

## ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation:                   ASSESSING USER UNDERSTANDING OF  
HERITAGE IN THE ENVIRONMENT:  
PRESERVATION STRATEGIES FOR THE  
USE OF PLACE

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While places often derive associations with heritage from distinctive land uses or patterns of activity, the historic preservation planning tools commonly available in the U.S. are limited in their ability to sustain those associations. The active and evolving aspects of a location's character are challenging to reflect in the point-in-time historic property documentation that typically serves as the basis for preservation planning decisions. This study explored methods to illuminate the qualities residents and users associate with a community's distinctive local character, or sense of place, and how those qualities relate to local history and heritage. Two case studies in Nashville, Tennessee, the urban Music Row neighborhood and rural Bells Bend community, were examined through mixed research methods, including document-based research, field observation, online survey, and interviews, to achieve a more holistic understanding of sense of place and to ascertain which features and qualities

meaningful to members of the community align with place characteristics that can be regulated by local planning tools.

Older and historic places were among those associated with the sense of place of both cases. Continuity of locally-distinctive uses emerged as important, as did social interactions and relationships. Uses may be sustained with the help of planning tools beyond those commonly thought of as preservation strategies, such as land use zoning and economic incentives. Social aspects of place are harder to address but can be recognized through expanded definitions of heritage and interpretive efforts.

Though a limited response rate constrained interpretation of some results, elements of the methodology show promise for enabling direct input from place users in practice. Defining what heritage-related qualities are most meaningful to community character can yield better informed preservation planning processes.

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ENVIRONMENT: PRESERVATION STRATEGIES FOR THE USE OF PLACE

by

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## Introduction and Research Context

In 2016, the United States celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA). This milestone for the federal preservation program and for most of the programs that establish the framework for historic preservation in the U.S. occasioned reflection among practitioners on the accomplishments of the original legislation and discussion about how it could be improved in response to current issues, such as demographic shifts and changing development patterns (for example, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation 2016, Page and Miller 2016). Ideas such as expanding the definition of significance for the purposes of recognition programs like the National Register of Historic Places or expanding the scope of the NHPA to encompass elements of intangible heritage reflect a desire to more holistically recognize, appreciate, and maintain places of importance to diverse communities. Many of these communities do not fit the traditional notions of architectural or design distinction, historical importance established by written record, or archaeological study value that more easily comports with the way historic places are commonly understood and managed in existing programs.

In 2018, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the nation's leading preservation advocacy non-profit organization, devoted one of the major themes of its annual conference to intangible heritage. Another track focused on cultural landscapes and the "culture-nature connection." Recent government initiatives have made efforts to widen the scope of properties included in traditional recognition and

register programs and to broaden the involvement of the public in preservation activities (Advisory Council on Historic Preservation 2018). Preservationists have also worked toward recognition of places important to communities whose histories may have been invisible or less visible to the mainstream, such as through recent listings of sites associated with the gay rights movement and other aspects of LGBTQ history and context studies and other initiatives focused on Asian-American and Latino cultural heritage. These activities, along with evolving scholarship in the field, point toward an effort to expand preservation beyond the confines of national, state, and local register programs grounded in architectural history and archaeology, where regulation of change, if any, is often focused on aesthetic characteristics and information potential. They also evidence increasing awareness of the interconnected quality of the historic environment and community identity and a recognition that places associated with heritage are valued in diverse ways. While interpretive efforts with greater flexibility in recognizing and communicating heritage at many scales are a part of preservation work, regulatory tools, tax incentives, and local historic districting tend to get more attention in planning.

While a half-century of implementation marks an appropriate occasion to reexamine the provisions of the NHPA, it is also worthwhile to look beyond the confines of the federal preservation program for a more thorough understanding of history, heritage, and the physical environment from the perspective of communities. Though places may have historical significance in terms suited to formal preservation programs, they may also hold other values for those who live there, use the buildings and landscapes, or associate their past with a particular location. This study is

concerned with how places derive associations with history and heritage from distinctive land uses or patterns of activity and the challenges of preserving and maintaining those associations with the historic preservation and planning tools commonly available in American cities. San Francisco Heritage addressed examples of the limits of existing tools in a 2014 report broadly focused on conserving the city's cultural heritage, including things like longstanding local businesses, festivals, and community cultural institutions (San Francisco Heritage, 2014). Though any of these might occupy a part of the historic built environment that could be regulated in terms of appearance, ensuring continuity of traditions and uses intertwined with community identity necessitates different strategies. In a rural context, the preservation of land or agricultural buildings retains important physical reminders of a farming past, but knowledge about the practices of cultivation and the functioning of an agricultural economy is lost when seasonal rhythms of planting, growth, and harvest fade from view (Sundermann c.1992). As Eric W. Allison and Mary Ann Allison write, "Since the regulatory framework envisions the preservation of the physical building or site, even the most stringent design review of purely cultural sites will fail to address what is often most important: the ongoing activity associated with them" (Allison and Allison 2008, 32).

These aspects of a location's character are difficult to reflect in the static, point-in-time documentation that often serves as the basis for preservation planning and management decisions. The views of users of places should inform decisions about significance and what aspects of the historic environment will be preserved. Preservation practitioners may need to embrace different methods of collecting

information about and describing such places in order to capture the full range of qualities that contribute to community history, character, and sense of place. Finding flexibility within existing programs is one strategy, but preservation practitioners may also need to explore opportunities for better integration with land use planning and growth management strategies that shape how neighborhoods and districts function. In local preservation agencies, the pitch for the enactment of historic preservation and conservation overlays often emphasizes that these preservation tools have no effect on land use, which is regulated through zoning. It is an excellent way of convincing property owners that their historic architecture could be adapted to new uses in the future, and it recognizes the inherent flexibility of many historic property types to serve a variety of uses. But such preservation tools can't conserve the complete character of a historic place when its character is associated with a use like agriculture, or with intangible cultural qualities such as a traditional cultural practice or the persistence of an industry or trade. Preservation planning scholars Randall Mason and Marta De La Torre propose that the preservation field should move away from "safeguarding things in and of themselves" toward consideration of the other diverse societal and cultural goals that conservation may serve (Mason and De La Torre 2000, 176). The "ambient" heritage they describe poses challenges for traditional preservation practice when utility values are emphasized over aesthetics. There may be other avenues for combining preservation of historic physical fabric and land use that could emerge from additional integration of heritage values into contemporary growth management approaches. Cross-disciplinary awareness can flow in both directions, and preservation professionals should learn more about how

planning tools other than traditional preservation methods may ultimately retain the characteristics that define heritage for those who know a place best.

This study explores how residents and users connect with their heritage through the environment, how those connections affect perceptions of local identity, and what role use plays in the importance of historic places. Specifically, it examines the features or characteristics residents and users of two areas in Nashville, Tennessee, associated with the heritage of those places in order to ascertain the degree to which such meaningful features align with place characteristics that can be regulated by local planning and preservation tools. The proposed case study areas are places where community identity tends to be associated with certain activities and land uses rather than historic architecture. As such, they present challenges to a traditional historic preservation approach to maintaining “sense of place” through regulation of the appearance of the built environment. The study will also examine to what extent those user-identified characteristics are reflected in formal preservation and planning documentation and whether the heritage characteristics are or can be protected by preservation and planning tools available locally.

The potential practice applications of this research include understanding how planning strategies for managing the historic environment may contribute to the preservation of places significant to community heritage and identity. Though the preservation “canon” may ultimately be expanded, communities could benefit from the fullest range of tools with which to maintain those aspects of their history and heritage that contribute meaningfully to sense of place, whether or not they meet formal designation criteria. The preservation literature supports expanding the range

of places that are afforded consideration as significant to community heritage as well as techniques that involve a wider range of participants in defining significance. However, the literature does not appear to have widely explored methods of translating expanded recognition of community significance into additional (or modified) management approaches beyond general recommendations for participatory planning. At the same time, planners have embraced smart growth principles with little definition about how historic places and heritage contribute to community identity or sense of place beyond aesthetic qualities and heritage tourism. There appears to be a need for better examination of how heritage and community significance fare outside the boundaries of traditional preservation practice in response to planning interventions and land use transitions.

The specific questions asked by the research are: In areas where historic significance is linked to particular uses or practices, what qualities do users associate with the community's or district's distinctive local character, or sense of place? How are these qualities related to heritage? Have planning and preservation tools succeeded in preserving such qualities? This study contributes to improving preservation practice by exploring methods to illuminate how residents and users connect with their heritage through the environment, how those connections affect perceptions of sense of place, and what role historic uses play in sustaining place identity.

Chapter 1 explores the literature surrounding the concepts of sense of place and heritage, including the use of these terms in connection with sustainability, growth management, and place identity. It reviews current issues in preservation

practice in the United States to locate the research within debates about the reach and efficacy of preservation tools in capturing the full range of values that communities attach to places associated with heritage. Chapter 2 introduces the methodology and its sources in research influenced by cultural landscape studies, environment and behavior studies, and urban design and its orientation toward the logistical limitations of field research for development proposals. Chapter 3 describes each of the case study areas using a simplified cultural landscape assessment approach derived from a cultural studies model (Korr, 2002).

The results of the survey and interview components of the project are presented in Chapter 4, which integrates information from oral histories and the cultural landscape descriptions into conclusions about the elements of sense of place that residents and users in both case study areas identified as most closely associated with their place's heritage and character. Chapter 5 looks at local planning policies and preservation tools in terms of how they respond to the character-defining qualities identified in the study. The chapter discusses the effectiveness of the methodology and finds that, though it had limitations that would prevent consideration of this study as a model, open-ended survey questions and guided direct input from people who know places of heritage yield useful information about sense of place and heritage values to inform the planning process. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion about how integration of preservation and land use planning approaches can benefit both disciplines, and it proposes potential courses of action for historic preservation practice to either broaden its scope or ally with related disciplines to

sustain the historic environment as well as the social and cultural activity that often gives it meaning for community identity.



## Chapter 1: Considering Heritage, Sense of Place, and Preservation Values

Exploring the relationship between the physical and natural environment, heritage, and sense of place begins by reviewing the use of the latter two terms in scholarship and in preservation practice. Sense of place is part of an understanding of place that is distinguished from a simple geographic location in that places take on social meaning through human interaction and return sensory information through individual perception. In turn, they orient us to our environment and our position (physical and social) within it. Heritage, likewise, relates to the record of past events referred to as history but encompasses present-day meanings and uses of that record to shape individual, community, and national identity. This chapter considers these terms and how they have been used in preservation and planning practice. It further discusses the current context of historic preservation practice in the United States to locate this study within ongoing debates in the field and to position it to respond to current preservation challenges.

### *Sense of Place*

Preservationists and planners find common ground in describing community identity through the concept of sense of place. For example, the ten principles of smart growth include an imperative to “[f]oster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place.” (Smart Growth Network 2012). When historic preservation advocates seek to establish linkages with growth management strategies,

this principle is frequently cited as a natural connection between smart growth strategies and historic preservation. Definitions and professional approaches to maintaining and enhancing sense of place vary, however. The concept receives frequent mention in historic preservation texts as well as in planning practice, urban design, and economic development. Preservationists would be aided in their work by tools that allow them to assess and discuss sense of place in relationship to both physical aspects of the environment and to heritage and place identity as a broader concept encompassing intangible elements. Laurajane Smith provides the following starting point: “Heritage, particularly in its material representation, provides not only a physical anchor or geographical sense of belonging, but also allows us to negotiate a sense of social ‘place’ or class/community identity, and a cultural place or sense of belonging” (Smith 2006, 75). Understanding the personal, emotional connections that develop between users and the historic environment would assist planners, architects, local officials, economic development specialists, and others in assessing the value of heritage to the maintenance and creation of community identity.

In order to understand how “sense of place” is used to describe certain experiential qualities of historic places, it is worthwhile to look at the wider use of the term in diverse literature on historic preservation, urban design, cultural geography, environment and behavior studies, and growth management. While the concept of “sense of place” has filtered through the work of a wide range of scholars and observers of landscapes and the built environment, it entered the preservation planning vocabulary primarily through cultural geographers and landscape historians

working in the second half of the twentieth century (for examples of how the term shaped larger works, see Jackson 1994, and Feld and Basso 1996).

Sense of place includes experiential and social aspects tied to an individual's or group's interaction with the landscape and the people and other things within it. Sense of place, therefore, takes on social and communal meanings and is not simply contemplative (Basso 1996, 56-57). J.B. Jackson associates the following characteristics with the term: "a lively awareness of the familiar environment, a ritual repetition, a sense of fellowship based on a shared experience" (Jackson 1994, 159). Sense of place is also reflective of how we orient ourselves in relationship to the world and to others. It is multisensory, requiring immersion or experience to appreciate. Places can be sensed, and thus the concept includes aspects of individual perception of location, direction, and time within a spatial context, as Kevin Lynch describes (Lynch 1960, 1972). Those perceptions draw on the physical senses of sight (in recognizing faces, places, buildings, views, symbols, and other things), hearing (in identifying sounds that are distinctive or that accompany an activity), smell (which may evoke awareness of elements both natural and man-made), taste, and touch (from sensations generated by walking, interacting with buildings and structures, or encountering natural phenomena like wind or humidity, for example). Finally, sense of place has been described in terms of its contribution to identity and orientation, echoing the language with which Congress articulated its reasons for enacting the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Tim Cresswell notes the moral connotations of place, home and roots, concepts that express connection and fixity in contrast to mobility (Cresswell, 2002, 14-15). Humans find and sense whether they

are “in place” as well as when they are “out of place.” Sense of place helps us grasp where we are in terms of location as well as social and economic structure, local customs and culture, and historical time.

The Smart Growth movement’s definition of sense of place attempts to balance architectural beauty and distinctiveness with natural and intangible qualities. The description of sense of place included within the Ten Principles of Smart Growth refers to the natural environment and intangible qualities, such as feel, of communities that possess sense of place. References to historic preservation are present, as the principle calls for “natural and man-made boundaries and landmarks to define neighborhoods, towns, and regions. It encourages the construction and preservation of buildings that are assets to a community over time, not only because of the services provided within, but because of the unique contribution they make to the look and feel of a city” (Smart Growth Network, 2012). In this way it relates to the practice of physical planning through design standards and other aesthetic controls. Look is a quality that planners, architects, and historic preservation professionals have proven tools for regulating, while feeling is often acknowledged but not fully understood and even less consciously influenced. While appearance can be subjected to certain uniform controls through design guidelines, feeling, in the sense of the evocative quality ascribed to the concept in the National Register of Historic Place’s elements of integrity, is much more personal and subjective.

