

NORHILL NEWS

NEWS FROM NORHILL NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2013 VOL. 24, NO. 5

Norhill Remodeling Guidelines Clarified

Article II, Section 12 of the Norhill deed restrictions specifies that remodels and additions must “be in harmony” with existing structures, but what exactly does that mean? To make things even more confusing, the deed restrictions reference three aspects of harmony: harmony of external design, harmony of ground elevation and harmony of topography.

Obviously, the concept of “being in harmony” is essential to maintaining the delicate character of a historic district, so the NNA Deed Restrictions Committee has issued a set of guidelines to clarify these issues and provide guidance for homeowners and developers who wish to renovate structures in the Norhill Historic District. These guidelines are now posted on the NNA website.

Harmony of External Design

We know from working with city planners at the Houston Archeological and Historic Commission that choice of external materials is very important. It’s impossible to maintain the look of a historic area if non-traditional materials are allowed. Doors, windows, siding and roofing are all required to look like original materials from the 1920s, even if they are made using newer technology. The front facade of a house must be maintained, too. If you can show that the facade was changed by a previous owner, you have the right to take it back to the original design.

Harmony of Ground Elevation

Many areas in the Heights and other older Houston neighborhoods have allowed homes to be raised so they tower over the surrounding structures. We’ve experienced very little of that in Norhill, so we require that structures align vertically and horizontally with others on the block. Anytime this rule is violated, it just looks wrong.

Harmony of Topography

Rapidly escalating property values have caused an explosion of interest in building larger structures on our small



lots. In order to preserve the unique character of Norhill, we recognize the need to place some limits on this growth. We are specifying that primary dwellings be roughly centered on a lot, with adequate set-backs in the front, rear and sides. The footprint of the primary dwelling should represent no more than 40% of the lot.

We also recognize the importance of maintaining balance with neighboring structures. It’s not right to allow one home to overpower the ones on either side. Our guideline is that a primary structure cannot be expanded to more than 150% of the average of the immediately adjacent primary structures (the people you share a fence line with). So if the houses on either side and to the rear average 1,500 square feet, you cannot expand your house to more than 2,250 sf.

But more than anything, we don’t want Norhill to become a community of wall-to-wall structures like you find in other inside-the-loop neighborhoods. We think quality of living requires at least a minimum amount of green space, trees and gardens. So we have set a maximum limit of 2,500 square feet on remodeled structures in Norhill. There are some existing houses larger than that, but not many.

These guidelines are intended to help manage growth in Norhill in a way that allows us to “harmoniously” maintain the historic integrity of our neighborhood. For a complete look at the remodeling expansion guidelines, go to norhill.org/remodeling.

President's Message

Many times, when I ask a client how things are going, the answer is "We're getting there." That answer assumes the client knows where "there" is, of course, but that's the way I feel about Norhill Neighborhood Association.



If the purpose of a civic organization is improve the quality of living for its residents, then I think we can agree that NNA is headed in the right direction.

Already this year we have sponsored a tree planting project that put 72 trees in the ground. We held a "Sportacular" in Proctor Park that attracted over 100 adults and children for a half-day of fun and socializing. Our recent ice cream social drew 55 people of all ages (and added several pounds to my waistline). And we filled the park building in January by offering free BBQ at our annual Member Appreciation Dinner.

Our First Friday Happy Hours are becoming more popular every month, and our Dinner Club and Cycling Club are thriving. Thanks to a series of informative speakers and topics, we now get about 50 Norhillians to turn out for the association meetings on the last Tuesday of every month. We've covered everything from Houston bike trails to bungalow remodeling tips to mosaic art techniques this year so far. And the August meeting featuring Constable Rosen was especially helpful with lots of crime prevention ideas.

And our long-time dream of having distinctive signs marking the boundaries of Norhill Historic District will soon be realized.

So I guess you can say "We're getting there." But we won't be able to say we've arrived until a much higher percentage of Norhill residents are willing to support our activities through the annual membership fees. If you've been meaning to join, I hope you'll do it today.

—Bob Lamons

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Nominations being sought for 2014 Norhill board

We are now soliciting nominations for individuals to serve on the 2014 board of Norhill Neighborhood Association. A slate of proposed officers and directors will be presented at the September 24th meeting of the association, and the election will be held at the October 29th meeting. Nominations will be accepted from the floor at both meetings.

