

Preserving the old, making room for the new

Local woman proposes making Vickery Place a conservation district.



SHELIA HUFFMAN

As a longtime resident of Vickery Place I feel excited and cautious about the influx of interest and investment in my neighborhood.

It is exciting to see upscale apartments and chic retail moving into my area. It is exciting that my home has escalated in value. But I am also cautious.

I want to safeguard all of the aspects of my neighborhood that made it special in the first place. I want to protect the cultural and historical heritage of Vickery Place. I want to preserve the lifestyle associated with urban living.

Enacting a conservation district would help maintain all that is good about our neighborhood while allowing growth and worthwhile development to continue within the area.

Developed in 1911, Vickery Place is filled with Dallas history. Early 20th century families who had a role in shaping Dallas lived in

the very houses that are our homes today. They were pharmacists, teachers, utility company managers, insurance clerks, doctors, lawyers and salesman.

They lived in modest homes near the city where they worked. They were community leaders, developers and news editors, interested in their families, their city and the quality of life in their neighborhood, just as we are today.

In fact, Vickery Place was built to house the middle class. It was advertised as "above the city" and right on the streetcar line.

The Arts and Crafts bungalows so prevalent in Vickery Place were the hot architectural style of the era. Many of the houses were constructed from designs found in plan books like Aladdin and catalogs such as Sears.

They had then, and still do have, a charm about them; they represent "Americana."

The front porches are an especially inviting element of the Arts and Crafts style of architecture popularized by Greene and Greene and of the Prairie style of Frank Lloyd Wright.

Vickery Place probably boasts one of the largest subdivisions of front porches still left in Dallas.

Tudor, Colonial Revival and Mediterranean styles also comprise the rich, diverse architecture of Vickery Place.

Additionally, there is a certain feel to the neighborhood. That

neighborhood bars and eclectic boutiques surrounding our neighborhood.

We understand change is inevitable. But with change comes responsibility.



PHOTO SUBMITTED BY SHELIA HUFFMAN

HISTORY IN THE MAKING: Many residents of Vickery Place are pushing to make their neighborhood a conservation district.

"feel" is one of the reasons many of us chose urban over suburban living. We love the tree-lined streets, the quaint old homes, the front porches and the green space. We like being able to walk to the sidewalk cafes, small restaurants,

Because we have something special and we don't want to lose it, it makes sense to tweak the zoning and development rules for our neighborhood in a manner that will nourish the sought-after urban character of the area while

honoring the cultural and architectural history of the past.

Architectural style, height, setbacks, garage location, driveways and lot coverage are some of the building standards that can be regulated by a conservation district. These building restrictions can preserve the streetscapes and overall feel of an older neighborhood and still allow new construction to carry on.

New construction is not undesirable; it simply needs to be guided so that it blends and co-exists with the surroundings. With foresight we can preserve the charm and architectural significance of this vibrant neighborhood and retain the link to our shared cultural history.

■ For information about Vickery Place, visit www.vpna.org. To be included on the e-mail list and receive updated information regarding the proposed Vickery Place Conservation District, e-mail info@vpna.org.

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