Another angle on the role of history and heritage in enhancing community character comes courtesy of scholars examining the role that public history plays in urban revitalization (Hayden 1995; Hurley 2010; Foster 2013). Dolores Hayden

establishes a strong case for the importance of public history in reflecting and maintaining local identity through sense of place and for place-based acknowledgement of marginalized histories to reclaim ground literally and figuratively for those whose contributions to the urban landscape are often overlooked. She contends place is so powerful in connecting to memory and in developing personal attachment because of its multisensory aspect. Hayden sees the concept of place as a meeting point between the aesthetic and natural environments. In that intersection, humans imprint the history of their own life, work, and play on their environments, and so social history is also woven into the fabric of place, and urban landscapes are “storehouses for social memories” (Hayden 1995, 9). Hayden uses the concept of the cultural landscape, pioneered and shaped by Carl Sauer, to describe and understand this area where “[c]ultural identity, social history, and urban design are . . . intertwined” (Hayden 1995, 15). Urban landscape history, as exemplified by the approach taken by public history projects profiled in *The Power of Place*, offers a means of strengthening “links between disciplines that draw on public memory” (Hayden 1995, 46).

Hayden’s approach contrasts with those of social scientists who have addressed the natural features of landscape or architectural historians who may study the aesthetic qualities of urban places without addressing how they take on meaning through being used and shaped by people. She proposes the urban landscape as a store of history that can be studied and yield information about those who lived there while also providing a medium for interpreting and sharing stories about the past through new urban design initiatives that reflect this heritage. Her approach

emphasizes the social and cultural meaning invested in urban landscapes and highlights the importance of these two qualities as contributing to “a sense of place” (Hayden, 1995).

Ned Kaufman takes a similar approach to the concept of sense of place in that he considers social and cultural meaning to be a large part of what makes places important to users (Kaufman, 2009). He goes further, however, to frame the relationship between users and their places to include issues of power and control that often trump values of emotional attachment and in which the central concern is “a question of power and equity: of who gets to choose” what happens to a place or how and when it changes (Kaufman 2009, 32). He contrasts the developer’s lens (“places are fundamentally blank pages on which to inscribe market calculations”) and statements about the community value of places, including as repositories of memory, culture, social capital, civic pride, historical knowledge, and educational potential, and as locations where all can “exercise citizenship” (36-37). Kaufman’s vision is collective rather than capitalist and considers places to be social and cultural assets as opposed to simply real estate investments. Places that have value in these ways are not always protected by historic preservation or environmental laws or zoning regulations. Thus, such “story sites” and their social value are at risk (Kaufman 2009, 38).

Kaufman calls for activists and scholars within environmental, planning, and historic preservation circles to develop language for discussing and assessing the value of places to communities as a step towards increasing community and user control over the fate of meaningful places. Development of better language to discuss

place could lead to the creation of new policies and tools (Kaufman 2009, 37). This study aims to help fill this void by exploring techniques that would allow those managing historic places to articulate characteristics of community significance that have associations with heritage, whether or not such features are typically captured in preservation documentation or regulated under local preservation ordinances.

While sense of place or community character serves as a criterion for the evaluation of development plans and proposals, it remains inconsistently defined. Nor, as landscape architect Ray Green asserts (1999), has there been much research into how residents and users understand the concept. That void is being filled by studies that attempt to associate sense of place or community character qualities to characteristics of the natural or built environment (see for example Green 1995, 1999; Brehm 2007; Wells 2009; and Henry 2015) as they are more readily manipulated through planning and regulation. Hilary Orange asked local residents around a World Heritage Site what the term “sense of place” meant to them and received diverse responses reflecting concern with “the intrinsic character and atmosphere of place, a sense of belonging, emotional response, and knowledge and understanding...” (Orange 2011, 115).

Focusing on the user experience of place is not a new strategy for planning and urban design scholarship. Previous work, such as that by planner and urban designer Sidney Brower (Brower 2000), has emphasized assessing the physical environment through the lens of how it meets users’ needs and fosters well-being and community connections. Other studies in the design field have pursued community feedback about sense of place in order to make urban design more responsive. While

Randolph Hester, a community planner, asked residents about what places in Manteo, North Carolina, were most important to its town character, he found that observation of their behavior led to different conclusions about the places that were used most and that figured prominently in the town's daily habits. These became what he calls the town's "sacred structures" that were to be protected when incorporated into a plan with economic development as one of its goals (Hester 1993). Archaeologist Thomas F. King proposes Hester's assessment approach to places of community identity as a democratic alternative to the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) (King 2016). More recently, architect Ming Hu and sustainability scholar Roger Chen employed user surveys combined with field study to examine whether architectural and urban design characteristics influence user perception of places (2018). Social aspects of community character, however, can be more difficult for planners to control (Green 1999, 314). One approach is to intensify community engagement efforts related to cultural resources.

Ideas for increasing community engagement in planning processes are emerging in the area of cultural resources practice. Planning consultants Stephen Townend and Ken Whittaker posit that new methods of consultation can yield information about community values and sense of place in the environmental assessment process for proposed developments. Implementing such new methods changes standard practice for environmental assessments by shifting the expertise from consultants and professionals working with quantitative data to qualitative, community-generated data (Townend and Whittaker 2011). Thus, professionals take on a facilitation role rather than making independent judgments as experts.



Community input aimed at understanding sense of place and place identity in preservation planning efforts helps support social sustainability and resilience. Sense of place and community distinctiveness figure prominently in sources from the planning field concerned with sustainable growth. In describing resilient cities, or those best adapted to respond to shortages of natural resources and the effects of climate change, including natural disasters, planners Peter Newman, Timothy Beatley, and Heather Boyer describe the “place-based city” among the characteristics of cities that meet the goal of resilience. In this terminology, place is associated with the utilization of local energy resources and economic development that keeps financial resources cycling within a community or region. However, the final imperative of the place-based city refers to a concept of place that is emotional and focused on social cohesion: “Cities and regions will understand renewable energy more generally as a way to build local economy, nurture a high quality of life, and create a strong commitment to place” (Newman, Beatley, Boyer, 2009, 81). The authors propose that the success of locally focused development efforts, whether in terms of energy, economics, or other resources, will only succeed when they are supported by local culture (83). Thus, cultural or social sustainability is another critical aspect of resilience. Mary Corbin Sies, Isabelle Gournay, and Robert Freestone argue for the importance of cultural sustainability and resilience in relationship to historic planned communities, contending that such places are more likely to remain faithful to the intentions of their origins when residents come together in forming a shared understanding of what characteristics are most central to

community identity (2019). Change can thus be weathered with less risk of losing the essential elements of sense of place.

Sustainability offers important connections with the direction of planning but raises other questions for preservation practice, as preservation scholar Erica Avrami has outlined (2010, 2012, 2016). Though the preservation field is quick to identify with principles of sustainability, she finds the connection between preservation and sustainability is not well established by data and merits further study, as well as an openness by preservation practitioners to work with results that may show preservation is not always synonymous with sustainability, and to alter policy accordingly (Avrami, 2016). Of particular concern to the purpose and goals of preservation are the less quantifiable but foundationally important issues of social sustainability, such as maintaining community identity (Avrami 2016). Architect and preservationist Richard Wagner echoes Avrami's concerns about whether preservation as it is practiced in the U.S. is inherently compatible with sustainability (Wagner, 2011). He cites the continued emphasis on retaining and replicating original materials in restoration practice, even as the range of places considered eligible for the National Register has broadened, as a potential stumbling block to achieving environmental sustainability goals (Wagner 2011, 12).

“Placemaking” has come into use as a term to describe the creation of locations, especially public spaces, which are vibrant, distinctive, and expressive of local character. The Project for Public Spaces defines placemaking as a process that “facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution.”

(Project for Public Spaces 2007). This description acknowledges the social and cultural aspects of place and place identity. The organization describes the characteristics of great places in terms of four large-scale attributes: social, accessible, active, and attractive. The quality “historic” is associated with the comfort and image quadrant on the organization’s circular diagram describing these attributes.

Placemaking approaches have generated additional connections between heritage, place, and community identity. Planner and attorney Edward T. McMahon posits the economic benefits of placemaking in that distinctive communities attract more visitors, generate more spending, and retain residents who develop affection for their place (McMahon 2010). He defines sense of place in terms of four general, but interrelated, categories of qualities: visual, cultural, social, and environmental (McMahon, 2010, 2). McMahon argues that sense of place contributes value to community and individual identity as well as social and economic factors. To develop sense of place, communities must design a built environment that is memorable and that also respects its natural environment rather than remaking it. Communities must also cultivate “a feeling of belonging and stewardship by residents” (McMahon 2010, 3). McMahon and the planning approach advanced by the Orton Family Foundation share a critique of traditional land-use planning techniques: too much reliance on quantitative measures at the expense of “the values, customs, characteristics, and quirks that make a place worth caring about” (McMahon 2010, 2; Orton Family Foundation 2012).

Although preservation practitioners have been quick to note the commonalities between historic preservation approaches and certain smart growth

strategies, the connections (and disconnections) between the two have not benefitted from much scholarly attention. Notable exceptions exist primarily at the master's level, where students in the mid-Atlantic have looked at specific projects and development contexts to determine whether smart growth and historic places do or can exist in harmony. They have concluded that some, but not all preservation goals are also components of smart growth strategies for older neighborhoods (Grilli 2007). Preservation may correspond in the case of fostering distinctive communities with a sense of place, preserving open space, and directing development towards existing communities, but other aspects of smart growth harmonize with preservation approaches more or less by property type (Dorman 2009).

### Heritage

In this study the term historic places or heritage is generally used instead of sites or historic properties in order to reflect a broader range of things that connect us, in the present, to the past in some way. The choice of “heritage” frees the study from the administrative confines of the way particular terms are used in preservation practice in the United States, such as the definition of historic property codified in the National Historic Preservation Act, and, unlike “historic architecture” or “built environment,” can encompass natural features, archaeological sites, and intangibles such as practices, rituals, crafts, and arts. It reflects my intention to challenge the ability of traditional historic preservation documentation and planning approaches to address the full range of qualities identified as contributing to a sense of place by residents or users of those places. Although heritage has intangible components, as in

the practice of rituals, the passing down of skills and arts, or the telling of stories, this study focuses on human interaction with manmade or natural physical features.

Heritage is a difficult term to define precisely since it can be nearly all encompassing. It has evolved after emerging as a concept in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries via the work of antiquarians and enthusiasts who sought to celebrate locations and objects associated with national origin stories (West and Ansell 2010). The collection of artifacts and objects during this period also fostered the development of what archaeologist Laurajane Smith calls the “authorized heritage discourse,” or AHD (Smith 2006), as collectors tended to view the monuments and material culture of the wider, often colonial, world against the standard of classical models and European masters (West and Ansell 2010). The role of professionals and experts in heritage was established during the nineteenth century at the same time that inventories and national listings of monuments emerged (West and Ansell 2010, 33). In the twentieth century, the definition of heritage expanded through the recognition of its social value, particularly following the adoption of the Burra Charter in 1979 (West and Ansell 2010, 39). The Burra Charter was revised in 1999, and the focus on material culture, buildings, and archaeological sites expanded so that heritage may now encompass cultural landscapes and elements of intangible heritage, which was recognized in another UNESCO convention in 2003 (Harrison, 2011, West and Ansell, 2010, 41).

Smith contends that all heritage is intangible, “a cultural process that engages with acts of remembering that work to create ways to understand and engage with the present” (Smith 2006, 44), although physical manifestations and remnants of the past

may act as mnemonic devices prompting or channeling engagement in this dialogue. Her critique of the term heritage challenges its dominant Western associations with material culture, sites, and aesthetically pleasing locations. In describing the “authorized heritage discourse,” or AHD, Smith points out how the selection of material culture to be preserved and passed down is a means of legitimizing certain narratives and values through the authority of expertise at the expense of others that may emanate from those who do not participate in, or are excluded from, the dominant national, community or group identity (Smith 2006, 29). Others have posited that the heritage discourse may not be as monolithic as the AHD implies, however (Koziol, 2008, 48). Nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge that heritage concerns not a purely factual representation of the past, but rather how we take elements of the past and shape them to address a range of social and cultural needs in the present (Smith, 2006, Little and Shackel, 2014). This view of heritage provides an opening to see it as a resource to be used constructively in sustaining communities and given consideration in planning processes.

While the relationship between heritage and identity often has been taken for granted, its susceptibility to power dynamics has important implications for how preservation tools and policies are used and how their use can favor some agendas over others (Smith, 2006; Smith, 2010; Little and Shackel, 2014; Rico, 2015). The management of heritage itself becomes an avenue through which community identity is subjected to regulation in light of this relationship (Waterton and Smith, 2010, 11). Historic preservation interventions are influenced by the cultural patterns that produced the built resources they seek to conserve, as folklorist Douglas DeNatale

found in Lowell, Massachusetts, but they also contribute to new understandings of the past and of the social relationships in the subject community (DeNatale, 1994).

Different understandings of heritage can be captured through innovative methodologies, as archaeologist Rodney Harrison demonstrates through a counter-mapping approach to illuminate the experiences of indigenous and non-indigenous users of historic landscapes in Australia (Harrison, 2011). By employing methods beyond traditional historic property documentation, such as recording stories from those familiar with the landscape as they revisit it or having them draw points of interest on aerial maps or photographs, “[t]he processes of counter-mapping allow minority groups to challenge some of the ‘taken for granted’ of heritage management, but also encourages people to celebrate their experiences of the everyday” (Harrison, 2011, 91). The result is a more nuanced representation of features within the landscape and their use, delivering a better understanding of how historic places operate in the production of individual and community identity.

