

**Clifton Community Meetings
Written Input**

**Submitted by Janice L. Weber
126 North Jane Street**

Experience with, or opinion of the Historic Preservation Designation and Landmarks process in Clifton

I have had no experience with Landmarks. I did support designating Clifton as a historic district after the loss of several historic homes.

Recommendations or next steps

I want our neighborhood to have SOME protection from development and destruction. Either:

1. We (the Council) use these comment to lobby Landmarks to make adaptations for Clifton (people worked hard and long on those).
2. Change to "Conservation" status (after first learning what it entails).

**Submitted by John Eberman
113 Coral Avenue**

Experience with, or opinion of the Historic Preservation Designation and Landmarks process in Clifton

The Landmarks process seems difficult yet we should figure out how to keep Landmark protection. Preservation should not be limited to just grand structures but offer protection for working class structures as well. The new house on Coral is an example of a living, breathing preservation district. Clifton has had all types of housing and we should not get stuck in 1910 or any period. That house on Coral went through Landmarks for material on exterior, scale, and mass.

Recommendations or next steps

We should try to figure out how to smooth the process so that it is a smoother process for residents ("user friendly"). Landmarks should respect Clifton's specific guidelines and follow them consistently. Clifton is a diverse neighborhood with all types of housing stock. Could the neighborhood set up a repair fund to help offset costs to needy elderly?

**Submitted by Kelly M. Croghan
264 Saunders Avenue**

Recommendations or next steps

Provide history of origin & evolution of Landmark ARC on Website.

Provide document that constitutes Landmark ARC; what are the written guidelines?

What is the process for changing?

**Submitted by Darcy Croghan
264 Saunders Avenue**

Experience with, or opinion of the Historic Preservation Designation and Landmarks process in Clifton

What is a Neighborhood Landmarks Preservation Plan?

Recommendations or next steps

Please consider people who cannot afford costly improvements but want to keep their property in repair. We need more information on the preservation plan.

**Submitted by David Coyte
1813 Frankfort Avenue #3**

I have had experience with the Historic Landmarks crowd on several properties. I have found them to be inconsistent, and in one instant downright dishonest. I have seen single glazed windows installed contrary to code (apartments at N end of Keats) and I think this prioritizing of Historic Preservation over energy conservation and building code is a serious issue.

I was told by an “architect” that galvanized metal siding was meant to be installed horizontally. This was to keep me from re-installing vertically on a building that was remodeled at 117 N. Jane. The same “architect” from Landmarks also told me that screwed down metal roofing would leak – as if it was a defective product – because he didn’t want me to replace the existing roof that did leak with this product.

Beyond the “out of control” and out of touch staffing my concerns with this designation lie with future preservation. For this community to be economically sustainable homeowners must be free to improve the efficiency of their homes without additional economic burden.

I support moving to a conservation district designation which affords the important protections we sought with Landmarks, but allows homeowners to address their property issues freely and intelligently.

**Submitted by Peggy Sue Howard
No address provided**

My first contact with the Clifton Community Council was 17 years ago when I asked the Council for support of my application to turn a gutted, falling down house on Sycamore Ave. I wanted to buy into a duplex. They supported me.

Years later when it became apparently necessary to protect the neighborhood, I joined with other neighbors and the Council. We spent endless hours and months drafting the “Clifton Preservation District Document.” We were assured we could amend the preservation district document to reflect the diversity of Clifton. The amended document was finally submitted and approved. We were elated.

Now those hard fought for “Clifton Preservation District” changes are being denied.

We don’t need a new or different designation for Clifton. I call on the City to recognize the Clifton Community Council’s Amendments to the preservation district document and to support the Council in its efforts to preserve the diversity of the Clifton neighborhood.

Submitted by Tracy K’Meyer, Glenn Crothers, and on behalf of other residents of Coral Avenue

Because my family will be out of town during the week of the first two meetings on the historic preservation issue in Clifton, I am submitting this letter to the Clifton Community Council and sending a copy to councilwoman Tina Ward-Pugh. The neighbors signing below join me in expressing general

concerns about the preservation district and one, Beau Baker, will seek to make a statement on our joint behalf at the meeting. I have attached a response to Mr. Beckman's request for details about individual experiences.

