



*City of Charleston*

# West Ashley Historic Preservation

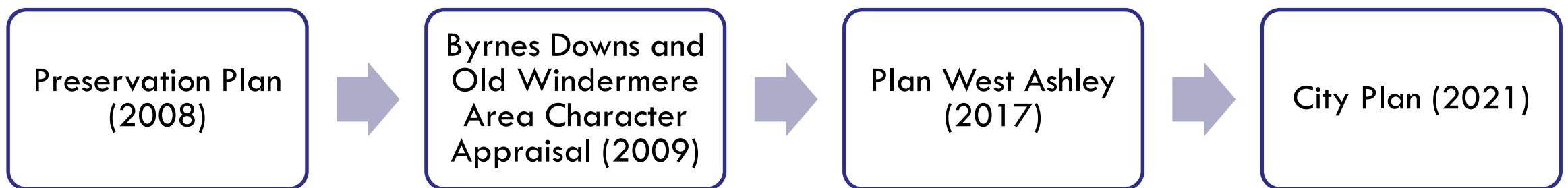
Eric Pohlman – West Ashley Coordinator  
2023

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# History of Plans

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# Preservation Plan (2008)

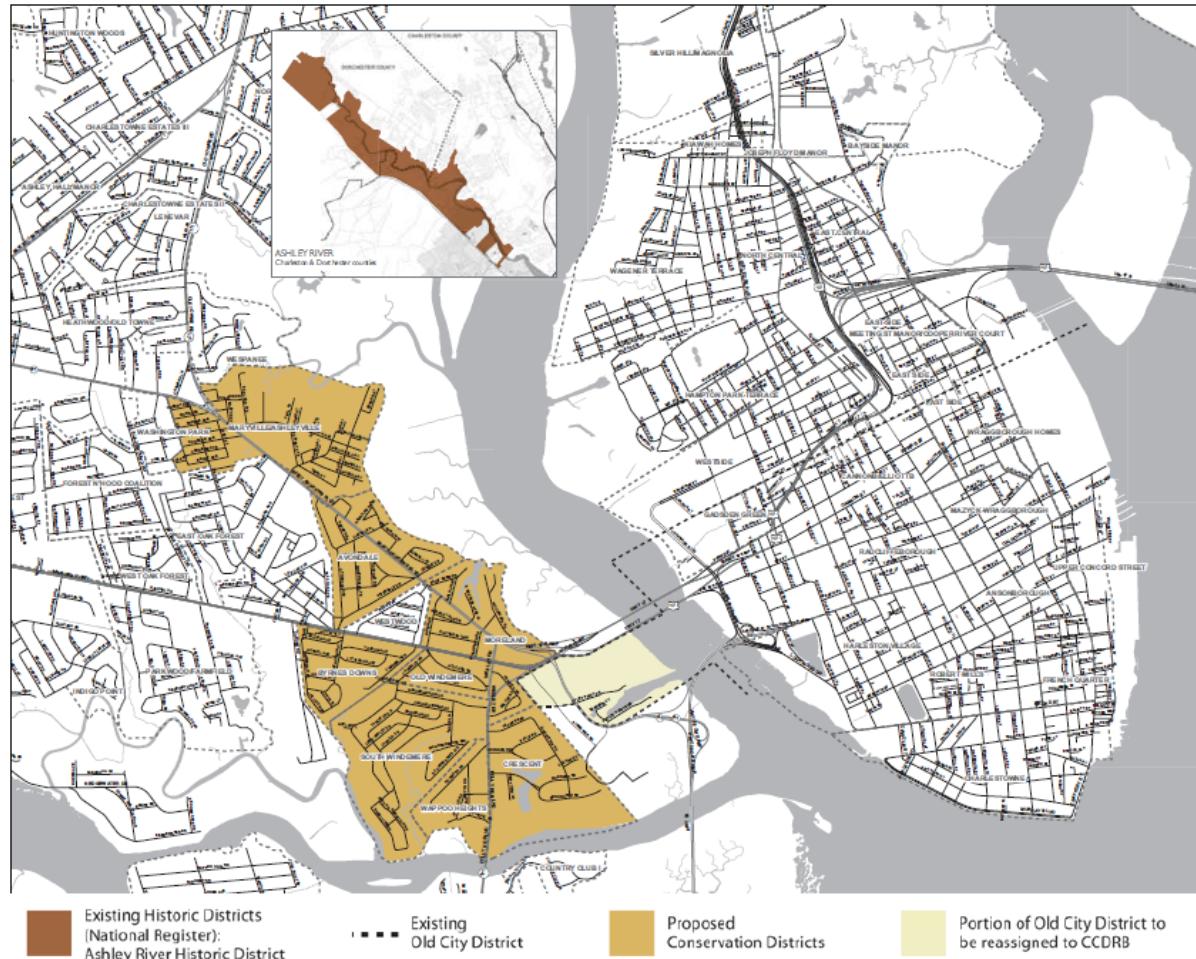
Recommended creating Area Character Appraisals