### *Historic Preservation Practice in the United States*

Historic preservation in the United States has progressed over time from a focus on individual pieces of architecture or prehistoric archaeological sites to an increasingly holistic effort to retain and interpret the historical and cultural importance of a diverse range of properties. The current interest in the preservation of landscapes, ranging from traditional cultural landscapes sacred to Indian tribes to urban landscapes of the recent past, demonstrates the maturation of this trend. It has also exposed limitations

in the programs and tools used to ensure the longer-term survival of such important historic places. Many preservation tools were created during the period in which the preservation paradigm emphasized conservation of physical fabric of architectural treasures (Araoz, 1998; Lee, 2004).

The history of U.S. heritage and historic preservation laws illustrates this shift over the twentieth century. Federal involvement in historic site preservation began with the Antiquities Act of 1906, which gave the President the ability to designate National Monuments on federal lands. Later, the Secretary of the Interior was empowered to designate National Historic Landmarks (NHLs) via the Historic Sites Act of 1935. For the first time, the federal government could recognize the importance of historic places in local, state, and private ownership in addition to those managed by the federal government. The emphasis remained, however, on individual properties of exceptional importance. By the time the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) was passed in 1966, preservation practice had begun to recognize that the significance of places could be derived collectively from properties that lacked individual distinction but together illustrated significant historical trends, development patterns, plans, or events. Hence, historic districts were included as one of five property types (buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts) that could be eligible for the National Register. The newly created National Register also defined significance more flexibly in offering recognition to places that derived importance from events, characteristics, or trends at the state and local levels. The creation of the National Register represented a democratic shift in the federal preservation program, allowing as it did the recognition of places important solely at the local or state levels



and in empowering State Historic Preservation Offices to take over most of the administration of the program.

The first section of the NHPA included among its goals to provide a “sense of orientation” to the American people. During a period of dramatic change in American cities driven by suburbanization and urban renewal projects and major highway building initiatives, historic places were seen as key components of local identity that were under attack. However, the action strategies available to preservationists, such as rehabilitation tax credits and local historic districting, emphasized retention of historic architecture, which is only one aspect of place identity for long-term users or residents. As geographer Robin Datel notes, preservation approaches can inadvertently contribute to the destabilization of neighborhoods or their traditional identities when historic district designation invites outside investment or attracts new residents or users who prioritize the aesthetic or ambient qualities of the area over multi-layered social and cultural narratives (Datel 1985). Since the passage of the NHPA, preservation practice has often focused on maintaining physical and aesthetic qualities of historic places while explaining rationales for preservation activity in terms of economic benefits, aesthetic benefits, educational value, and local, state, or national pride. Less frequently have preservation practitioners or those working in related disciplines systematically examined the social and psychological value that historic preservation activity can generate, the sensory and emotional connections to place that proximity to historic sites and buildings may create.

Globalization has precipitated another angle on the importance of sense of place in the context of historic preservation. What role do historic sites and buildings

play in distinguishing one place from another in an age when separation of time and space has been dramatically lessened by technology? Is there still a role for community importance to play amid recognition of historic places on a national or international scale? These are among questions addressed in a recent volume of essays from the United Kingdom (Schofield and Szymanski 2011) that describes techniques for identifying, maintaining, and enhancing place identity, albeit focused on British administrative models that have typically placed control of heritage assets at the national, rather than local, level.

Randall Mason and Marta De La Torre, writing about the role that values-based preservation has to play in sustainability and the conservation of heritage in a globalizing society, note that the pursuit of place attachment accompanies and counteracts some of the forces of globalization, such as a tendency toward homogenization (Mason and De La Torre 2000). They see globalization producing two interpretations about the importance of heritage places and objects. The first focuses on the uniqueness and irreplaceable quality of such things, while the other reflects the ongoing use and redefinition of history in current circumstances. They describe the latter as “another, ambient kind of heritage that is continually reproduced, which stresses utility values (the constant stream of new museums in which the experiences if not the artifacts themselves are seen to be replaceable; innumerable ‘Main Street’ shopping districts) and can be seen as ‘replaceable’ or at least ‘substitutable’” (Mason and De La Torre 2000, 171).

U.S. preservationists are familiar with another definition of place in the form of the National Register. The National Register criteria specify five property types

that can be places for the purposes of the federal preservation program: buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts, which are a combination of any of the other types. Place in this sense is physical and geographical—natural features may be included, but generally National Register listings reflect the hand of man on the land or in construction. However, in requiring that such properties remain intact enough to maintain “integrity,” or the ability to communicate their significance to a viewer or user through their physical properties, the National Register criteria recognizes the highly tangible as well as more experiential qualities of place.

Little research has been carried out to specifically assess strategies for maintaining or enhancing sense of place or place attachment with reference to historic resources. This void makes it difficult to demonstrate the cultural, social, and experiential benefits of preservation, as preservation scholar Jeremy Wells noted in his 2009 dissertation. Wells explored the importance of personal experience in assessing the significance of older and historic neighborhoods by comparing historic Charleston, South Carolina, with a neo-traditional neighborhood built to evoke the traditional architecture of historic Charleston. Specifically, he sought to determine whether the age of urban residential environments affected how residents felt attachment to their neighborhood and built environment. Personal and emotional connections to place are more difficult to categorize and grasp, and they lend themselves to qualitative, rather than quantitative, research methods. Wells and Elizabeth Baldwin show how the “spontaneous fantasy” engendered by patina helps develop an emotional connection between everyday people and place. Such connections speak to the age value of historic environments and how it may differ

from established definitions of historical significance (Wells and Baldwin, 2012). The difficulty in developing analytical methods to examine place attachment to historic places has hindered the preservation community's ability to speak to the relative value of these social benefits in determining what to save, how, and where.

Social values and the role that historic places play in developing personal and community connections to heritage have received greater emphasis as preservation practitioners have turned to examine the multiple significances and values that can be contained in historic environments. Understanding the importance of historic places in terms of multiple—sometimes competing—values is a concept pioneered by Alois Riegl in his influential essay, “The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and Its Origin,” first published early in the twentieth century (Riegl 1982). Riegl explored the preservation of monuments from an art historical perspective that is also informed by an awareness of how old buildings have “use value.” He further recognized that a modern consciousness of age imbues historic monuments and other older structures with evocative power simply because they are old. Such places can conjure an association with a past even for those who have no knowledge of history.

Gustavo Araoz, in considering the international evolution of preservation theory and where the United States fits into it, identifies a present phase of practice that includes an awareness of ritual values and processes that lead to material expression in vernacular architecture, cultural landscapes, and traditional cultural properties (Araoz, 1998). In spite of this broadened awareness of site significance, he argues, U.S. preservationists have not determined how to successfully manage historic places that have “dynamic needs for permanent change.” In considering

locations where ongoing use is an aspect of significance, accommodating adaptation to the changing needs of an industry or practice presents a challenge to many traditional preservation methods that are grounded in an established period of significance and/or historic appearance.

One possible approach to meeting the need to manage ongoing change within and around historic environments is offered by Randall Mason in his essay on “Theoretical and Practical Arguments for Values-Centered Preservation” (Mason 2006). Mason argues for a changed paradigm that embraces community-centered participatory planning approaches. Values-centered preservation emphasizes the diverse values that a community can attach to a historic place and begins the process of determining how the property should be managed by identifying these values and then determining which should be prioritized in developing a treatment plan. Mason’s discussion of multiple values is informed by Riegl’s treatment of the complementary and competing historical, artistic, use, age, and intentional commemorative values that a monument may possess. Like Araoz, Mason identifies different approaches to preservation practice, but he classifies them in terms of being inward-focused and separated from social concerns (the curatorial impulse) or outward-focused on the connections that preservation work has to other social goals (the urbanistic impulse). The “strategic/political mindset” that flows from the urbanistic approach follows a method of involving stakeholders and working collaboratively to find solutions to balancing history and preservation with other values. Specific examinations of how successfully American preservation planning tools and processes incorporate efforts to support social sustainability are few but growing in number over the last decade.

Historic preservation scholar Ned Kaufman's work explores what he calls "story sites," which are socially valuable even if they do not always qualify for the protections offered architecturally distinguished or more traditional historical places (Kaufman 2009, 38). Geographers Tim Cresswell and Gareth Hoskins have examined the differing degrees of success that advocates attained in seeking official designation on the National Register or list of National Historic Landmarks for places strongly associated with lived experience. They found that official designation criteria are often materially focused in a way that contrasts with advocates' perceptions of place. These criteria further emphasize physical integrity, potentially at the expense of community significance (Cresswell and Hoskins 2008). When community heritage concerns fall outside the influence of existing historic preservation programs, it is necessary to look for modifications of the programs or other tools to sustain those important aspects of community character.

The trend toward recognition of multiple values in planning for the management of historic places is not confined to the United States. Townend and Whittaker propose qualitative methods to address the new challenges of assessing the cultural resources planning implications of the United Kingdom's embrace of the *European Landscape Convention*, a treaty "to promote landscape protection, management and planning" throughout Europe (Council of Europe 2000). Specifically, their methods seek to account for the role perception plays in the understanding of historic places, reflecting a trajectory in U.K. government heritage planning policy that treats place less as a geographically-bounded location or collection of features and more as a conceptual entity understood through experience

(Townend and Whittaker, 2011). The emphasis on perception and experience necessarily focus attention on the values and associations that those involved with the historic place ascribe to it. To assess the effects of development proposals, Townend and Whittaker propose gathering data from consultative processes and products such as oral and written commentary on historic places, mapping, and photography (71). Current debates over the federal preservation program indicate that it is an imperfect tool for recognizing and managing the full range of places that possess significance for American communities (for example, King 2009, 2016, Kaufman 2009, Allison and Allison 2008). The National Register criteria are characterized as too limiting to encompass all of the places that have historical meaning for Americans, with large landscapes and physically altered but still resonant places often cited as examples of what is difficult to fit into the National Register's recognition "box." The National Register recognizes four broad areas of significance (Table 1).

Table 1. National Register of Historic Places significance criteria

Criterion	Recognizes properties that...
A	Are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history
B	Are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past
C	Embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction
D	Have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history

Source: Quotation of 36 CFR Part 60 in National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. Rev. ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1997), 2.



These criteria are intentionally broad and have the ability to recognize a wide range of historical narratives and significances. Where the National Register faces particular criticism is on the matter of its requirements for physical intactness, called “integrity” in the listing criteria. Integrity refers to the physical characteristics that allow a property to communicate its historic significance. Five are relatively easy to describe in terms of whether and how they have changed over time: location (“where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred”), design (“the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property”), setting (“the physical environment of a historic property”), materials (“the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property”), and workmanship (“evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period...”) (National Park Service, 1990, 44-45). The final two aspects of integrity, feeling and association, are somewhat more subjective. Feeling refers to how a property expresses its period of significance and whether the totality of its physical characteristics can evoke that period for an observer. Association is “the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property” (National Park Service, 1990, 45). In part, it refers to the location being the place where in fact a historic event, for example, occurred, but the term also carries a connotation of limited change. A property that retains integrity of association cannot have experienced such extensive physical changes or intrusions as to no longer be recognizable as the place where the action occurred. The National Park Service’s

guidance on how to evaluate integrity acknowledges that these last two elements “depend on individual perceptions” (45) and, thus, must be present along with other aspects of integrity in order for the property to meet the criteria for listing.

The elements of integrity tend to be harder to demonstrate when properties are constructed of poorer quality or found materials or are composed of natural features that inherently change over time. They can also be challenging to apply to places significant to populations that historically have lacked power over their environments and the ability to ensure their upkeep or to control the ways in which they change. However, those places may still maintain their associations with past events or people for the population that values them. A number of practitioners and academics have called for expansion of the National Register criteria, greater integration of natural and cultural heritage protections, or other means of recognizing landscapes and community landmarks that are dynamic by nature (Allison and Allison 2008; Cresswell and Hoskins 2008; Donaldson 2012; King 2009; Conard 2001; Nieves 2007). Other authors have questioned whether preservation laws should be expanded to offer recognition and protection for intangible heritage, including community practices, craft, dances, stories, and other elements (Araoz 1998; Donaldson 2012; King 2009) or have criticized the narrow or inconsistent application of national designation standards, such as those for the National Register or the National Historic Landmarks Program, or local landmark programs (Cresswell and Hoskins 2008; Allison and Allison, 2008). While changing specific laws and policies offers possible remedies to the immediate limitations of the federal preservation program, others have suggested approaching preservation decisions as a whole from a new angle, such

as emphasizing community involvement and discernment about the multiple values that historic places hold in a contemporary context in order to determine how or whether they should be preserved (Mason 2006; Avrami 2010; Little and Shackel 2014).

David Morgan, Nancy I.M. Morgan, and Brenda Barrett, preservation professionals with experience in State Historic Preservation Offices and National Heritage Areas, assessed the existing limitations of the federal historic preservation program in recognizing and protecting places of community heritage significance in their reflection on the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina (Morgan, Morgan, and Barrett 2006). They contrast rebuilding responses and outcomes in Mississippi, where the assessment of the relationship between heritage and the affected communities was largely confined to the use of existing information about historic properties and those listed in the National Register, with Louisiana, where a state-sponsored rebuilding planning effort emphasized strong stakeholder participation. In Louisiana, maintaining and enhancing architectural and cultural heritage (“sense of place”) emerged as a primary goal. This critique of preservation practice defined narrowly by regulation or federal program authority is relevant to planners, policy makers, and preservation professionals who occupy positions to influence preservation policy but lack knowledge of how anthropological approaches and stakeholder involvement processes can broaden our appreciation of what constitutes a property worthy of preservation.

As Morgan, Morgan, and Barrett note, the use of planning, regulatory, or financial incentive tools to preserve historic places typically follow the

documentation, and sometimes registration, of a historic property. Thus, debates about significance and who has the ability to define it can translate directly into whether places may receive certain types of government assistance. Local regulatory tools for preservation typically follow the pattern of design review without regulation of uses. These mainstream preservation strategies leave potential gaps for places of community importance that do not easily fit the National Register significance criteria or that are important primarily for qualities and uses not recognized by traditional preservation criteria.

