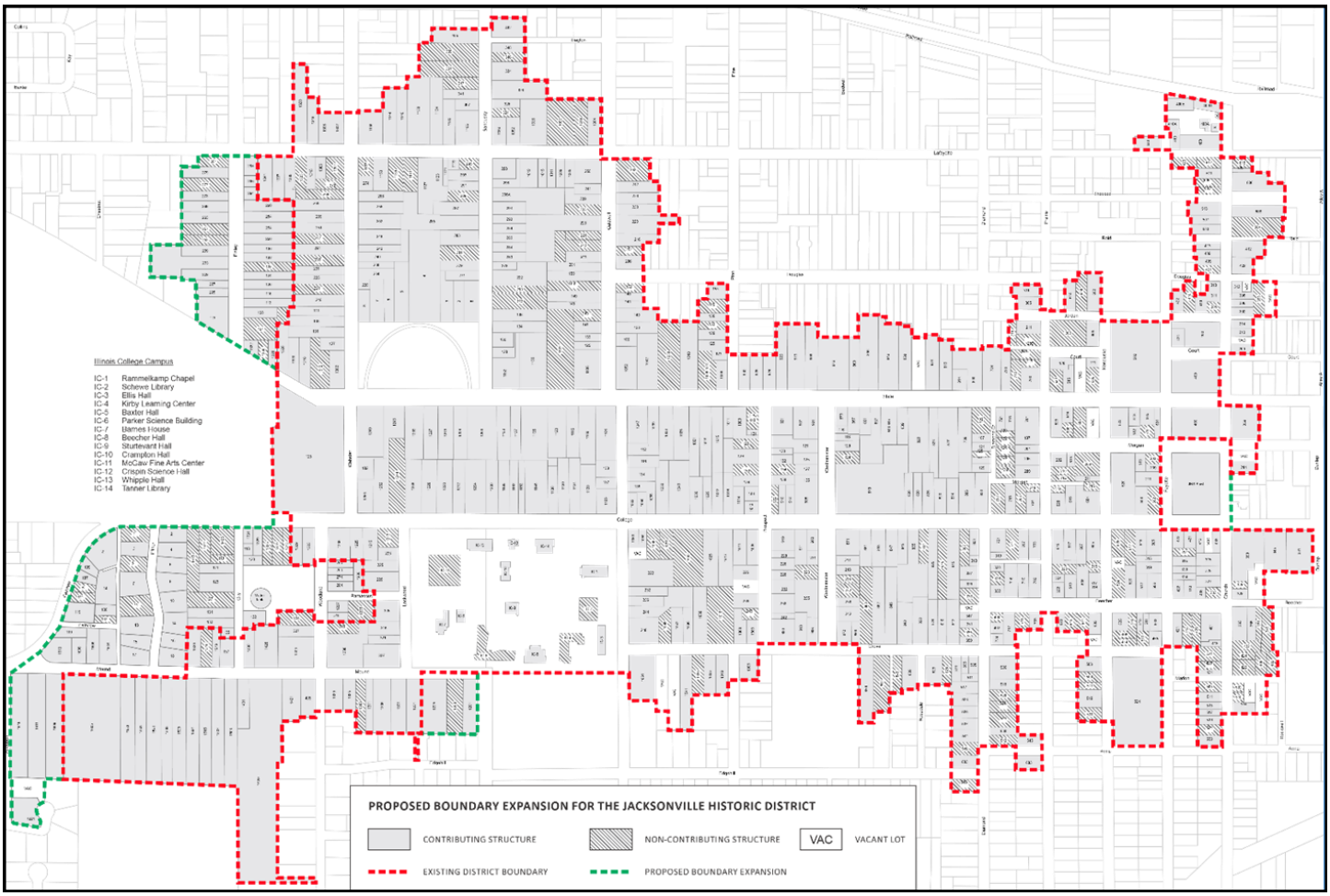
City of Jacksonville
Historic Preservation Commission
SPRING 2014 NEWSLETTER

Jacksonville's Historic District Expands: *What It Means*

The Historic District was put on the National Register of Historic Places on June 9, 1978, with boundaries set by pre-WWI west side development and was designated a Local Historic District. With a high level of integrity, it is mostly residential with many late-19th/early-20th century single-family homes representing almost all architectural styles popular in Illinois from 1830-present. While including some early buildings (like IC's 1829 Beecher Hall), it had no precise period of significance and omitted areas/buildings thought too new (1920s and newer). Lacking a complete resources inventory and contributing vs. non-contributing significance valuations, it only noted some sites of special significance with brief descriptions and classified others with invalid terms.

In 2010, to correct 1978 Nomination flaws, the City and HPC did an intensive historic resources survey to study and inventory the original district and adjacent areas for architectural/historic significance to determine need for boundary adjustment. Each property was evaluated for historic significance based on presence of historic fabric, not physical condition (integrity) to decide contributing/non-contributing status. Generally, those built from 1829-1964 with few changes were deemed contributing; those with major alterations were rated non-contributing unless the changes occurred within the period of significance and acquired importance. The 2011 *Historic Resources Survey of the Jacksonville Historic District and Additional Areas* report gave background, descriptions, and resources inventory (posted on the HPC website at www.jacksonvilleil.com) and recommended expanding the district.

On April 28, the Jacksonville City Council unanimously approved expanding the Historic District, whose period of significance is now 1829-1964. Boundaries expanded in 4 areas to indicate contributing/non-contributing resources during Jacksonville's historic development and is now nearly 368 acres, with 596 contributing and 175 non-contributing structures. The new boundary aligns with the original statement of architectural significance that qualified the district as "one of the most complete illustrations of Illinois' architectural history as can be found."



Identify Our Local Landmarks

Can you can identify the Historic Names for some of Jacksonville's Local Landmarks? (Note: Some photos may be old!)

A

B

C

D

E

F

1) ____ George M. Chambers House (1841-6)
2) ____ Gov. Joseph Duncan House (1834)
3) ____ Hackett House (1942)
4) ____ Joseph O. King House (c. 1860)
5) ____ David A. Smith House (1854)
6) ____ Burge Building (c. 1850)

Answers: 1) E; 2) C; 3) A; 4) D; 5) F; 6) B

Frequently Asked Historic District Questions

Q: What are the special requirements for properties in a Local District?
A: Owners are not required to do anything. The HPC realizes changes are needed to keep a building functional but also wants to protect and preserve the building's character/neighborhood. So, any significant *building exterior* alterations (work that already requires a city building permit and can be seen from the street, including additions and full/partial demolition) require a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) from the HPC. When planning exterior changes to property, HPC asks owners to use preservation-friendly methods that follow Secretary of Interior Standards, and will help find solutions that meet owner needs and Commission recommendations.

Q: Does the Commission get to tell me what I can and can't do with my building?
A: No; the HPC's role is less about regulating what property owners can do and more about helping them do what they want with their buildings in a preservation-friendly manner that fulfills the city's long-standing commitment to historic preservation in ways that benefit the entire community. The COA review process allows the HPC, acting on the City's behalf, to ensure that alterations are sensitive to building features and elements that qualified it for historic designation in the first place (e.g., altering a flat roof to a steep gable would change the whole design and scale to a very different look than originally intended). If your project is not approved, you can always appeal the decision to the City Council.

Q: Honestly, how difficult is it to get a project reviewed and approved?
A: Much easier than most people seem to think! Most maintenance work does not require a full review. Of the projects that required a full COA process, over 95% were approved. HPC members work with property owners during the review process, offering ideas and advice from preservation experts to resolve any issues in a way that is acceptable to all parties.