Recommended designating Wappoo Heights, the Crescent, Old Windermere, South Windermere, Byrnes Downs, Moreland, Avondale, Maryville, and Ashleyville as conservation districts

Recommended extending BAR oversight of new construction, alterations, and demolitions to the portion of the Ashley River National Register Historic District within the City of Charleston

Recommended publishing a Preservation Manual for Charleston that details types of buildings and materials, as well as how to conserve and adapt buildings for modern use

Recommended protecting historic commercial areas like the Avondale commercial district through zoning



7.50 Proposed changes to historic resource protection in West Ashley

# Byrnes Downs and Old Windermere ACA (2009)

Recommended the creation of Conservation District(s)

Recommended expanding code enforcement for property maintenance

Recommended creating demolition review for Windermere neighborhood

Recommended submitting Coburg Dairy Cow for National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)

Recommended pursuing NRHP for Old Windermere Neighborhood

## ACA's Purpose

- Articulate a historic context and statement of significance for the study area
- Describe the urban design of the area
- Identify character-defining features (building height, scale, mass, setbacks, etc. )
- Define neighborhood boundaries
- Identify areas are intact and transitional
- Evaluate the unique qualities of the neighborhood

# Plan West Ashley Implementation

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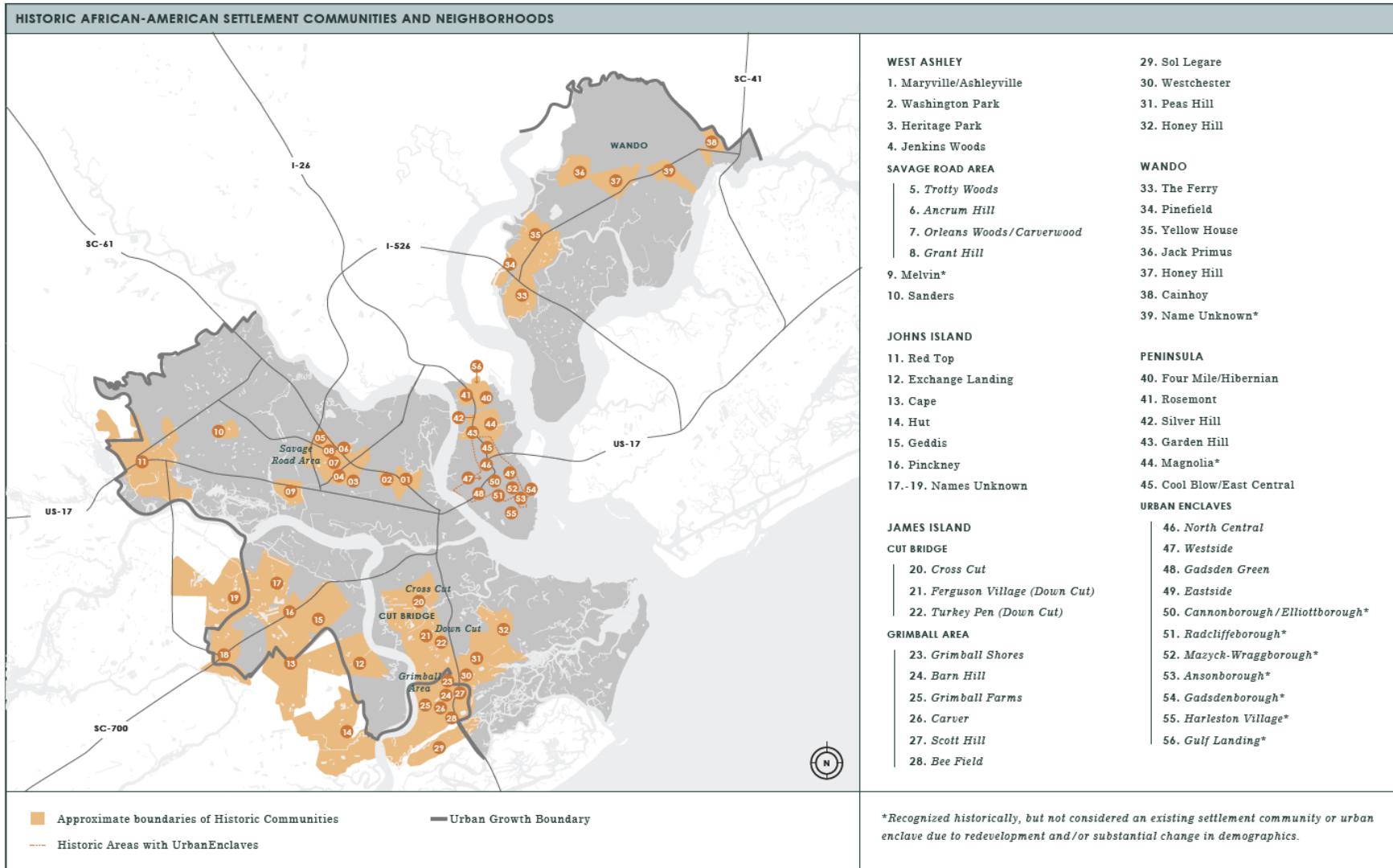
- **Plan West Ashley Element 6**
  - *Pursue neighborhood preservation.* Some areas in inner West Ashley are eligible for historic designation. Pursuing official designation can provide additional protections for neighborhood form, character and architectural appearance.
- **Plan West Ashley Element 76**