Avrami emphasizes the social value of historic preservation, generated through processes that involve communities in making decisions about how their heritage is used as well as through the retention and enhancement of places that serve modern needs while transmitting information about the past, observing that “[p]reservation is fundamentally a form of planning—both public and political—that seeks to codify collective memory in the built environment, so as to communicate the values of a community to future generations” (Avrami 2012, 204). She notes, however, that preservationists have not systematically investigated the social rationales that support preservation strategies and that can link the conservation of heritage to sustainable planning goals of equity and community involvement. Further, preservationists sometimes fail to consider social needs and benefits in management decisions about how or whether historic places should be changed. They may not grasp the importance of social values, or they may simply be working within the constraints of management systems that set goals based on an understanding of historic places simply as artifacts or objects.

### Rural and Agricultural Landscapes

Rural and agricultural landscapes pose a unique set of challenges for the retention of sense of place when land use transitions mark shifts in agricultural practice or a move away from agriculture altogether. A number of studies have acknowledged how changes to the rural landscape affect sense of place, including agriculture and its associated lifeways and other historical practices. Adam Nicolson evokes a vivid sense of place for Sissinghurst, the home and gardens of writer Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicolson, spanning the earliest history of Kent to its twentieth-century literary fame, in describing efforts to return active farming to the estate after its management was taken over by Great Britain's National Trust. Nicolson writes that "a landscape is seen; a place is experienced and known" (Nicolson, 2010, 304), speaking to the importance of perception to sense of place. By restoring farming at Sissinghurst, it is prevented from becoming a narrowly-focused tourist site composed of a garden and literary shrine. Farming reflects the many users and occupants of the estate over its long history and demonstrates its connection to the common history of its surroundings. In contrast to presenting the estate solely from the view of its notable twentieth-century owners, the inclusion of agriculture offers opportunities for examining and interpreting the social relationships that existed between landowners and those who manage and work their land. Such relationships provide a window on the dynamics of status and power in this rural environment. In restoring farming to Sissinghurst, its economic heritage is also revived and honored. Farming reestablishes a significant connection to the livelihoods

of those who worked the land there as well as those who farmed and continue to farm in similar conditions around Kent. In both of these respects, farming reopens paths to shared experiences that Sissinghurst's role as a literary shrine could not (Nicolson 2010).

The cessation of tobacco farming in Maryland in the wake of the tobacco buyout left behind farms and barns for which a variety of new uses have been sought, but it also discontinued certain longstanding practices and cycles associated with a particular kind of labor-intensive agriculture (Sundermann 1992). An innovative documentation effort in Calvert County organized by the Maryland Historical Trust and the Calvert County Historic District Commission (*The Money Crop*) captured the county at the point of change through a combination of oral histories, photography, and historical research. The project is an example of how a multi-disciplinary approach can be used to capture and convey a community's understanding of the significance of its built and natural environment, i.e. of its sense of place. Such documentation is particularly important given the difficulty in finding new uses for distinctive property types like the tobacco barns, leading to their more rapid disappearance from the landscape. The method reveals human connections to the land, barns, fields, and each other. It also acknowledges the significance of traditional use, which cannot always be preserved or maintained.

In other areas, agriculture is among those uses connected to maintaining important cultural heritage. A study from Norway documents a link between the concept of cultural heritage and agriculture in Norwegian policy, finding that farmers are often portrayed as keepers of cultural heritage and that farming is valued for its

effect on the landscape as well as how it employs traditional knowledge (Daugstad, Ronningen, and Skar 2005). However, a nostalgic approach to the historic rural landscape can distort both the history of the place and its environment, as geographer T. Young finds in the National Park Service's early management of Cades Cove in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park (Young 2006). In this case, a distorted conception of the cove's history motivated the preservation of certain buildings, especially log structures, aligned with the image of an isolated mountain settlement where people lived and farmed in harmony with the land even though residents had embraced modern technologies and engaged with nearby markets and educational institutions for years. At the same time, visitor affection for Cades Cove's open vistas led to management practices that degraded the environment while trying to preserve its attractive visual qualities. The preservation of rural landscapes must balance the continuity of agricultural heritage with sustainable use of the land in order for the cultural heritage of such places to thrive into the future. On a positive note, agricultural historian Sally McMurry finds that agricultural land preservation and historic preservation can work in harmony, particularly in settings where farming includes small, sustainable farms, agritourism, or integration with natural resource conservation (McMurry 2016, 15-16).

## Chapter 2: Methodology

This project utilizes a case study approach contrasting two areas within Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County, Tennessee. The case study method allowed close observation of specific places and direct interaction with their residents and users in order to access information about how those familiar with these places perceive the community's historic qualities and distinctive character. The selection of two cases within the jurisdiction of the same local government allowed the different characteristics of the locations to emerge against a uniform set of available planning and preservation tools. Though located within the same municipality, they differ markedly in that one area is an urban, fairly densely developed business district easily accessible by multiple modes of transportation whereas the other is rural, accessible only by river or a two-lane road, and primarily residential with some areas of agricultural, recreational, or conservation use.

A mixed methods approach to examining the two case study areas was selected given the wide variety of qualities that can contribute to historic significance and sense of place. The methodology was also intended as a trial of potential techniques that could expand upon traditional architectural history documentation approaches comprised of documentary research, field observation, and physical description or drawings. These methods have been critiqued as relying too much on the role of an expert to evaluate the historical importance of places and for missing other values that may be attached to places by those who are intimately familiar with



them (Kaufman 2009, King 2009, 2016, Wells 2009). Querying residents and users on specific qualities they associate with places in the case study areas is based in studies of place attachment and how people form social and cultural meanings for place in interaction with the environment. The methodology integrated images to gauge individual perceptions of environmental qualities as in other studies based in geography, architecture, environmental psychology, and planning (e.g., Brower 1988, Green 1999, Green 2004, Wells 2009).

The two case study sites present interesting questions for traditional preservation planning approaches as understanding of their place identity is tied to historical patterns of use: music recording, production, and marketing and farming, respectively, rather than traditional notions of architectural style or landscape features characteristic of a period in the past. The availability of documentation and research on both case study areas influenced their selection. Music Row has been the topic of recent preservation debates and advocacy activity, including the development of a National Register of Historic Places (National Register) Multiple Property Submission (Jones and Brackett 2016) and three other individual nominations (Jones 2016; Robison, Mielnik, and Rumble 2012; C. West 2015a). A master plan for the Bells Bend Park was developed in 2003 (Greenways, Inc. 2003), and the area was part of the development of a comprehensive conservation corridor plan written c.2007 (Price and Coco [2007?]). Similarly, both have been the topic of recent oral history projects that offer another means of gathering first-person narratives about how local residents and users think about place and sense of place in connection with these areas (Music Row Oral History Collection, Nashville Public Library 2014, Bells

Bend Oral History Collection, Nashville Public Library 2012). Finally, both areas have experienced controversies over planning and development in connection with both public and private proposals that resulted in newspaper coverage and other sources of documentation about salient issues. Thus, a reasonably similar level of background and context could be established to support inquiry with residents and other users.

Initially, research established a background description and basic history of each case location, including current and historical land use information, geographical descriptive data, and local history. Documentary research also helped establish the land use and preservation planning history of the case study areas, including how land use policies have been applied over time, how the areas have been characterized in comprehensive and area plans, and how any major development or redevelopment proposals were received by the community and handled by local planning bodies. This research also established whether planning or preservation tools have been applied specifically to locations within the case study areas with a goal of preserving historic architecture, sites, or landscapes.

Documentation was supplemented by field observation to gather additional information about the physical characteristics and patterns of use at the case study sites. Each case study location was visited multiple times and on different days of the week and times of day. Photographs for in the image rating exercise (see below) were collected during field observation in April 2016, November 2017, and from September 2018 – January 2019. For this phase of the research, the study followed a cultural landscape documentation methodology (Korr, 2002). This approach yields

information beyond the physical description and historical information usually collected in preservation documentation such as the National Register of Historic Places nomination form. In addition to providing more expansive descriptive information that is multisensory, as opposed to simply visual, the cultural landscape methodology challenges observers to consider perceptions of place and the agency of persons, nature, and the built environment in shaping the place and its associated meanings. This opens the documentation to include elements like social boundaries, power to influence change within the landscape, and cognitive landscapes. In addressing questions of sense of place and heritage, which are heavily dependent on how individuals and communities assign meaning to places, these aspects of a documentation approach were desirable. Korr's full methodology is extensive, and the case descriptions attempt to cover his five main operations, or points of study, in an abridged approach that focuses on location and boundaries, natural and built environment and soundscape, shaping influences, and meanings. Additional information on cultural analysis of the landscapes is integrated into the findings (Chapter 4) and conclusions (Chapter 5).

The next phase of the research involved interaction with people familiar with each of the case study locations in order to understand their perceptions of sense of place and its potential connections to history and heritage. The methodology for this phase of the research was influenced by Ray Green's work on community perception of town character in Australia (Green, 1999, 2010) and Sidney Brower's study of resident and visitor criteria for evaluating neighborhoods in Baltimore, Maryland (Brower, 1988). Information was gathered from text sources and a short online

survey to select a range of places or physical features that are commonly mentioned as characteristic of the case study locations. For Music Row, content analysis of the Music Row Oral History collection, information gathered from the Metro Nashville Planning Department's Music Row Detailed Neighborhood Design Plan (2016-17), and two walking tours of Music Row supplied initial information about places, uses, and qualities mentioned in association with the history of the area. In Bells Bend, survey responses, along with content analysis of a conservation corridor planning study (Price and Coco, [2007?]), planning documents related to a mid-2000s development proposal, and the 2012 Bells Bend/Scottsboro Oral History Project collection were used to generate a list of community characteristics and places.

An electronic survey with multiple choice and open-ended questions allowed respondents to volunteer their ideas about features or qualities that contribute to the case study site's sense of place (Table 2). The survey and a protocol for follow-up interviews, described below, were submitted to the University of Maryland's Institutional Review Board and approved on October 31, 2018. Provisions for maintaining the confidentiality of interview respondents' identities were incorporated in the research plan. Where interview responses are cited in this study, they are identified only by interview number. The survey used the University of Maryland's Qualtrics survey platform and was distributed via a weblink. The content of the survey, including inquiry into the nature of personal association with the area and length of association, is similar to the short survey described by Hilary Orange in her study of historic mining sites in Cornwall (Orange, 2011). Those places are also appreciated as historic primarily for their use or evidence of past use above aesthetic

qualities. The survey yielded information about places and features residents and users identify with sense of place and helped indicate whether there is a link between perceptions of place as historic and perception of “sense of place.” The efficiency of simple, accessible questions and a short survey format offer advantages for translating methods to the field.

Surveys were distributed to an initial group of contacts in the historic preservation and planning fields who were asked to share the link with their networks in the two case study areas. Other potential respondents were contacted directly. Surveys remained open for approximately three months. Data from the surveys’ open-ended questions was coded using the survey application’s text analysis capability. The researcher assigned text labels to features or places mentioned in responses. For example, when Music Row respondents described “old historic homes,” “bungalow-style houses,” “or “historical houses,” they were all coded according to *residential architecture*, and the first and last examples would also be coded *historic*. Coding allowed analysis of the frequency with which particular places or features were mentioned in connection to the area’s distinctive character.

Table 2. Electronic survey questions and answer formats

QUESTION	ANSWER FORMAT
What is your personal association with [Music Row or Bells Bend]?	Multiple choice
How long have you had an association with [Music Row or Bells Bend]?	Multiple choice
[Music Row or Bells Bend] has a unique character different from other parts of Nashville-Davidson County.	Likert scale
[Music Row's or Bells Bend's] unique character has changed during the time I have known it.	Likert scale
[Music Row or Bells Bend] is historic.	Likert scale
[Music Row or Bells Bend] is a place I associate with personal memories.	Likert scale
How would you describe the natural or manmade features that distinguish [Music Row or Bells Bend] from other areas? (For example, building types, the presence or absence of trees and other vegetation, topography, building materials, or street width.)	Open-ended text box
What else contributes to making [Music Row or Bells Bend] special or memorable?	Open-ended text box

Survey data substantially informed selection of 12 representative images for each case study area for use in follow-up interviews (Figures 1 and 2). The 12 images included places that were mentioned specifically in survey responses and oral histories as well as representative places or features that aligned with responses to the open-ended survey questions, such as “hills” or “recording studios.” Interview participants were recruited from an optional question on the survey that asked for respondents’ willingness to participate. Participants met the researcher at public places, homes, or offices for 45 minutes to one hour. At the interview appointments, I explained my personal connection to the research as a Nashville resident. I also disclosed my husband’s employment in the city’s planning department and, in the case of interviews about Music Row, clarified the research was being carried out independent of current city-led planning efforts.

Figure 1. Images used in interviews—Music Row. Photos by author.



Former fire hall



One-way street, 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue South



Adaptively reused houses



*Musica* statue (Alan LeQuire, 2003)  
and roundabout



Modern apartment building



Old apartment building





Modern office building



Recording studio



Alley



Former location of coffee house



BMI building



Office in adaptively reused house

Figure 2. Images used in interviews—Bells Bend. Photos by author.



Hills



Farmhouse



Community club



River and boat ramp



Old Hickory Boulevard



Park outdoor center



Former Wade School



Field



Sod farm



Railroad overpass near highway intersection



Large-lot suburban houses



Cattle

Participants were asked to view the 12 photographs of the case study area and rate each one on a five-point scale for 12 polar quality pairs, such as *distinctive—ordinary*, *beautiful—ugly*, or *natural—manmade*, on a response sheet (Table 3).

The qualities were selected based on survey responses and followed the model of Green's work on town character (1999). The rating exercise was not as extensive as Green's in terms of the number of polar quality pairs (12 versus 22) in order to keep interviews to a manageable length for volunteers. While several of the polar quality pairs were drawn directly from Green's or Brower's (1988) work, other descriptors were modified to reflect responses received in the two case study surveys.

Respondents were asked which of the images and which of the qualities in the rating pairs they thought were most closely associated with the case study area's sense of place. The researcher asked clarification questions to probe why specific images were selected. Finally, respondents were asked about characteristic activities and the boundaries of the study areas using maps generated by Metro Nashville's publicly-accessible GIS system.

Table 3. Interview response sheet

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Interview Number \_\_\_\_\_

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Please view the images and rate each place on the qualities in the scale below.