We want to express our strong support for an ordinance creating a new option called Neighborhood Conservation Districts and for moving Clifton under that designation. This will provide an opportunity to protect the area's historic character by requiring review before demolition and for new construction but will allow homeowners to make renovations that will improve their properties and the quality of the neighborhood.

We support this change because the current preservation district rules are enforced in a way that does not reflect the original concerns of the residents, causes frustration, and discourages improvement in the neighborhood. I attended some of the meetings before the preservation district was adopted. The motivating concerns of most of those in attendance was to prevent old houses from being demolished and to keep new structures that do not reflect the character of the neighborhood from being built. Advocates of becoming a preservation district repeatedly assured residents that doing so would not "keep you from fixing up your house". These rules were meant to preserve the aesthetic character of a house as viewed from the street. Paint colors, porch lights, and other removable changes were not mentioned at the time as subject to review. This impression was reinforced to me two years ago, when Landmarks Commission inspectors who came to look at our windows told me that "anything that can be removed isn't covered" by the need to ask permission (this is why replacing old storm windows with modern ones is okay). In short, we were lead to believe there was significant latitude in what we could do to our houses as long as the visible character of the structure was not permanently altered.

Based on our own and neighbors' personal experiences the review board is enforcing policies in a far more strict manner than we had been lead to believe would be the case. We watch as houses that need repairs don't get them. I've talked to developers who rehab old houses who say they wouldn't buy in Clifton. We've noted how home prices rise for similar structures in Crescent Hill while stagnating in our area. Contractors report having to build a seven hundred dollar replacement downspout and choose a particular front porch light. The circulation of stories such as these has created a climate of frustration and disrespect for the whole idea of a preservation district. Thus people look for, and find ways around the law. People are afraid to ask to do something to their houses for fear it will be turned down. People, like us, decide to put off a fix instead of paying the much higher costs for approved changes, or think about moving out of a neighborhood we love.

Our frustration over the difficulty in making renovations has increased recently in light of the total failure of the Landmarks office to prevent the intrusion of a modernist, out-of-scale structure into the middle of our neighborhood. While we are told we cannot put in new windows that would restore the historic look of our house, a new owner can build a completely out of character monstrosity just up the block. By allowing the construction of that new structure on Coral Ave., the preservation district administration has lost its moral authority in our neighborhood. For that reason we strongly encourage a modification of Clifton's status to allow people to fix up their existing houses.

My husband, Glenn Crothers, and I had a frustrating experience with the staff of the Landmarks office when we sought to replace the windows in our house. We had the windows inspected by professionals at Cunningham Overhead Doors and Windows. We chose new windows that would preserve the character of the house. In fact, replacing with these windows would have restored the look of the house

because right now we have modern (c.1980s) metal storms bolted on and vinyl siding frames around each window.

When we called the preservation office we were told on the phone it was unlikely we would be allowed to replace our windows. The inspectors appeared to have made up their minds before they even visited the house. The "inspection" took approximately fifteen minutes and consisted of two people walking around the outside of the house and looking up. They neither touched nor opened a single window. From their vantage point they could not have seen that in a couple cases the "wood" around the window is filler material inserted where wood has fallen out (upstairs back window). They could not have seen that it is easy to stick fingers right through some of the sills. Since this "inspection" we've filled in the cracks with caulk. These "inspectors" left us with the remark that we could go through the appeal but their recommendation was going to be no and there was no way we would be allowed to replace our windows with a negative judgment from them.

We asked the contractor who did the construction on the interior of our house to give us an estimate to "repair" the windows. She determined that it was not be feasible to repair the windows because they were too far gone. In making that judgment she was losing business because we would have hired her to do the job if it was possible. We consulted with another contractor with experience in old houses and he estimated the cost of repair would be at least 50 percent more than the figure quoted to us by Cunningham Overhead Doors and Windows. We couldn't afford that. I corresponded with Tina Ward Pugh who said she would convene a meeting to discuss making an easier policy for windows in light of energy concerns. If she did I never heard about it.

In replacing our windows we were trying to accomplish two goods: enhance the energy efficiency of the house and restore a more historic character by getting rid of the ugly storms and the poorly installed and unsightly siding frames. The inspectors' goal was to keep old materials in the house. Considering that to repair many of the windows we would have to replace the wood in the frames, sashes, and sills and replace the pulley system and in most cases the hardware too, it is unclear what exactly would be preserved. The inspectors told us repeatedly that the Landmarks office had no concern about energy efficiency. They evidently don't care about the historic look of the house either since they advised us to keep the storms or get even more modern ones.