  - *Identify and preserve historic community assets and character in West Ashley.* Within inner West Ashley's oldest neighborhoods, the neighborhood descriptions and recommendations of the City's Preservation Plan and the subsequent "Area Character Appraisals" completed for Byrnes Downs and Old Windermere provide a resource for understanding physical character and historic assets, and tools for preserving these assets. The City should implement pre-existing recommendations from the Preservation Plan. This understanding of assets and priorities should also be updated based on other historic community assets identified by West Ashley residents subsequent to the adoption of the preservation plan and Area Character Appraisals. The City should also engage with neighborhood and other local organizations to help contribute to any future Area Character Appraisals, with this process also used as an educational and capacity building exercise for neighborhood residents.

# City Plan (2021)

City Plan brought to light other areas of historic significance including the settlement communities located in and around the City.

Strengthen policies and allocate resources to address demolition by neglect of historic properties.

Update and maintain a cultural resource inventory to evaluate the status of known cultural resources, identify under-documented and/or threatened cultural resources - especially in African-American settlement communities, and prioritize documentation needs and designation recommendations.



# Existing Protection

- City's Design Review Board Corridor Demolition Review (§54-268)

## c. Scope of Authority

- 11. Demolition, partial demolition, removal or relocation of any structure 50 years of age or older within the jurisdiction of the Design Review Board shall require approval by the Board. Demolition, partial demolition, removal or relocation of any structure less than fifty (50) years of age, with the exception of those referenced in paragraph 7 above, shall not require approval.

