

## I. INTRODUCTION

### **The Preservation Plan's Purpose**

In 2001, the City of Carbondale received a Certified Local Government grant from the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency to prepare a community-wide Historic Preservation Plan. The Historic Preservation Plan is intended to provide the City and the Preservation Commission with specific community preservation goals and objectives, and an action plan to implement the goals, objectives, and recommendations included in the Plan. The Preservation Plan was also to include a review of the community's historic resources, based on a *Master List of Historic and Architecturally Significant Properties in Carbondale*, a list of an estimated 300 properties which had been assembled by the Preservation Commission through a windshield survey and compilation of two professional surveys. The review of this list would take the form of recommendations for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places and Carbondale Register of Historic Places. Of particular interest were to be recommendations for local historic districts and neighborhood preservation districts, which were enabled by the 1989 Preservation Ordinance, but have yet to be established. Also among the project requirements was a review of the City's Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance, in order to develop recommendations for possible amendments to the ordinance or other regulatory measures for the protection and continued use of historic properties.

Among the duties of the nine-member Preservation Commission, as established in Section 15-2D-1 Preservation District of the Zoning Ordinance, are:

- to conduct an ongoing survey to identify properties, improvements, and areas that have historic, architectural, or community interest;
- to investigate and recommend to the City Council designations of properties and areas which have special historic, architectural and/or community value as historic districts, landmarks, and neighborhood preservation districts;
- to review applications for alteration, construction, and demolition affecting properties formally under consideration for designation or designated historic districts, landmarks, and neighborhood preservation districts;
- to advise and assist owners of property or structures within designated districts on physical and financial aspects of preservation, renovation, rehabilitation, and adaptive use, and/or procedures for inclusion on the National Register;
- to recommend to the City Council the nomination of properties to the National Register;

- to inform and educate the citizens of Carbondale concerning the historic and architectural heritage of the City; and
- to review the City Zoning Ordinance and recommend to the Planning Commission and the City Council any amendments appropriate for the protection and continued use of properties which are locally designated.

While this is not a complete list of the duties of the Preservation Commission as specified in the Zoning Ordinance, this selection of tasks is particularly relevant to the content of this Preservation Plan. The intent of this Plan is to create a work program focusing on preservation education, property designation, and procedural aspects of the Preservation Commission's duties. The Preservation Plan provides goals, objectives and actions, along with priorities, for these areas of the City's preservation program.

## **The Planning Process**

*ArchiSearch, Historic Preservation Consultants*, was hired in July 2001 to prepare the Preservation Plan under the guidance and direction of the Preservation Commission and City staff. In July, ArchiSearch had an initial meeting with City staff and the Preservation Commission to discuss the Preservation Plan and citizen participation. Based on this discussion, a Community Interactive Workshop was held on September 20, 2001, at which time local citizens were invited to express their concerns and desires for the historic resources of the City. The event was publicized in the City's bi-monthly newsletter, the *Carbondale Communique*, the City government's cable channel and on the City's website. A direct mailing was also done targeting owners of historic properties, neighborhood organizations, and others. Fifty-four people participated in the workshop for over two hours which included focus group sessions. Focus groups of eight to ten people addressed the three basic questions of planning: What do we have? What do we want? How do we get it? Group responses were posted for "voting," with all workshop participants receiving nine stickers to place as votes on the overall responses. The meeting concluded with a review of the top answers and an invitation for discussion among the participants. (A summary of these responses is included in the Appendices of this Plan.) The following morning, the Preservation Commission, City staff, and ArchiSearch met to review the workshop responses.

Based upon the results of the workshop and discussions with the Preservation Commission, ArchiSearch prepared a partial draft plan containing goals, objectives, and actions for review by City staff and the Preservation Commission at their November 19, 2001 meeting. After review and comment by the Commission, a draft was presented by ArchiSearch at a February 27, 2002 meeting with the Preservation Commission. The draft was revised based on comments from City staff and the Preservation Commission. The consultant's involvement with the project concluded with a presentation of a final draft of the Plan to the City Council on April 16, 2002.

## What is “Historical”?

Webster defines “historical” as “of, relating to, or having the character of history; based on history.” Many people in the field of historic preservation use the terms “historic” and “old” interchangeably, i.e. a historic building or an old building. Conversely, some people think of “historic” as conferring some sort of status, which is typically not the case. The outcome of the “historic” versus “old” debate is that we have greatly expanded our concept of what can be considered significant in historic preservation. The earliest efforts in our country focused around the obvious: homes of presidents, governmental buildings, and grand mansions. In recent years, we have increased our concept of what is historic to include the vast realm of properties which represent our development history. From gas stations and diners on Route 66 to wagon ruts left from migration along the Santa Fe Trail, from neon signs along our Main Streets to simple bungalows in our neighborhoods and now to ranch style houses, many types of properties can help us better understand our history, even our recent history. We may focus around particularly unique aspects of “historic,” for example, Buckminster Fuller’s geodesic dome home in Carbondale or the Brooks Catsup Bottle water tower in Collinsville. National attention on properties such as these from the recent past has been spearheaded by the fact that these properties are just as susceptible to change, even demolition, as many of our older properties.

Increasingly, historic preservation has focused not just on single buildings, but on neighborhoods, farmsteads, and other groupings which comprise historic districts. Importantly, historic districts may consist of more than just groupings of buildings to include other features which lend character. Such features may include streetlights, brick streets, building setbacks, landscaping, and outbuildings, such as garages and carriage barns. These are all historic resources which contribute greatly to our communities.

This document and the Carbondale Zoning Ordinance define “historic resources” as follows:

*Carbondale’s historic resources are those properties and improvements which reflect the historical, cultural, political, economic, artistic, social, ethnic or other heritage of nation, state, or community; or which have a special community or aesthetic interest or value to the City. These resources may also be representative of an architectural or engineering type inherently valuable for the study of a period, style, craftsmanship, method of construction, or use of indigenous materials. They establish a sense of time and place which is unique to the City of Carbondale.*