As professional historians (both of us are professors at UofL, where I am chair of the History Department; Glenn is also the Director of Research at the Filson Historical Society) we are proud to live in an older neighborhood and value the historic character of the area. However, the inconsistent and over-zealous administration of the preservation guidelines-which frustrates long time homeowners while allowing newcomers to build whatever they want-has disillusioned residents the historic designation. We support a new Neighborhood Conservation District plan in order to preserve the historic character of the area, while enabling residents to improve and renovate their homes.

**Submitted by Patria Fielding
129 Bellaire Avenue**

This letter is written for inclusion in the data gathered in the hearing held on August 7, 2010. I have lived at 129 N. Bellaire Avenue in the Clifton neighborhood since 1983. I have been very active in the neighborhood, including many years of volunteering with the Clifton Community Council. I have been an officer and committee chair in the organization.

Please allow me to present a little history. Clifton became a historic preservation district in 2003 after the following events:

- The sending of a legal notice to every property owner listed in the PVA records.
- The required legal notice in the local newspaper.
- The delivery of hundred of flyers door-to-door by volunteers in the neighborhood.
- A public hearing by the Landmarks Commission. I believe the hearing was at the Clifton Center. In that hearing a very thorough report was presented outlining why Clifton was deemed to be qualified for designation.
- The commission and the Metro government acted to designate Clifton as a historic preservation district.
- Subsequent to that, Clifton people were invited to participate in the writing of the guidelines specific to Clifton, a task involving many hours of work.

I am presenting here my top 10 reasons for my beloved neighborhood to remain designated as a historic preservation district.

Designation has the backing of local law while neighborhood plans have little or no influence over land use events.

1. Get free advice – from people trained in architecture and history and who love the same.
2. Enjoy an increase in property values and neighborhood stability.
3. Stop demolition without due process. Buildings suffering from purposeful demolition by neglect should be so lucky! Example – the Queen Anne on Frankfort Avenue.
4. Opportunities to watch the house on your street come alive with quality restoration that keeps in place the historic fabric of Clifton.
5. Honor the heritage of a working-class neighborhood and keep it intact for the future.
6. Have in place processes and personnel to help the Land Use and Preservation Committee deal with developers.
7. Along with the Land Development Code, have the force of preservation law to deal with absentee owners.
8. Get the word out early that Clifton values its heritage, its buildings, its landscape, its trees, its walls, and more.
9. Have skillful help and guidance as your home exterior is renovated, such that the renovation adds value and beauty while maintaining historic quality.

I thank you for this opportunity to be heard regarding this issue. I appreciate the attendance of everyone here and the voice of every speaker.

Submitted by Jerry & Cathy Warner
157 N. Keats

We began working with Landmarks in the 1990's in the Cherokee Triangle. Since then we have completely restored 5 properties in Clifton and helped on many others. On the last property we purchased in Clifton in 2009, we were denied permission to replace deteriorated windows with like windows. This house is not historic, being only 60 years old. We appealed to the A.R. C., and had 2 meetings, both of which we found humiliating and negative. We felt the outcome was decided beforehand. We wrote letters of protest to Metro Council woman Tina Ward-Pugh and The Clifton Community Council. Ms. Ward-Pugh did not answer our complaint and the community council's letter

advised us to count our blessings for having Landmarks. We have lived and worked in this neighborhood for over 30 years. Now we feel something vital has been taken from us. When bureaucrats can come into your neighborhood and dictate with seeming impunity, you do not live in a democracy, you live in a bureaucracy. We want to be de-regulated, or changed to a Neighborhood Conservation District (NCD).

Submitted by Lydia Prichard & Robin Goodman
Pope Street

We bought a house on Pope St in December. Though it did not change our decision to buy our house, we were a bit dismayed to discover that we would not be allowed to replace two extremely inefficient windows in our house because of the Historic Preservation District designation of the neighborhood. We were equally thrilled to learn of the movement to create a less restrictive designation for this neighborhood.

We would love to attend the meetings for tonight and for Saturday but our schedules will not permit. However, we wanted to be sure that our opinions were expressed and we hope that you will consider this email as input.