## d. Standards for demolition, partial demolition, removal or relocation review. In reviewing an application to demolish in whole or in part, or remove or relocate any existing structure applicable to paragraph 10 or 11 above, the Design Review Board shall consider, among other things, the following factors:

- 1. The architectural and aesthetic features of the structure, the nature and quality of the structure, including its architectural fabric, any historical significance, the nature and quality of the surrounding area and the structure's contribution to the overall streetscape of the area.
- 3. In any case involving the demolition, partial demolition, removal or relocation of a structure, before granting approval, the Design Review Board may require that the applicant provide a written report produced by a South Carolina licensed structural engineer describing the state of repair and/or structural stability of the structure under consideration. The Design Review Board may also call upon the city engineer or chief building official to provide it with a written report on the state of repair and/or structural stability of the structure under consideration.

# Recent Demolition Requests

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1332 Ashley River Road - Deferred for demolition by DRB (recommended denial at PC for rezoning). This property was unknown to be the home of Isaac Peaks who was influential in WA history and development. City Staff spoke up for preservation of the structure due to its historic context



1349 Ashley River Road - Home turned commercial operation, DRB voted to deny demolition even though property was in County. Applicant ceased the process to annex and the development of a Parkers Kitchen/Gas. Applicant could have pulled demolition permit in County prior to submitting. St. Andrews Boulevard - Stier Kent Canady metal fabrication. Demolition in county in 2021.

## Recent Demolition Requests

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2319 Savannah Highway - Former dry goods/grocery store. DRB voted to approve demolition. Community presented history of family and the importance of the structure being the only grocery store in the area for many decades.



1731 Savannah Highway - Former residence turned commercial. DRB voted to deny demolition based on the unique construction of the structure.

## Outside of DRB

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8 Stocker – Requested demolition and through community involvement was rescinded. Owner was given community support for variances to achieve goals of building new house on neighboring property. Property outside of DRB.



Dupont Station (Limehouse Produce Shed) – Demolished 2016 through Charleston County. No protections since property was not annexed into the City.

## Outside of DRB

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534 Savannah Highway- Request for demolition twice and was twice denied. Structure is now sitting vacant



