THEMATIC DISTRICTS

At the turn of the 21st century, cultural resources professionals are faced with identifying, evaluating, and registering cultural resources that challenge commonly held assumptions about what is "historic" and worthy of preservation. The concept of significance changes with the passage of time, new scholarship, and a better understanding of the need to recognize historic places associated with all the diverse cultural groups.

-Carol D. Shull, "Evaluating Cultural Resources"

Thematic District
A thematic district is one in which the properties share themes, trends, and patterns of history. The thematic district is organized by a thematic context and property type.

Thematic Context
The thematic context may be historic events, significant persons, architectural styles or characteristics to which the group as a whole relates.

Property Type
Property type is a group of properties defined by common physical and associative attributes.

Example:
Residential Development: Denver Mid-Century Design
Property Type: Residential

Benefits

*Provides the citizens with a means for recognizing and protecting unique historic resources scattered around the City (i.e. Modernism, commercial districts associated with streetcar suburbs, Googie architecture,...)

* Provides neighborhoods that have had significant redevelopment (pops and scrapes) with a means of protecting remaining historic resources even when a typical historic district is not appropriate. Examples would include Hilltop, Park Hill, Washington Park, University Park, Platt Park, etc.

* Provides neighborhoods that have significant political opposition to designation with a tool to protect deserving properties without creating a no-win situation at City Council.

* Minimizes the impact on Landmark Staff because only contributing structures would require design review and there would be no non-contributing properties in a thematic district.

* Acknowledges the methodology already utilized in the National Register Multiple Property Submission. It allows for a broader perspective on how resources are related.

* Minimizes the use of the individual landmark designation tool to protect resources that may meet one of the three categories of significance - architecture, history, geography. (Example: Amter House).

* Reduces the potential for opposition because only contributing structures would be listed in the designation.

* Supports the city-wide survey project and the development of theme-based context statements.

*Assist in furnishing essential information for historic preservation planning because it evaluates properties on a comparative basis.

*Facilitates the evaluation of individual properties by comparing them with resources that share similar physical characteristics and historical