



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

LAKE EOLA HEIGHTS HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWSLETTER 3rd QUARTER 2009

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: WHAT ABOUT THE CHURCH AT RIDGEWOOD AND CATHCART?

By David Martens

Last week I walked past the property at the corner of Ridgewood Street and Cathcart Avenue within the Lake Eola Heights Historic District. Vines cover nearly half of the three-story structure. A board or two has been added to cover a broken window here and there, but cracked or open windows still can be found. The neglect is obvious, unfortunate and is causing unnecessary decay to a building of contributing historic significance.

It is owned by the Catholic Diocese, located across the street from St. James Cathedral School and catty-corner to the St. James Social Hall. Services are being held at the Social Hall while the cathedral is undergoing an extensive \$10 million restoration, renovation and expansion project.

This structure I'm talking about has a rich spiritual history in downtown Orlando. It was originally built in 1928 in the mission revival style for the Central Christian Church. Other congregations that have found a home there include Temple Israel, The Light and Life Free Methodist Church and United Pentecostal Church of Orlando. The Pentecostal Church sold the church to a private concern for \$360,000 in 1999 and it was donated to the Diocese in that same year. St. James Cathedral School used the building for a number of events; however concerns about structural soundness and a leaky roof caused them to close it for good a few years later.

Fast forward to 2008 when a group from St. James Cathedral School invited city representatives, interested parties and members of the neighborhood to a meeting to announce their plans to demolish the church and replace it with a meditation garden. We were outraged.

At this meeting and even at a second meeting with school officials our offer as a neighborhood was to assist with a fund-raising program to rehabilitate the building. The recommended plan was to create a small performing arts hall as well as an educational arts center. Representatives

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

7 p.m. Thursday August 13
at Trinity Lutheran Church
123 East Livingston Street

Bring a Neighbor!

LEARN TO GROW ...

By Jeff Thompson, RLA, ASLA

The new school year will soon be upon us, so what better time to think about how the garden can provide kids with some important lessons? Gardening can teach the rewards of responsibility, the fundamentals of ecology and the concept of sustainability.

Consider planting a small victory garden. In Michele Obama's White House Kitchen Garden, which has been in the news this year, school children played a big role in prepping, planting, weeding and then harvesting the garden. The goal is to show children that their hard work can pay some tasty dividends. A kitchen garden is a great way to get kids out of the house and into the sunshine. The routines of watering and weeding teach responsibility. There are a couple of "Victory Gardens" in the neighborhood and the City supports community gardens on empty lots.

A vegetable garden is a good way to teach kids that growing some of your own produce is far more sustainable than mechanized farms in another state or country shipping food to a grocery store where it is purchased by the consumer. Tons of carbon is generated by the production and transportation of food compared to virtually none from "growing your own."

A raised plot in your back yard for vegetables and herbs or a few citrus, avocado or even a Lychee tree would be a good, manageable start to a "Sustainability Garden."

Since most kids love bugs, a butterfly garden is a great way to capture children's imaginations.

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