



Legislation Text

File #: 21-4176, **Version:** 1

HLC#21-008: Establishment of a Cultural Landscape designation

The Commission's recent review of the Harrison property at 400 W. Oak Street as a possible site for the historic village exposed a need for a new designation for properties that have historic significance but do not qualify for landmark status. Staff recommends a new designation Cultural Landscape designation for properties that have historic significance but do not have historic buildings. The designation would be similar to Official Recognition and will not impose any landmark restrictions on the property.

A cultural landscape is defined by the National Park Service as a geographic area (including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein), associated with a historic event, activity, or person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values. Cultural landscapes are composed of a collection of character-defining features, which may include small-scale features like statuary and benches, as well as large patterns of fields, forests, and other features that demarcate the land. Character-defining features are generally organized as topography; vegetation; circulation; water features, and; structures, site furnishings, and objects.

There are four general types of cultural landscapes:

Historic Designed Landscape

A landscape that was consciously designed or laid out by a landscape architect, master gardener, architect, or horticulturist according to design principles, or an amateur gardener working in a recognized style or tradition.

Historic Vernacular Landscape

A landscape that evolved through use by the people whose activities or occupancy shaped that landscape.

Historic Site

A landscape significant for its association with a historic event, activity, or person.

Ethnographic Landscape

A landscape containing a variety of natural and cultural resources that associated people define as heritage resources.

The Harrison property on Walnut Creek is an example of a Historic Vernacular Landscape. The property was once the site of the Mansfield Gin, a peanut mill and the H. & T.C. Railroad pump house which were destroyed in the 1922 flood. While traces of these buildings remain, the property does not qualify for landmark status. The relationship between the buildings, creek, trees and land does create a cultural landscape. These structures are shown in the Mansfield Gin Detail from the 1921 Sanborn Map.

Also attached for the Commission's reference is Preservation Brief 36: Protecting Cultural Landscapes from the National Park Service and an article on cultural landscapes from the Texas Historical Commission. These documents provide more information on cultural landscapes and their role in historic preservation.

Staff recommends the following:

1. The establishment of a Cultural Landscape designation in conjunction with the Historic Landmark and Official Recognition designations;
2. That the Commission identifies appropriate properties as cultural landscapes for recognition;
and
3. That the Commission develops best practices to preserve the City's cultural landscapes.

Attachment

Mansfield Gin detail

Preservation Brief 36: Protecting Cultural Landscapes

Texas Historical Commission Article