IMAGE #

Varied	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Uniform
Natural	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Manmade
Quiet, peaceful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lively, busy
Closed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Open
With charm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Without charm
Friendly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unfriendly
Familiar	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unfamiliar
Distinctive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ordinary
Beautiful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ugly
Changing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Staying the same
For locals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	For tourists
Historic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not historic
Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Out-of-the-way

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A primary goal of the project is to offer recommendations and improvements for historic preservation planning practice, so the study format attempted to model methods that could be adopted by professionals studying historic places for the purposes of documentation or regulation, by planners seeking community feedback on heritage values, or by community groups interested in exploring the historical associative aspects of neighborhood character. This approach led to choices such as limiting the number of images and polar quality pairs used in the rating exercise in order to keep the time burden for interview respondents to no more than one hour, as well as using a five-point rather than seven-point rating scale as in Green's 1999 study. It also motivated selection of an online survey format for ease of distribution, although this method may limit responses from residents or users lacking internet access or who tend not to interact online. While some larger-scale planning studies may come with a budget for surveys or public meetings, many assessments performed to support environmental decision-making for development proposals are carried out quickly and with budgets based on efficiency, or in which any assessment of historical associations and heritage values is based on what planners or preservation professionals in government can accomplish in their regular duties. For these reasons, testing the response to an electronic survey was integrated into the methodology to explore how such methods might allow greater access to community input when travel funds and time are limited.

Another goal of the methodology was to explore means of eliciting information about participants' experience of heritage in place in a way that reflects the multidimensional nature of "sense of place." The rating exercise with images of

places was designed to offer further insight into how specific places and features were experienced by interview participants (Stedman et. al., 2014). This aspect of the methodology is one step in a future research direction toward building opportunities for members of a community to describe their connections to history, heritage, and place in their own words and images via photographs, video, or narrative. Images can also help avoid limiting the discussion to features labeled “historic” through local regulation or registration programs by focusing respondents’ attention on their own experiences and associations.

## Chapter 3: Case Studies

Nashville, Tennessee, offers a pair of contrasting areas in which history, heritage, and use are intertwined. Both sites experienced a galvanization of community will to direct neighborhood change in response to development proposals representing land use shifts. While one, Music Row, is urban and primarily commercial—but on a neighborhood scale—and the other, Bells Bend, is rural and primarily agricultural and residential, they both offer opportunities to gauge community reactions to preserving distinctive place-based characteristics connected, respectively, to the recording, marketing, and distribution of music and to farming and rural life.

The following descriptions of the two case studies are based on American studies scholar Jeremy Korr's Cultural Landscape Fieldwork Model (Korr, 2002). Korr's methodology shares elements with historic properties documentation methods such as the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) nomination form, the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record/Historic American Landscapes Survey documentation standards, and guidelines for surveying historic properties. It differs in several respects relevant to this study, such as consideration of varying perceptions of the landscape, cultural analysis, and the explicit goal of multisensory, rather than solely visual, description. These elements of place description help support the consideration of intangible elements of heritage and use of place, and they allow additional room for



phenomenological consideration of resident and user connection to history in sense of place.

Nashville is a growing mid-size city and the capital of Tennessee. The city has had a metropolitan form of government since the city of Nashville and Davidson County formed the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County (Metro Nashville) in 1963. In 2017, U.S. Census estimates placed Davidson County's (and therefore Nashville's) population at 691,243 within a 14-county metropolitan statistical area of 1,903,045. The city's population has grown rapidly in recent years, with a population increase of over 121,000 between 2000 and 2017 according to U.S. Census estimates. This growth has come as a result of factors including an upward trend in net migration, which has averaged over 24,000 in the five years from 2012 to 2017 (Nashville Chamber, "Regional Stats," 2019). Even so, Metro Nashville's growth is not as dramatic as some neighboring counties (Nashville Chamber, 2018).

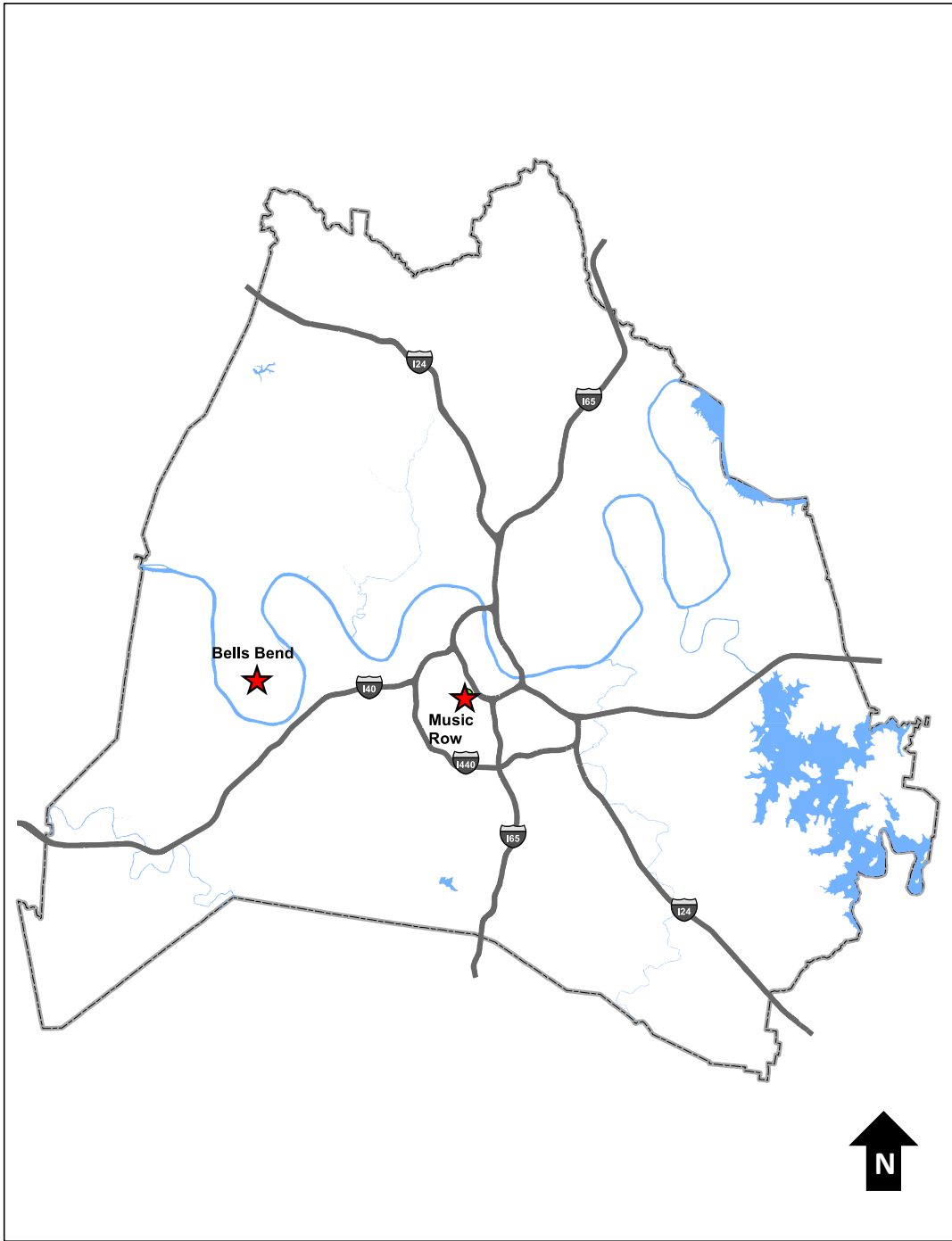


Figure 3. Metropolitan Nashville – Davidson County showing case study sites. Courtesy Metropolitan Planning Department.

## Music Row

### Location and boundaries

Music Row is centered on a stretch of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Avenues South (renamed Music Square East and West, respectively, north of Music Square South/Grand Avenue) bounded by Demonbreun and Division Streets on the north and Wedgewood Avenue on the south. It is located southwest of downtown Nashville, Tennessee. The neighborhood earned its name in the second half of the twentieth century as a center for recording studios, music publishing houses, and other businesses associated with the music industry. Unlike other centers of industry, Music Row does not have iconic office towers or corporate campuses. However, a 2019 survey of Music Row businesses found that “approximately half of the businesses in the area are music-related, made up primarily of artist management, publishing, and recording and production studios” (Metropolitan Planning Department, Vision Plan, 2019, 8).

The businesses that populate the Row began in modestly-sized bungalows, four squares and other common house types of the early twentieth century that populated the area when it was a residential neighborhood constructed after the installation of a streetcar line in 1895 on what is now 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue South (Jones and Brackett, 2016, E30). Nashville’s music-related businesses began to proliferate downtown and in other commercial areas after World War II as the WSM radio show called the “Grand Ole Opry,” broadcast from the city’s Ryman Auditorium, gained national popularity (Jones and Brackett 2016, E9). The first recording studio was established by Owen and Harold Bradley at 804 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue South after they

purchased and renovated a house in the area that would become Music Row in 1954. A Quonset hut, added to the rear of the building in 1955, created space for both film and audio recording, though demand for the latter quickly shaped the studio's primary business (Jones and Brackett 2016, E11, E36). RCA Studio B followed on 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue South in 1957. (Robison, Mielnik, and Rumble 2012). When music businesses began moving into the neighborhood in the 1950s, the residential building stock offered affordable prices for adaptable space that was close to, but not within, downtown (Kreyling 1998, 310), and where city zoning policies allowed commercial uses (Jones and Brackett 2016, E33). Music-related business owners found it convenient to locate close to one another, and the area quickly developed into a cluster of studios, publishing houses, record labels, publicists, management companies, and other kinds of businesses that served the music industry. Music Row is often described as campus-like in terms of the proximity of many businesses related to the music industry (Gibson 2015; Knobloch 2015; Williams 2015; Brackett and Gross 2016, 8; Metropolitan Planning Department, Vision Plan, 2019). It is considered an important industry cluster for music businesses, boasting the highest concentration of music-industry jobs of any U.S. city according to a 2013 study, which described Nashville's music industry presence as one of the largest and most dynamic industry clusters in the world (Harper, Cotton and Benefield 2013, 7-10). Another recent study by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, examining whether Music Row could be constituted as a cultural industry district, posits the area likely contains "more historic music-related buildings than the rest of the country" (Brackett and Gross 2016, 9). Music Row remains a renowned center of music

business activity closely associated with the history of country music but operating in other genres as well.

The area is also a crossroads. The dual one-way street arrangement of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Avenues South carries heavy through traffic from southwest Nashville to and from midtown and downtown. Business days bring a constant flow of cars through the area. The long and narrow shape of the area typically characterized as Music Row further connects a disparate group of Nashville neighborhoods and institutions. On the north end, Music Row's office buildings blend into the increasing number of mid-rise office, apartment, and condo towers in midtown. The two one-way streets now meet Demonbreun and Division Streets at a roundabout featuring a large bronze statue of dancing figures meant to represent the spirit of music. Downtown is several blocks east, across the I-40 interstate corridor and railroad lines in a redeveloping area known as the Gulch, referencing its past history as the railroad gulch alongside the Louisville and Nashville Railroad's Union Station. To the south, an east-west arterial called Wedgewood Avenue forms the boundary between south Music Row and the campus of Belmont University.

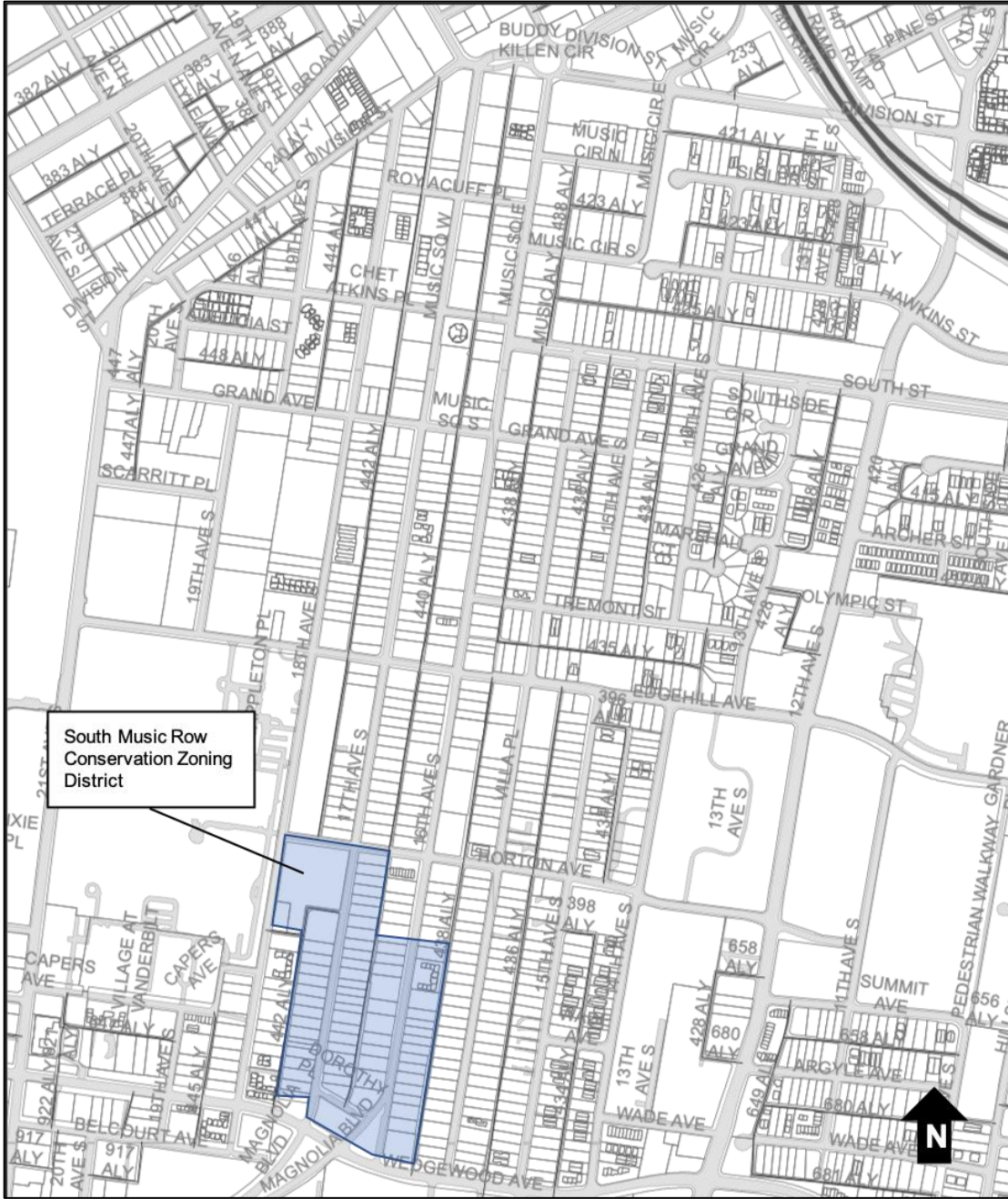


Figure 4. Music Row area street map. Base map courtesy Metropolitan Planning Department. Detail source: Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission, 1997, 2017.

