

The Steps we Followed to Historic Designation
The 700 Block of 18th Avenue NE

- We were informed in early December by a neighbor, who had been involved with historic preservation while living in Oregon, that it might be possible to have a smaller area in a neighborhood, such as a block, receive historic designation.
- Once we realized this might be an option available to us, we met with Laura Duvekot, a historic preservationist with the city of St. Petersburg, to ask her how we should proceed. She informed us that we would need a majority plus one of our block's residents to receive an application.
- We then approached each of the residents on our block to see if there was enough interest. We felt it was best to speak directly with each of our neighbors, to express our concerns about the future of our block and how we could best protect it from new, inappropriate construction. If a neighbor was adamantly opposed we respected their opinion and moved forward, looking to meet the quota we needed instead of persuading someone to change their views.
- Those who were definitely on board and those who were interested but still had questions and reservations were asked to sign what we called a letter of intent. We had seven owners of the ten parcels on our block sign this letter. We had enough interest at this point to proceed and brought that signed document to Laura. We asked her if she would be willing to set up an information session for those owners who had signed this document but still had concerns about how a historic designation would affect them.
- An information session with City Planning was held on December 16th. At least one resident from each of the seven parcels that had signed the letter of intent was present at this meeting. Laura Duvekot and Derek Kilborn answered our questions and addressed our concerns for over an hour. At the end of this meeting, all homeowners who had signed our document felt comfortable enough to proceed.
- At this point we began the official local landmark designation application. Although our names are listed on the application as being the preparers, this was a monumental task and one we could not have done on our own. Robin Reed from HONNA and Emily Elwyn of St. Pete Preservation were our lifelines. Using the Lang Court application as our guide, they each did major portions of the application and guided us through each step of this very involved process. When the application was complete, it was close to 90 pages.
- The application was turned into the city on December 28th and the application fee was paid at that time.
- On January 6th a ballot was mailed to every homeowner on our block. It was mailed by the city with a certificate of mailing.
- On January 10th the City of St. Petersburg Urban Planning and Historic Preservation Division had received enough yes votes (a minimum of 50% plus 1) to deem the application complete and ready to be processed by City Staff.

- The next step was to get approval from the CPPC, the City's Community Planning and Preservation Commission, at a public hearing held on February 14th. At this hearing the CPPC would decide if we met the criteria for designation as a local historic landmark. The city prepared the notice of this public hearing and the mailing labels and we mailed it with a certificate of mailing not only to every resident on our block, but also to all residents living within 200 feet of our block. At this hearing the city presented their staff report and anyone was able to speak for three minutes for or against our designation. We worked very hard to get as many residents from our block as well as neighboring blocks to speak on our behalf. We also asked anyone who could not attend to send emails supporting us. We had no opposition at this meeting and the commission voted unanimously in our favor.
- Finally we would need approval from the City Council. A notice of this public hearing and address labels were prepared by the city and we mailed them to all residents on our block, as well as all residents within 200 feet of our block, with a certificate of mailing. This hearing was held on March 16th. Again, we asked everyone on our block in support of our efforts to speak at this hearing, or if unable to attend to send an email on our behalf. And again we reached out to anyone we knew who supported our efforts regardless of where they lived to speak or email on our behalf. We did have opposition at this meeting from two homeowners on our block. But it was not enough to prevent our receiving unanimous support from the City Council. We are now the fourth historic district in the city of St. Petersburg and are thrilled that we can protect the future of our block!