948 St. Andrews Boulevard - Stier Kent Canady metal fabrication. Demolition in county in 2021.

# Current Efforts

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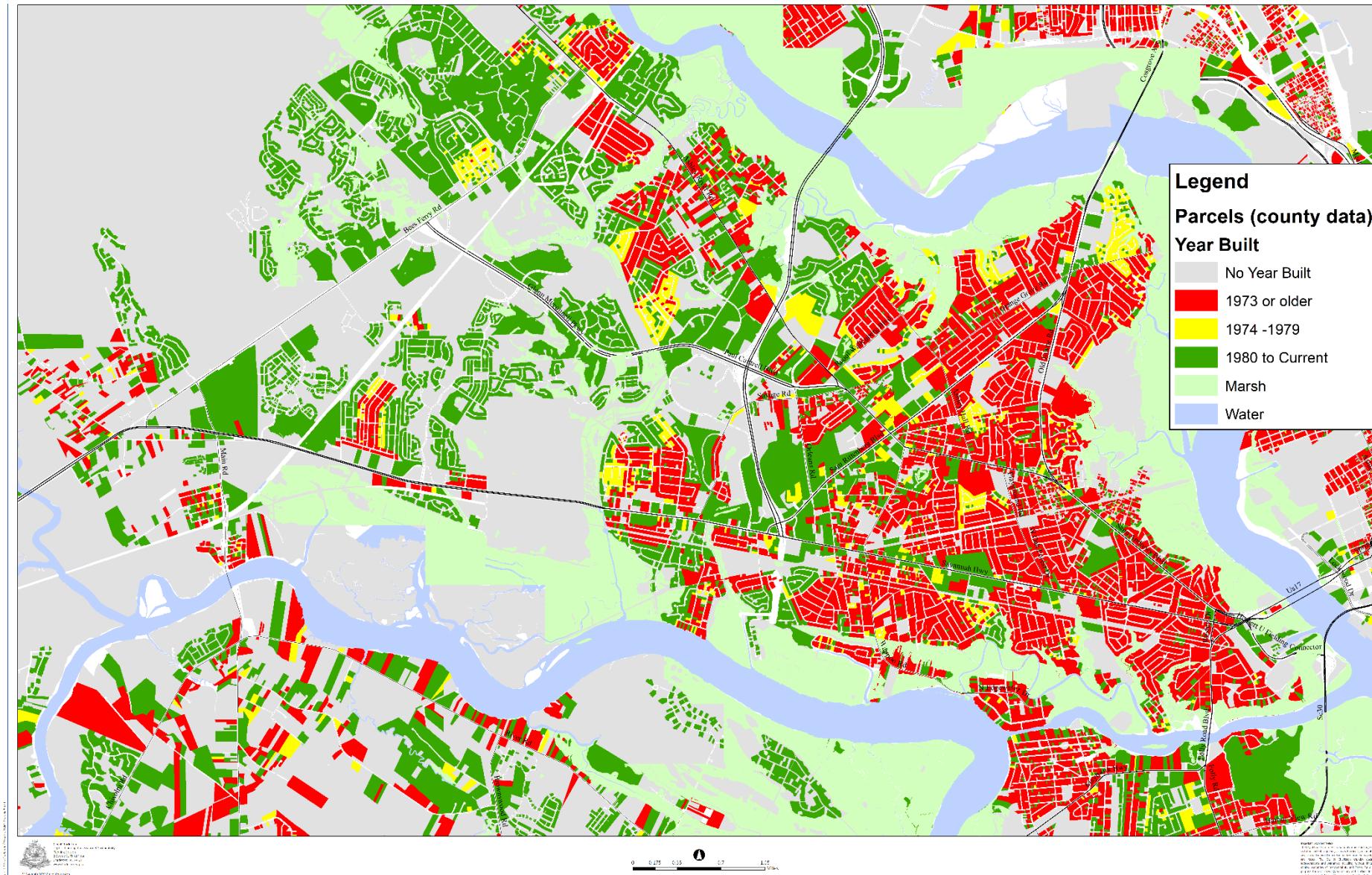
- Neighborhood meeting called when 8 Stocker Drive was requested for demolition, included requests from residents of Old Windermere, South Windermere, and Byrnes Downs.
- CM Ross Appel and Peter Shahid, neighborhood presidents, and city staff led meeting to discuss with community in attendance current limitations and next steps that could be taken
- Old Windermere neighborhood association opted to lead a survey with residents of Old Windermere to determine if historic protections are desired within the community and to what those protections would look
  - Demolition protection
  - Architecture
  - New Construction
  - Landscape
  - Urban form

Neighborhood Association meeting was held

Survey was compiled by city staff

Neighborhood leadership is leading collection

# West Ashley Year Built (County Data)



# Comparative Cities

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## Columbia, SC - Community Character Areas

While Community Character areas are not historic districts, they are meant to provide a level of protection, minimizing the possibility that demolition and construction activity within a residential community would drastically negatively affect the existing character of that community. Neighborhoods which have elected to have this overlay have a review for demolition and new construction on newly subdivided lots.

Contains:

- 1) Subdivision regulations for lot size and building placement
- 2) Design heights
- 3) Criteria for demolition for structures older than 50 years, with review by Design Development Review Commission (architectural review board)

## Savannah, GA – Conservation Overlay District

The purpose and intent of the Conservation Overlay District (CD) is to preserve the character of Savannah's older and historic neighborhoods which lack the protection of a local historic district overlay. The CD establishes a public process and standards to evaluate demolition of contributing [buildings](#) in order to ensure historic buildings are preserved and the character of the district is maintained.

Contains:

- 1) Contributing status criteria which outlines elements that must be met to qualify for demolition review.
- 2) Requires preservation board approval for demolition of contributing structure.
- 3) Also has criteria for one neighborhood regarding recombination of lots.

# Considerations and Discussions

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Currently majority of West Ashley does not have historic designation or oversight for demolition

Many properties are found to contain historic or cultural relevance only when demolition request is presented to the City

Members of the public are asking for greater clarity and direction on what could and should be preserved

Midcentury preservation and suburban preservation takes a different path than traditional preservation techniques

Does West Ashley need a full architectural inventory of historic structures?

Should demolition review extend beyond current considerations?

Should an interim measure of better demolition guidance be drafted?