On the east, Music Row abuts a neighborhood of early twentieth-century bungalows, Tudor Revivals, and other minimally-detailed revival style houses that are slightly more modest than some of those converted to business use on the Row. This neighborhood, Edgehill, has a long and notable history encompassing growth as a late nineteenth-century African-American, middle- and working-class community, followed by streetcar development and white suburban migration, and later urban renewal. Segregated patterns of residential development in the early twentieth century defined 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue South and west (including the area that is now Music Row) as predominantly white, while Edgehill's black population, which saw an influx of professionals in the 1940s and 1950s, located mostly between 10<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Avenues (Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission 2018). Once music businesses began clustering on 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue South in the 1950s and 60s, the city enacted zoning changes that facilitated conversion to commercial uses in the formerly residential neighborhood. The changes led to the departure of many residents on the west side of Edgehill (Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission 2018).

Edgehill is once again redeveloping as Nashville's growing population seeks housing close to the city center. Developers have recently replaced older houses with two larger ones on the same lot, a Nashville phenomenon known as the detached duplex, in this area as in many other inner-ring suburban areas that have residential, but not exclusively single-family, zoning. A contentious proposal to apply a type of historic preservation overlay known as conservation zoning to Edgehill passed in September 2018. Edgehill is home to a number of community institutions, including churches, a community garden, a library, and a neighborhood commercial node

located in a converted drycleaner building. The White Way Cleaners building, redeveloped with bars, restaurants, and boutique shops in the mid-2000s, is only one block away from 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue South but maintains an identity separate from Music Row. It is never identified within the boundaries of Music Row. A little farther east of Edgehill's single-family homes lies a cluster of public housing developments, constructed during the urban renewal projects that dramatically altered 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue South in the 1950s and 1960s (Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission 2018).

On the west, Music Row is bordered by a group of educational institutions with varied and distinguished histories. They include Vanderbilt University, including its major medical center, and the Scarritt-Bennett Center, a non-profit conference and retreat center located in the historic former collegiate gothic campus of the Scarritt College for Christian Workers (C. West 2015, 136). The George Peabody College for Teachers campus, now part of Vanderbilt University as its Peabody College of Education and Human Development, is a National Historic Landmark with a campus plan consciously modeled on the University of Virginia (C. West 2015, 137).

Vanderbilt now makes a couple of incursions into the Row itself through its purchase of office buildings. Belmont University also has a presence on Music Row through studio and related facilities used by the university's highly-regarded College of Entertainment and Music Business programs. Thus, in spite of Music Row's enclave-like quality with respect to music industry businesses, it is located in a section of the city where a diverse population passes through regularly. The connectivity of Music Row's street grid provides access for university students and staff on their way to and from campuses, downtown and midtown office commuters, those traveling to work or



appointments at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, and tourists riding sightseeing buses. Bike lanes on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Avenues South and sidewalks throughout the area allow for walking, biking, and—recently—electric scooters.

In the Multiple Property Documentation Form for “Historic Music Industry Resources, Nashville, Davidson County, Tennessee,” architectural historian Robbie D. Jones and preservationist Carolyn Brackett describe somewhat larger boundaries for the study area, extending Music Row to Broadway and Interstate 40 on the north and encompassing a larger area west of Music Square West and north of Grand Avenue extending to the point where 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue South meets Broadway and as far northeast as Interstate 40 (Jones and Brackett 2016, G212). This area corresponds to the area the Metropolitan Planning Commission used for recent neighborhood-level planning studies of Music Row. Participants in the current study, however, more narrowly limited Music Row’s extent to 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Avenues South with occasional juts out to the east and west along cross streets like Grand Avenue, Chet Atkins, and Roy Acuff, and rarely crossing north of Division Street. Two interview participants limited it to only the area north of Grand Avenue, where 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> are known as Music Square East and West, respectively. The inclusion of sections of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Avenues South near Division Street was variable, as some participants contended this area had experienced too much recent change and demolition to still be called part of Music Row.

Music Row’s boundaries may expand when it is considered as a cultural landscape in an intellectual sense, representing its relationships with concentrations of music-making activities throughout the Nashville region or beyond. For example, one

oral history about the area notes a group of singers who considered certain studios in Hendersonville (a town in neighboring Sumner County where several country music stars settled about twenty miles northeast of the case study area) as “sort of outposts of Music Row” (Cherry Sisters 2015). As another commented, “[I]t’s really been a center of the universe for music” (Bell 2015). Music Row possesses an emotional component tied to its history that transcends geographical boundaries for some of its residents and users. In the words of one publicist, “It’s still where this music is created. I don’t think that will ever change no matter where people move physically to create that music” (Campbell 2015).

#### Natural and built landscape and soundscape

Music Row offers an eclectic mix of building types, materials, and styles. Massing increases toward the northern end of the district and decreases toward the southern end, particularly south of Edgehill Avenue where the area retains its residential neighborhood quality. In general, building heights are low- to mid-rise. Higher rise office, apartment and condominium buildings are now located on the north and east sides of the roundabout where Music Squares East and West join Demonbreun Street at the northern boundary of Music Row. A controversial new luxury hotel, under construction at the northern tip of Music Square West just off the roundabout, will attain a height of 14 stories. The southern side of the roundabout remains a green space occupied by Owen Bradley Park, a small urban park dedicated to the man who, with his brother, established the first recording studio in the area and is considered a founder of Music Row. The statue of groundbreaking producer Bradley shows him

seated at a piano. Benches in a brick-paved semicircle surround Bradley's statue, and paths through trees and small lawns join Music Squares East and West.

The northern end of the Row is home to the architectural statements of some of the more prominent record labels, performance rights organizations, and studios. These range in architectural style from expressions of mid-century modernism to exuberant post modernism to contemporary glass box offices. Interspersed with larger buildings in the northern end, however, are remnants of Music Row's residential past—repurposed houses including brick Queen Anne-style Victorians, American Foursquares, Craftsman bungalows, and Tudor and Colonial Revivals representative of the middle-class suburb the area was when they were constructed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The prevalence of these residential buildings increases as one travels south towards Wedgewood Avenue. Adaptively-reused early twentieth-century houses retain their original appearance to a varying degree. It is typical of Music Row to see additions and modifications of all shapes and materials. These changes occurred over time in response to the space and functional needs of office and business conversions and do not often adhere to preservation-based approaches for rehabilitation and the construction of additions outside the conservation zoning district. Also interspersed among the larger buildings of the north Row are numerous utilitarian commercial buildings. Most are of a scale representative of residential lot sizes and one to three stories tall. In some cases, lot consolidation has resulted in larger office complexes or larger-scale buildings, though most do not exceed four stories. Materials are highly diverse and include brick, stucco, stone, EIFS, wood siding, vinyl, and glass, though brick and glass are most

common in new construction. New construction of commercial buildings has generally followed the residential setback. Construction of a new apartment building on Music Square West in 2018, while in keeping with an urban design approach to activate streets, is noticeable in that the building envelope meets the sidewalk.

On the southern end of Music Row, a more residential feel has been retained south of Horton Avenue due in part to the enactment of conservation zoning, a type of historic preservation overlay, in 1997. The boundaries of the overlay include the entire block of 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue South between Horton and Wedgewood Avenue. Most of the corresponding block on 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue South is similarly included, with a cutout of six lots immediately south of Horton. Here the adaptive reuse of houses for businesses has retained the residential appearance of buildings to a greater degree. More lawns and mature trees remain to soften views within this section of the Row. The southern end of 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, in particular, retains a column of southern magnolia street trees so continuous it nearly obscures facades from passing traffic. Fewer magnolias survive on 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, but they are still prevalent as street trees.



Figure 5. 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue South in the South Music Row Conservation Zone. Photo by author.

A local architecture critic describes Music Row as “an amalgam of suburban office park, early twentieth-century neighborhood, and country kitsch, the architectural expression of a big business uncomfortable with the idea of big business” (Kreyling 1998, 309). The tension between Music Row’s residential past and its commercial present is played out in architecture that occasionally makes bold corporate statements, such as the buildings housing performance rights organizations like the American Society of Composers, Authors and Producers (ASCAP) and Broadcast Music Incorporated (BMI), but elsewhere strives to maintain the home-like qualities of the area’s residential roots, even if it results in a certain amount of incongruity in larger corporate buildings (Kreyling 1998, 318). The symbolism of smaller, intimate, and home-like spaces also reflects an ethos of country music, which often celebrates home and family over materialist displays and urbanism (Kreyling 1998, 320). Recent construction that looks more urban elicits a negative reaction among those who have an attachment to that symbolism on Music Row. “Now everything seems to be getting so sterile and so highfalutin” remarked one studio manager in 2015 (Copeland 2015).



Figure 6. Music Square West, north end of Music Row. Photo by author.

Sidewalks are a key characteristic of Music Row. On 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Avenues South and on the cross streets that pass through the area (Horton, Edgehill, Grand, Chet Atkins, and Roy Acuff), sidewalks are separated from the street by a green strip. Walkability and the act of walking from office to office have strong significance for Music Row, as many stories about the sense of community engendered by the clustering of music-related businesses in this area include reminiscences of how people in the industry would walk to transact business, a characteristic that distinguishes it from other centers of the music industry. “Nashville had a laid-back atmosphere where you could walk out of one door and go two doors down, walk in another door just by knocking and walking in” (Bishop 2015). One oral history participant recalled seeing well-known writers, producers, and musicians on the sidewalks: “Music Row was so nice because you could walk outside. I remember seeing Owen Bradley walking across the parking lot. You saw Chet [Atkins] walking somewhere. Or Ray Stevens would be walking down the road of the RCA building” (Bryant 2015).

Throughout Music Row, parking is carefully claimed and allotted. Where businesses have small lots in front or to the sides of their buildings, signs typically warn that such spaces are reserved for building occupants or employees. Vanderbilt-owned buildings in the area post signs requiring university parking permits on their lots. The small residential buildings in the area also mark resident parking clearly. Some larger firms have gated parking areas. Alleys offer access to rear-lot spaces.



Visitors without a specific destination that might offer a visitor space are left with finding street parking, which is in high demand during business hours.

The one-way orientation of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Avenues South has given rise to distinctive signage conventions on Music Row, such as the frequent placement of signs on a diagonal or perpendicular to the street for easier viewing by passing cars. This contrasts with downtown or walkable urban commercial areas, where signage tends to be placed on buildings, either flush or on attached projecting signs, for visibility to foot traffic. Music Row's signage is oriented like an automobile strip in that it is typically placed out front, in the "yard" of repurposed houses or in front of commercial buildings. There is also a local custom of erecting banners to announce new hit songs or top-selling albums to congratulate award-winning performers or writers affiliated with a particular record label, management or publishing company. Some businesses place multiple banners of this type, which often feature pictures of the songwriters or artists, in front of their buildings. It is a type of promotion that speaks to the proximity that Music Row still offers the music industry since the banners reach only a very local audience. The banners also serve as reminders to those passing through the area about the importance and accomplishment of the music industry. In this way, this ephemeral signage marks territory that is physical as well as social and economic.

During business days, Music Row is a bustling office district. Delivery trucks make their rounds, traffic is steady, and street parking is always in high demand. Tour buses frustrate through traffic as they slow on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Avenues to point out places of interest. Sidewalks carry regular, light foot traffic, though since the music

industry tends to have a more casual dress code those on their way to or from work or appointments may not appear like a business crowd to visitors. Students with backpacks pass through on foot, particularly on the western edge where Music Row adjoins Vanderbilt University. On weekends the pace slows noticeably. Cyclists and joggers use 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Avenues South on weekend mornings, and area residents walk dogs. Street parking is generally available, and parking lots in front of businesses are noticeably empty or have just a few cars in them. Observations in the area on weekdays as well as weekends included users who were predominantly, but not exclusively, white and of a range of ages from young adulthood through late middle age. The very young and the very old are not often seen in the area, as there are not facilities catering to their care within Music Row, which remains principally a business district. Couples and groups of tourists also visit the area on foot to take photographs and see the music-related businesses, though many more pass through on one of the buses run by several companies offering tours of Nashville or country music-related sites. One tour company has recently launched a Music Row history-themed walking tour (Let's Go Travelin'). Groups of visitors are regularly bussed from the Country Music Hall of Fame downtown to RCA Studio B, a historic recording studio that has been preserved and is open for ticketed tours by the Hall of Fame.

Ironically, Music Row sounds just like many other urban neighborhoods—automobile traffic. Though the area is almost totally connected to the making of music, it is not a neighborhood that has contained many formal performance spaces. While music spills out the doors of honky tonk bars on Lower Broadway in

downtown Nashville, Music Row operates to the sounds of nearby construction, passing cars, and the occasional mockingbird. One assumes there is an inside/outside contrast in this aspect of the cultural landscape, as a step inside one of the office buildings housing music labels or a recording studio might offer a taste of what's being produced and marketed here, but it does not reach the street.