We are also voting at the September meeting to amend the by-laws as proposed at the August meeting expand the board from ten members to twelve, and to revise four of the board positions to better manage the growing needs of our association (see box).

Tom Patton is chairing the Nominations Committee. If you are interested in serving, or wish to nominate someone, please contact Tom at tfpatton82@gmail.com. His phone number is 713-578-0804.

Norhill 2014 officer and director positions:

President
V.P. Membership
V.P. Deed Restrictions
Secretary
Treasurer
Crime Watch Officer
Communications Director
Programs Director
Social Events Director
Community Projects Director
Director-at-large
Director-at-large

Norhill holiday party planned at Heights Villa

Save the date — Friday, December 6th for a fabulous holiday party at Heights Villa, the wedding and special events facility at Pecore and Michaux. Owners Cathy and Brendan Gowing have generously agreed to donate the use of their ballroom for a special holiday gathering of Norhill residents.

Details will be announced in the next issue of *Norhill News*, but it will be an opportunity to meet your Norhill neighbors, enjoy some food and drink, and get into the holiday spirit. A large group of volunteers, led by Kathy Cameron and Linda Vasse are already hard at work organizing the event. If you have ideas, or would like to volunteer to serve in some capacity, contact them at vasecameron@sbcglobal.net.

Since this is the same date as our regular First Friday Happy Hour, we are envisioning a “super happy hour” where Norhill residents are encouraged to bring something to eat and drink, augmented by additional food and drink provided by the association. More details about that



later. The Heights Villa ballroom is a large 50 x 50 room and will be set up with tables and chairs, as well as plenty of extra room for socializing.

Who knows? We may even hire a band and dance a little, too.

Ice cream social a refreshing hit

More than fifty Norhillians came to Proctor Park on July 20th to enjoy home-made ice cream and socialize with their neighbors. Eleven ice cream flavors were offered, from traditional flavors like strawberry banana and cherry chocolate chip, to more exotic recipes like one based on amber ale from the Town in City Brewing Company (which opens next year on Cavalcade).



The Adam twins, Harry and Theo, have different reactions to ice cream.

The winning recipes were:

Mark Adam – basil chili pequin

Mary Patton – raspberry cheesecake

Nancy Falgout – grapefruit basil sorbet

Special thanks to Viula Torgerson for organizing this event, and to Sally Walden of Habitation Realty and Charlotte Aguilar of *The Leader* newspaper for serving as judges in the ice cream contest.

Nobody knows Norhill better



Mary Wassef

Broker, ABR, CLHMS
Five Star Texas
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*Norhill resident
since 1999*



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NORHILL NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

2013 OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

President

Bob Lamons
713-828-7000

**First Vice President,
Membership**

Tom Patton
713-578-0804

**Second Vice President,
Deed Restrictions**

Willie Childers
713-864-0575

Secretary

Adam Oblath
713-534-7855

Treasurer

Daryl Sinkule
832-465-1051

Historian

Trisha Perry
281-799-7949

Crime Watch Officer

Patti Woods
832-776-2801

Parliamentarian

George Reynolds
713-651-7899

Member-at-large

Rebekah Mayfield
832-439-7219

Member-at-large

Theresa Doyle
713-504-9918

Yard of the Month

Linda Marx
713-503-0424

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **September 24** NNA Monthly Meeting – 2014 officer slate presented
Lynn Wallace, Village of the Heights
- **October 4** First Friday Happy Hour – Kathleen Brown, 916 W. Temple
- **October 13** Norhill Cycling Club monthly ride
- **October 18** Norhill Diner's Group – open to all residents
- **October 29** NNA Monthly Meeting – Officers and director elections
Delaney Harris-Finch, HA&HC Remodeling Guidelines
- **November 1** First Friday Happy Hour – John & Sally Wood,
1140 W. Cottage



Norhill News
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 [facebook.com/norhill.org](https://www.facebook.com/norhill.org)

NORHILL YARD OF THE MONTH

We are pleased to recognize these Norhill Yard of the Month recipients. Thanks for helping keep Norhill beautiful!



August: Terry Fromm, 1002 Al Gregg



September: Amanda Horak, 4611 Michaux