



Legislation Text

File #: ID-19-23, **Version:** 1

Department of Community Development

Reference: Walnut Grove Addition Reconnaissance Survey

To: Mayor Gregory Mills and Members of City Council
Chairman Chris Maslanik and Members of the Planning Commission

Through: Michael P. Martinez, City Manager

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Date Prepared: January 13, 2023

PURPOSE

Staff possesses research and documentation of historic resources within one of Brighton's oldest subdivisions, the Walnut Grove Addition of Brighton, bounded by East Bridge Street in the north, East Southern Street in the south, South 4th Avenue in the east, and South 2nd Avenue on the west and wishes to discuss the results and next steps with both the City Council and the Planning Commission.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

- Recognizable and Well-Planned Community
- Sustainability

SURVEY PROCESS

In the process of researching and documenting historic resources, surveying is one of the most important steps. There are two levels of surveys, both with their own importance, that aid in gaining information about historic resources.

A reconnaissance-level survey, sometimes referred to as a "windshield" survey, is a broad-brush look at a study area to determine what is potentially historical, what is not historical, and what needs additional study to make a determination of historical significance. This type of survey acts as a sorting tool. It separates properties with no potential for historical significance from those that merit closer scrutiny. It also provides baseline data for further research. It does not necessarily reveal information about significant persons or historical events associated with documented properties.

Once a reconnaissance survey has been completed, an intensive-level survey can be performed. An intensive survey starts with the information provided in a reconnaissance survey and adds more property-specific historical data. The property's Chain of Title indicates if significant persons lived or worked at the site during their productive years. Further research also identifies the architect, contractor or builder as significant practitioners and assesses how their body of work is represented by the subject property. Historical records can associate a property with significant historical events, or patterns of events in history, as indicated in a Context Statement.

Based on the City of Brighton's Historic Resources Survey Plan, the Walnut Grove Addition was identified as a high priority and had not yet been documented. The Walnut Grove Addition is one of the oldest neighborhoods in Brighton, platted in 1887 by Daniel F. Carmichael. The neighborhood consists of many great examples of residential architectural styles from the early- to mid-1900s, many of which appear the way they did when they were built. Staff worked with the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) to begin a documentation process on this area, which was initiated by a reconnaissance-level survey.

RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY PROCESS AND RESULTS

Process:

In 2022, City staff worked with Pinyon Environmental, Inc. to conduct a reconnaissance survey of the Walnut Grove Addition. As mentioned above, a reconnaissance survey is the most basic cultural resource survey, which allows us to sort potentially historic resources from those with little or no historic or architectural value.

Resources were ranked based on exhibiting characteristics of a defined architectural style and for retaining a high degree of historic integrity. However, research revealed that a select number of resources are, or were, associated with person(s) significant to the history of Brighton and the surrounding region. Thus, some resources which may lack architectural significance may be ranked as having a high probability for individual National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility due to their specific associations with significant individuals.

The study area for this reconnaissance-level survey consisted of one of Brighton's oldest subdivisions, the Walnut Grove Addition, bounded by East Bridge Street in the north, East Southern Street in the south, South 4th Avenue in the east, and South 2nd Avenue on the west (see attached survey report for details). The Walnut Grove Addition consists of 166 properties. Of those, 152 properties were surveyed based on the criteria of being 50 years or older.

Results:

The Walnut Grove Addition features a variety of architectural styles, but it consists mostly of one-and-one-half story Craftsman Bungalows and Minimal Traditional residences. Foursquare, Edwardian, Classic Cottage, Twentieth Century Commercial, and vernacular Tudor Revival buildings are also present, though they are less common within the neighborhood. Please see the attached survey report for more detail on the architectural styles.

A majority of the residences in the subdivision were constructed between 1901 and 1930, aligning with the agricultural development of the area. Another small boom in construction started in the post-World War II years, continuing to the early-1970s; very few residences in the subdivision were constructed after 1972. Based on this, a period of significance of 1877-1930 for the Walnut Grove Addition could be established.

Including the 152 properties that were surveyed, 20 resources (approximately 13%) were listed as having high NRHP potential eligibility, and 94 resources (approximately 62%) were listed as having medium NRHP potential eligibility. In terms of a potential historic district, 107 of the 152 (approximately 70%) of the homes in Walnut Grove would be considered contributing resources. As the City of Brighton's eligibility criteria closely follows the NRHP eligibility criteria, there is a great likelihood that the numbers discussed above as NRHP eligibility, would also entail eligibility for a historic district at the local level as well.

Importance of Walnut Grove:

Based on the information gained through the reconnaissance survey as well as research previously conducted through the Brighton City Museum, it is evident that the Walnut Grove Addition is one of the most important neighborhoods in both Brighton's past and future. The land that is now Walnut Grove was first owned by the Union Pacific Railroad, and was bought by Brighton's founder, Daniel F. Carmichael. The addition was the first to be platted after Brighton's incorporation in 1887. Many of Brighton's early residents lived in this area, including William Lovelace, an early Brighton mayor, Sam F. Eaton, one of Brighton's first merchants, and J.F. Alexander, one of Brighton's early doctors.

NEXT STEPS

Staff is continuing to research the best way to move forward with the information received through the reconnaissance survey project. The first strategy is to break the addition into smaller portions for intensive survey purposes. The smaller portions could potentially be divided by location, by designation potential, by architectural style, or anything else thematic. Breaking the addition into smaller portions allows for a more reasonable scope and scale for surveying at a more intensive level. Additionally, staff is actively searching for applicable grants to help fund the intensive surveys, as they offer much more detail than a reconnaissance survey. Another strategy staff is exploring is having the Historic Preservation Commission conduct some of the historical research needed for the intensive level surveys. This would cut the cost of the survey and allow for the Commission to be involved in learning the historical value of the Walnut Grove Addition.

Staff is also looking forward to more public outreach in the Walnut Grove neighborhood. Members of the Historic Preservation Commission have been canvassing in the area in hopes of finding residents and property owners with an

interest in designation. In addition, City staff will be sharing any research gathered on resources in Walnut Grove with property owners, to apprise them of the historical and architectural information staff has received. As part of the outreach, staff is planning to host an open house, or a similar event, that will provide information to residents and property owners about the history of their home, provide information on designation, and to gauge owner interest in designation, whether individually or as a district.

ATTACHMENTS

- List of Designated Properties
- Walnut Grove Addition Reconnaissance Survey
- Draft Staff Presentation