The concentration of music recording, production, and promotion-related activity on Music Row that characterized the industry in Nashville from the late 1950s through several decades has changed, however, in ways that present a challenge to understanding the current meaning and significance of this landscape. Several interviewees for a 2015 oral history project noted the migration of music-related businesses to other Nashville areas, such as East Nashville and Berry Hill, or neighboring counties (Williams 2015; Bryant 2015), as well as the trend for music to be recorded and produced digitally in home studios. Some sources mark the 1980s, a time when many independent labels were absorbed by larger firms, as the point at which Music Row began to change from its close-knit, family-like, improvised beginnings in converted houses to bigger businesses seeking bigger spaces (Buckingham 2015). One Music Row studio manager observed that some of the productivity engendered by close physical proximity, particularly through the development of social connections, has faded in the wake of these changes. He said the following about the effect:

There's been a major dissipation. When I got here in the 1970s, Music Row was Music Row. It was little publishing companies, little law offices, PR companies, management companies, all up and down the Row. And if you didn't have an office on Music Row, you weren't in the music business to some degree in Nashville. It was that important. (McMakin 2015)

While the Row has changed, many music-related businesses still identify with the area's heritage and sense of place as an amenity. According to a Metropolitan Planning Department survey of businesses in the area, "Almost all of the music-related businesses said it is important to be located on Music Row, and cited the cluster, history, visibility, and atmosphere as their reasoning" (Metropolitan Planning Department 2019, 8).

In oral histories, sidewalks, alleys, and porches are mentioned as places people would see and greet each other on Music Row. These interstitial spaces of urban form frame circulation in a highly walkable area. Alleys form an alternate circulation space within the area, accessing back entrances, off-street parking, and shortcuts while avoiding visibility out on the sidewalk. A small number of restaurants and bars are also mentioned, most of which are no longer operating. One bar, Bobby's Idle Hour, became a preservation cause in 2018 when it became known that its lease would not be renewed to make way for a proposed office building. Lamentations about the loss of Nashville's cultural identity to unchecked growth accompanied its closing (Renkl 2019). The lease was ending on a location that was home to Bobby's since 2005 when other development caused it to move from the location on 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue South it had occupied since opening in 1948 (Renkl 2019). Though the bar ultimately closed in January 2019, the reincarnation of Bobby's is already anticipated nearby on Music Square South, located between the two main streets of Music Row (Trageser 2019). The Bobby's story is about cultural resilience as much as it is displacement by new development. The future of the bar as a Music Row "third place" (Oldenburg 2001) seems assured. That has not been the case for

other restaurants and meeting places, such as Figlio's, which was known to attract songwriters, music executives, and other regulars on the Row. The converted house that was home to the restaurant was torn down in 2017 by one of the large record labels after having sat vacant for several years, in spite of its inclusion in the local preservation non-profit's most endangered list (Ward 2016; WSMV 2017).

#### Shaping the landscape

Proximity of related uses is a key neighborhood characteristic cited by community members now concerned about the future of Music Row. As Nashville booms economically and demographically, housing close to the amenities of downtown, revitalizing neighborhoods in the urban core, and campuses south and west of downtown (such as Vanderbilt University and Belmont University) is in high demand. Music Row's convenient location near these things and between other residential areas of apartments and single-family homes has made it attractive for multifamily housing development. Conversion of properties to residential use, however, threatens to dilute the music industry-focused, campus-like quality that was a central concern of a 1990s planning visioning effort on the Row (Kreyling 1998, 310-311). Though Nashville has worked to encourage mixed-use development and live-work opportunities, especially in the urban core and inner-ring neighborhoods, reaction when one of the most venerated recording studios (RCA Studio A) appeared on the brink of demolition for condos and other recent multifamily redevelopment proposals on Music Row have shown conversion to large-scale multifamily

residential use conflicts with Music Row's identity as a music business district (Metropolitan Planning Department 2019, 21).

The Studio A controversy also landed the neighborhood in the national preservation spotlight. The proposed demolition of Studio A, an architecturally modest 1963 building at 30 Music Square West, for redevelopment as condominiums sparked media interest when musician Ben Folds, a tenant of the building and its recording studio, posted online in summer 2014 regarding the possible loss of the building, its history, and the spaces still used by musicians. The National Trust for Historic Preservation got involved shortly thereafter and named Music Row one of its "National Treasures" in early 2015 (National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2015), after a preservation-minded local real estate investor stepped in to buy the building from the condominium developer (Gold 2015, 22). Shortly thereafter, the Metropolitan Planning Commission directed that new zone change applications may not be recommended for approval during the time in which planning staff would undertake a study to define development goals in consultation with stakeholders. Studio A was listed in the National Register in 2015 (C. West 2015a). The National Trust for Historic Preservation's involvement led to preparation of a National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form to pave the way for nomination of music-related properties to the National Register (Jones and Brackett 2016) and a study of preservation, economic development and heritage tourism strategies titled, *A New Vision for Music Row: Recommendations and Strategies to Create a Music Row Cultural Industry District* (Brackett and Gross 2016). The Metropolitan Planning Department began to study its policies on Music Row in more detail and involve

Music Row community members in drafting a detailed neighborhood design plan, a small area plan supplement to the area's community plan. While a detailed design plan was adopted in December 2016, the planning department and a stakeholders group continued work to refine an approach to managing growth in the area, exploring tools like transfer of development rights to manage the intensity of development pressure and new preservation tools like a cultural industry district focused on economic development of the music industry in this area (Metropolitan Planning Department 2019, 45; Brackett and Gross, 2016, 12-18). The "Music Row Vision Plan," which supersedes the detailed design plan, was approved by the Planning Commission in June 2019. Next steps include development of a tailored form-based code, economic development activities, and implementation of parking and open space recommendations. The vision plan also calls for creation of a non-profit business association to manage related initiatives, such as tourism and promotion of music-related businesses (Metropolitan Planning Department 2019).

While these heightened concerns about the pace of change on Music Row have spurred new planning interventions, the area has been subject to a series of public planning initiatives over the years, including transportation proposals, tourism efforts, and past visioning efforts aimed at balancing Music Row's growth with its campus-like character. These planning efforts have been described in other sources (Jones and Brackett, 2016; Kreyling, 1998) and will not be recounted in detail here. However, it is worth noting some key moments in Music Row's evolution after it began to form a music-related neighborhood identity in the 1950s. In the 1960s an urban renewal scheme called "the Boulevard Plan" was introduced, which would

have demolished all buildings on one side of 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue South to construct a six-lane highway from near Vanderbilt University to downtown and purportedly giving the growing concentration of music businesses in this stretch a more “prestigious address” (Kreyling, 1998, 314). Construction of high-rise towers on the new boulevard would further cultivate a modern, corporate image for the area (Jones and Brackett 2016, E80). Fortunately, the plan failed, but the compromise outcome was conversion of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Avenues South to one-way streets in 1970, a configuration that persists today (Jones and Brackett 2016, E85-86).

Tourism found a home on Music Row with the opening of the Country Music Hall of Fame at the north end of the row in the 1970s. It operated there until the late 1990s, and the museum moved into a larger new facility downtown in 2001. The original barn-like museum building was demolished. Tourist-oriented business clustered around the Hall of Fame on Demonbreun Street, but the business community on Music Row had an uneasy relationship with t-shirt shops and the like near their offices (Kreyling 1998, 310-311). Once the Hall of Fame moved, there were no real activities geared for visitors on Music Row, so the tourist-oriented businesses moved away. Visitors come to Music Row in a limited fashion, largely on bus and walking tours and guided tours of Studio B. Unlike other Nashville neighborhoods and districts that cultivate tourism, Music Row has few entertainment, retail, or restaurant venues to attract visitors for more than passing through to witness the presence of music-related businesses.



## Summary

Music Row's identity is influenced by the expression of adaptation and change in its built environment. It is an un-planned community. As oral history participants noted, Music Row's existence is largely accidental (Bruce 2015, Knobloch 2015). The Row has undergone change throughout its 60-year history, in response to both private and public actors. Perceptions of the pace of this change have raised alarms in the past, as a 1985 survey form in the Metropolitan Historical Commission's records noted, "Older structures are demolished weekly to make way for modern buildings" (Music Row Survey file, 1985). Studio modifications and porch enclosures to create additional office space are obvious alterations that help reveal the history of the area's growth to viewers. More recently, a planning tool called Specific Plan zoning, which gives the Metropolitan Planning Department more detailed control over aspects of physical planning in exchange for site-specific development rezonings, has been blamed for facilitating demolitions and change on Music Row. According to the 2019 *Music Row Vision Plan*, of 53 buildings demolished in the area between 2008 and 2018, 23 were on sites developed through Specific Plans (Metropolitan Planning Department 2019, 15). These developments have tended to be near the north end of Music Row close to downtown and midtown. The ongoing evolution of the area since it first became home to recording studios has produced a highly eclectic mix of business identity, residential character, neighborhood feel, and institutional proximity.

Music Row is dynamic in character as well as its built environment. Though the area possesses a strong identity based on its association with the music industry, specific meanings within the landscape are complex and variable depending on the

user's involvement with the music business and cognizance of its history. For those who know the area well, it is inscribed with a multitude of stories and personal connections, where collective memory intersects with personal place identity. "I can go building to building down Music Row and tell you who I wrote what song in that building with, what recording session I attended in that building," said one songwriter and producer (Bruce, 2015). For visitors arriving from out of town, it is a sometimes-confusing experience that that doesn't deliver on popular expectations about centers of industry. The adaptive reuse of residences, a defining feature of Music Row's built environment, has similarly complex meanings. The houses are considered charming and well-suited to small businesses while eliciting nostalgic reminiscences about the neighborliness of Music Row's past, but they can also be seen as old, quirky, and a poor fit for business, particularly when music-related uses demand accommodations for sophisticated technology and/or greater square footage (Gibson, 2015; Silver, 2015; Metropolitan Planning Department 2019, 19). As Music Row continues its evolution, some of the buildings that once marked the arrival of the new in this formerly residential neighborhood, such as RCA Studio A, are now considered heritage resources that maintain the Row's sense of place as a thriving center for music-related businesses in the late twentieth century.

Music Row's heritage centers in its stories, which operate on levels ranging from the personal to the global. As an industry cluster it documents country music's rise to international popularity and Nashville's transformation into a national center for the music business. As a neighborhood it reveals the multiple forces that have shaped growth in Nashville's near suburbs, from early streetcar development and

institutional influences to demographic and economic shifts, the adjustment of urban form for the convenience of automobiles, and now the desirability of walkable urban neighborhoods close to employment and entertainment. As a heritage site connected with music, it is the place where thousands of songs took shape, any one of which may have deep significance to those involved in their creation or a listener who discovers a connection to this place based on the common language of music.

### *Bells Bend*

#### Location and boundaries

Bells Bend, though it is located within Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County, still feels like the rural countryside. It is an area of approximately 10,000 acres located in a large oxbow of the Cumberland River just east of the Cheatham County line, one third of which is river bottomland (Graves 1975, 5). Historically home to several large family farms, Bells Bend is still primarily agricultural and residential in terms of land use. Since 2007, outdoor recreation has figured more prominently in the area with the opening of an 808-acre city park offering hiking, biking, and equestrian trails and an outdoor center. Bells Bend's relative isolation within a metropolitan county is due largely to the fact that it is accessible on land only via a two-lane road, Old Hickory Boulevard, which runs approximately six miles south from the four-lane Ashland City Highway (Tennessee Highway 12), terminating in a boat ramp at the Cumberland River. A ferry at that location provided more direct access to west Nashville until it ceased operation in 1990.

The southern end of the bend is flat river-bottom land. The land becomes more rolling as one moves north and is hilly at the northern end, approaching the community of Scottsboro. There the land forms of Tennessee's Central Basin join the western Highland Rim, a group of ridges ringing the Central Basin area where Metro Nashville is located today. Other ridges rise on the east side of Old Hickory Boulevard in the midsection of the bend. A series of hollows and streams break up these ridges. The largest, Tidwell Hollow, has an east-west road of the same name running through it. Small ponds and wetlands dot the southern tip of the bend, and other wetlands pierce the northwestern edge of the area. A large section containing 50 acres of wetlands was developed in this area of the bend in 1992 as part of environmental mitigation for a developer's filling of wetlands in another area and now serves as wildlife habitat as well as recreational space for the landowner (Price and Coco [2007?], 94).

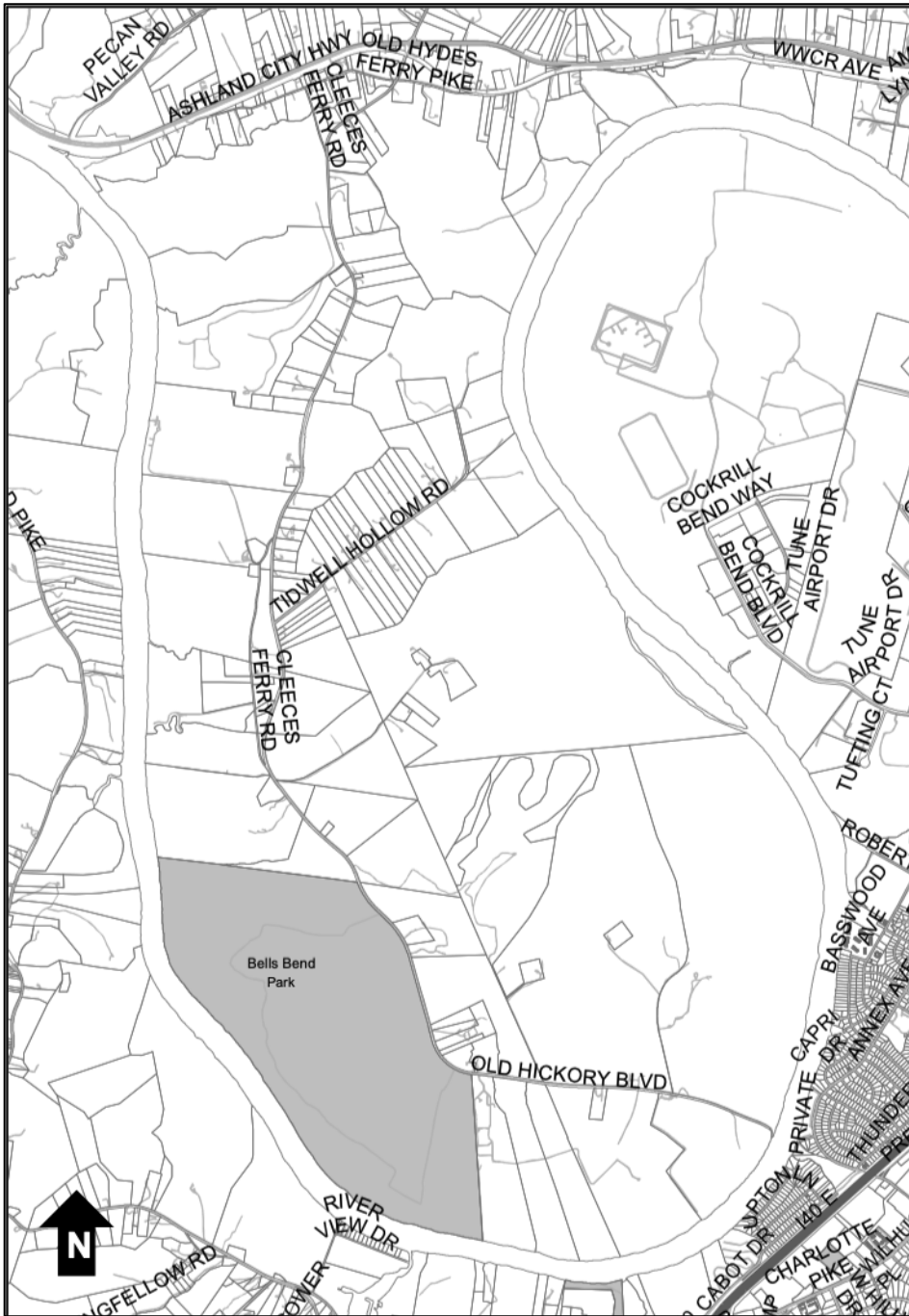


Figure 7. Map of Bells Bend. Courtesy Metropolitan Planning Department.