We certainly agree that maintaining the integrity of the neighborhood is important. Having said that, the restrictive nature of the current designation prices many people out of buying homes here. We all agree that homeowners stabilize neighborhoods. But many people will not buy homes in an area where they have to jump through innumerable hoops to make any renovations. While original doors and windows may be historic, they are not energy efficient, they are rarely secure and often even their aesthetic value can be questioned.

One of the things we love about Clifton is the historic nature of the neighborhood. But we also love the diversity – in people, housing styles, and incomes. If current restrictions make home renovations too pricey or difficult to obtain, we run the risk of losing that diversity.

We are very much in support of an ordinance that creates a less restrictive designation for the neighborhood. Thanks for considering our input.

Submitted by Alan & Brenda Jones
188 Vernon Avenue

We moved from Atlanta, Ga to Louisville in June 2008 and picked the Clifton area with hopes and dreams of restoring a historic home as well as a way of life for ourselves and our families that reside here in Louisville and have since the late 1800's.

We thought by following protocol and working with the City Project Architect before we submitted our plans to the Clifton Community Council that we would be ahead of the game and the meeting would go pretty quickly, 30-45 minutes tops since we had already made changes that were needed to comply with the CCC via the City Architect. Instead, we were immediately attacked and by that I mean our plans were attacked and it seemed as though suggestions were being made for no reason, as a matter of fact one member said, "You don't seem to want to make any of our changes." Well, we didn't since the suggestions didn't make good common sense and they were being thrown on the table just for good measure. The City Architect was appalled by the demeanor of the CCC, as were we and by the way we were in that meeting for approximately 2 ½ hours!!

We had been working on the project for over a year and would have welcomed some constructive additions to our issues but instead we were met with people that just seem to want to let others know they were in charge. We did in fact win our proposal but it was not pretty and if someone more docile had been presenting this to the CCC they would have had to postpone the work and getting the go ahead would have drug on and on.

I would like to see a group of compassionate, reasonably minded people with a background of working with the public be a criteria to be on this Committee, because word on the street has it and would agree, this Committee is not realistic and doesn't serve the Communities best interests but rather takes a holier than thou approach. I was told they could stop my progress anytime they wanted. Hmmm welcome to Louisville!

I think if you went door to door in the Clifton neighborhoods and took a poll you would find my statements are pretty much the consensus.

We love the community and want to see it flourish where families are on waiting lists to move in and restore it to it's original grandeur but we need community minded helpful individuals to attain that goal.

**Submitted by Virginia Forest
129 North Bellaire Avenue**

I am a long-time volunteer in Clifton, having served on the board of the Clifton Community Council and chair of the Beautification Committee. It is my desire to speak in favor of Clifton remaining a historic preservation district.

The loss of two historic homes, huge beautiful trees, and significant green space was the catalyst for me to favor designation of my neighborhood as a historic preservation district. The experience with Clifton Lofts helped me see how little input a neighborhood had when facing a developer with money. The land development code did not protect Clifton's heritage. Local government's fear of a lawsuit put in place the lack of will to help the neighborhood stop the far-reaching development. A thousand signatures on a petition were meaningless in the process. Local government was weak in dealing with the architectural renderings presented by the developer and in dealing with significant changes desired by the developer along the way. In fact, the neighborhood had to very closely "watch dog" the development endlessly.

Clifton Lofts resulted in loss and more. It gave permission to the developer to construct a 15 foot wall and fence on my property line about 7 feet from my deck. You can get a good look at it if you pause to look down the side of my home at 129 N. Bellaire. My property was the most effected by the development, but the lack of a voice and the unfairness of it all were the most outraging.

Please know this. The Clifton Community Council participates in Landmarks processes, but does not have enforcement responsibilities. The council did not know of most of the dissatisfaction with the Landmarks process until a few months ago. I am very glad all the issues with preservation and Landmarks are coming to light. Now we have the opportunity to improve those processes, to inform, to help residents, to list to residents.

I have applied for a Certificate of Appropriateness four times. I have found the staff at Landmarks to be very helpful and found that on-site visits were quite available. I have always appreciated the expertise available at no charge.

I am in favor of improving the processes involved and of keeping Clifton designated as a historic preservation district.