Figure 8. Detail, topographic map of Bells Bend. USGS 7.5" series, Scottsboro quadrangle, 1997.

A conservation corridor study completed in 2007, covering a region including Bells Bend and north through Scottsboro to the location of the city's Beaman Park, characterizes the area as three communities: Scottsboro, northern Scottsboro, and Bells Bend (southern Scottsboro). Elevations in the corridor's study area range from 400 feet above sea level (amsl) in the river bottoms to 850 feet amsl in the higher ridges north of Bells Bend (Price and Coco [2007?], 3). The corridor study defines Bells Bend's northern boundary as "the south side of Scottsboro's center along Hydes Ferry Pike" (Price and Coco [2007?], 5). Transportation corridors at Scottsboro help define the divide between Scottsboro/northern Scottsboro and Bells Bend. Old Hydes Ferry Pike, the older two-lane road, and Ashland City Highway, the four-lane highway, flank a railroad line. All three run east-west across the top of the oxbow that forms Bells Bend. Turn north on Old Hickory Boulevard at those corridors, and one is able to connect to other parts of Davidson and Cheatham Counties. Turn south down the oxbow, and all roads eventually dead end at or near the river.

The Cumberland River factors significantly into the shaping of Bells Bend's landscape as it literally forms the area's boundaries on all but one short (north) side. Before dams were constructed on the Cumberland River and flood control measures put into place in the mid-twentieth century, Bells Bend's river bottoms were subject to regular flooding. The December 1926 – January 1927 flood is remembered as the worst, cutting the bend off from all other surrounding communities for more than two weeks just before Christmas (Graves 1975, 9). Though ferries no longer cross the Cumberland, the history of river crossings survives in road names in the area such as Hydes Ferry Pike and Cleeces (Cleese's) Ferry Road.

## Natural and built landscape and soundscape

Bells Bend varies from the ridges and curves of Old Hickory Boulevard on the north end, where driveways make their way up through woods to houses not visible from the road, to the more open vistas of the river bottoms at the south end of the bend, where views are broken by fencerows and clusters of trees. Small houses and a few trailers line the road in the shady hollow it travels south from Scottsboro, and an old dairy barn appears on the west side of the Old Hickory Boulevard as the road runs. Then, as Cleeces Ferry Road branches off to the west, a modern house reflecting rural vernacular architecture comes into view. Opposite Tidwell Hollow Road, a more diverse scene representing the variety of the Bend appears as the viewshed from the road begins to widen: a restored historic frame house, row crops in fields, an orchard, late twentieth-century ranch houses, and a sod farm with a barn and other outbuildings. Old Hickory Boulevard continues south with gentle curves over rolling hills, passing the two entrances to Bells Bend Park, which are marked by large carved stone signs. Fences on either side of the road delineate pastures. Just south of the Bells Bend Outdoor Center, which is a modern building echoing the forms of silos and barns, the 1842 Buchanan House is visible on the west side of the road. Continuing south, the topography flattens more as one approaches the river. Another large sod farm is located on the west side of the road. Other houses dot the east side, and fields are a mixture of pasture and cultivated crops. To the southwest, the openness of the landscape offers views to the opposite bank of the Cumberland, where modern apartments are rising on prominent river bluffs in west Nashville.



Finally, Old Hickory Boulevard ends at a boat ramp and small turnaround and parking area that is often unoccupied. Other than the concrete ramp into the river, there are no public or park-like facilities here; it is not a place that invites visitors to linger.

The abundance of woodland, cultivated fields, and pastures in Bells Bend means that the landscape changes through the course of the seasons in keeping with the cycle of growth, harvest, and winter dormancy. The visual quality of the landscape, particularly its colors, changes in response to the seasons. In summer, it is green and vibrant. During the early fall, the golden tones of wildflowers and tall grasses contrast with green leaves on deciduous trees and the multi colors of vegetables in gardens. In the winter, the brown, gray, and green of fencerows and turned fields is occasionally enlivened by red or purple berries or the russet hide of a cow. Winter, though less colorful, offers more glimpsed views of houses and outbuildings along Old Hickory Boulevard and of the river from trails within Bells Bend Park. The landscape is also animated by wildlife and farm animals. Cattle are most evident today, but hogs, sheep, chickens, and mules were historically part of the area's livestock production (Price and Coco [2007?]). Residents mention wildlife in their reminiscences of life in the area, including turkeys, eagles, hawks, whooping cranes and kingfishers (Cantrell 2012, Whooping Crane Farm). The abundance of wildlife had scenic as well as practical and recreational significance to residents, who recall rabbit and squirrel hunting and, more recently, dove hunts (Barnes 2012, Graves 2012, Winfrey 2012) in the Bend.



Figure 9. Old Hickory Boulevard with park outdoor center in the distance. View from the south. Photo by author.

Bells Bend is noticeably quieter than Nashville's urban and suburban areas. The very small amount of ambient road, railroad, or mechanical noise focuses the listener's attention on the sounds of birds, other animals, and the wind in the grasses and trees. Small planes from the general aviation airport located on the next river bend to the east pass overhead occasionally. Cars tend to travel singly on Old Hickory Boulevard, allowing park users and residents to find silence in the lull between them.

Temporal rhythms are most perceptible in terms of the seasons of the year and the agricultural cycles that change the appearance of portions of the landscape. The day-night contrast is also worth noting. While the bend is quiet during the day, trucks head back and forth to the sod farms, and other traffic makes its way up and down Old Hickory Boulevard. The employees of the firm that makes the former Wade School its company headquarters and the Old School Farm fill the parking lot at the school, and occasional park users turn into the Outdoor Center lot. At night, however, Bells Bend is very quiet. It is possible to drive on Old Hickory Boulevard at night without meeting another car down or back until turning onto Ashland City Highway. Houses along Old Hickory Boulevard tend to have security lights or flood lights on, as there are no streetlights; high beams are necessary to drive with confidence. By about the midpoint of the Bend, it is almost completely dark on the north and west sides, while reflected light from the city lights the sky to the south and east. Bells Bend Park occasionally offers sky watching activities. It is one of few park locations in Metro Nashville that can provide such true darkness.

The prevalence of agricultural and residential land uses in Bells Bend mean that it is an area that is only selectively open to visitors or those who do not live or

work in the area and therefore challenging to study as a cultural landscape in its entirety. Most of the area is private land, and large portions of it are not visible from public right of way. The street network is limited, and private drives and roads provide access to many residences. Bells Bend Park welcomes visitors to its events, hiking trails, and nature programs, providing the most accessible way for outsiders to get to know the natural and cultural landscape of the area. The inaccessibility of much of Bells Bend's land does not mean that the community is hostile to outsiders, however. The park, and its active friends group, host a number of festivals and events every year that celebrate the agricultural heritage of the area, such as an antique tractor show, an archaeology day with hands-on activities, and a Farm Day complete with wagon rides, horses and donkeys to pet, and a fiddle competition. The Scottsboro Community Club, formed in the mid-twentieth century, is known for a Labor Day weekend barbecue at the club's location on Old Hydes Ferry Pike at the north end of the bend (McDonald 2012). On a more formal level, the Bells Bend Conservation Corridor organization hosts an annual fundraising dinner that invites donors to dine outdoors on one of the area farms. A common characteristic of these events is the way in which they offer ways to get to know Bells Bend in activities or environments clearly associated with its rural and agricultural heritage.



Figure 10. Antique tractor display at Farm Day festival in Bells Bend Park, October 2018. Photo by author.

Other outsiders are introduced to the area at the Old School Farm to Table restaurant, which is an extension of the Old School Farm. The farm offers employment for developmentally disabled adults who help raise sustainably grown produce for area farmers' markets and the restaurant (Vienneau 2015). Old School Farm to Table is located in the former Wade School, a restored New Deal-era brick school house. Wade School is remembered as an important community institution and activity center by longtime residents (Brown and Langley 2012; Creekmur 2012; Graves 2012; McDonald 2012). Dining areas and bars are now housed in the former auditorium and a classroom, and the restaurant once again serves as a community gathering place. On a winter weekend in 2019, the dining room was lively but not completely full, mostly of white couples in their 30s and 40s. On this night as many others, the restaurant offered live music, creating an environment where patrons are welcome to sit and listen at the bar as well as dine. While a gas station and market at the northeast corner of Ashland City Highway and Old Hickory Boulevard has a grill, the Old School Farm to Table offers the only food service on the south side of Ashland City Highway. There are no retail stores in Bells Bend.

Bells Bend's heritage is conveyed less through individual historic properties than through the interrelationship of natural and man-made features that can be viewed as a progression from Native American settlement evidenced by clusters of archaeological sites along the river, through European settlement and the establishment of family farms, to twentieth-century residential changes and shifts in land use for recreation or natural conservation rather than subsistence purposes. There

are two properties within the area described as Bells Bend in this study that have been determined to meet the criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places in the opinion of the local historic preservation office, the Metropolitan Historical Commission: the Buchanan House, 4107 Old Hickory Boulevard within Bells Bend Park, and Wade School, 5022 Old Hydes Ferry Pike (Metropolitan Historical Commission files), which is discussed further in chapter four. Bells Bend Park has been designated a local historic landmark, a zoning overlay which triggers review of certain changes by the Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission. The presence of the 1842 Buchanan House as well as a number of archaeological finds within park boundaries are noted in association with the park's designation as a landmark (MHZC, Historic Landmark Overlays, 2018). The ensemble of Bells Bend's built environment and natural landscape, as well as the archaeological resources there, have been suggested as a potential rural historic district and/or archaeological district under the National Register's listing criteria, though a definitive assessment of eligibility has not been prepared (Price and Coco [2007?], 24, 127; Mielnik 2011).

### *Shaping the landscape*

The earliest shaping of the landscape in Bells Bend was carried out by Native Americans who made use of the area's rich natural resources and settled in the area. The conservation corridor study identified 67 previously-recorded archaeological sites in the area, all but three of which were located south of Ashland City Highway, in the area this study defines as Bells Bend. Of those 67 sites, 60 were prehistoric,

dating from the Paleoindian through Mississippian periods, and seven were historic (Price and Coco [2007?], 21).

The area's rich natural resources later attracted Euro-American settlers. Bells Bend still contains some of Middle Tennessee's best farmland, and agricultural practices and history have been primary shaping forces in the area. It was historically home to large family farms supplying Nashville with crops, dairy, and livestock (Price and Coco [2007?], 5). During the twentieth century, many farms in the area produced crops for cash value, such as tobacco, hay, corn, wheat, and soybeans. They also raised produce, such as turnip greens, tomatoes, peppers, and okra, for home consumption and sale at markets in Nashville (Price and Coco [2007?]; Barnes 2012; G. West 2012). As family farming became harder over the course of the twentieth century, agriculture in the Bend shifted when farm families found jobs outside of farming to provide steady income. Some continue to cultivate large vegetable gardens in a continuation of the agricultural tradition (Price and Coco [2007?]). Other younger farmers have moved to the area to try smaller-scale organic farming of produce for regional farmers markets or community-supported agriculture (CSA) programs.

Mechanization of agriculture introduced machines to the agricultural landscape. Local historian John P. Graves notes that the Cleese family, who also established the first ferry across the Cumberland from Bells Bend, owned one of the first grain threshers in the region, which would be taken from farm to farm at harvest time (Graves 1975, 87). Introduction of trucks in the 1920s also led to gradual changes in transportation routes, such as livestock drives, associated with farming in the bend. While Cleese's Ferry had once been used to transport cattle, sheep, or hogs



across the river for driving them to market in Nashville, the rise in automobile traffic began to make drives harder, and trucks provided an alternate method for transport (Graves, 1975, 98).

Prohibition led to certain opportunistic variations in local agricultural practices. One local historian asserts that the northwest section of Davidson County, where Bells Bend is located, had over 40 percent of the whiskey stills in the county during Prohibition, even though it was only home to about seven percent of the population (Graves, 1975, 92). Undoubtedly some were operated by locals, but the area's natural resources, corn production, river access, and proximity to Nashville appear to have attracted outsiders during this period. Graves recounts a raid in Bells Bend that turned up still operators from Cookeville, Tennessee, a town 80 miles away (Graves 1975, 93). Area residents recall seeing stills near springs that provided ample water for distillation (Cantrell 2012).

Changes in agriculture have contributed to the evolution of the Bells Bend landscape. Price and Coco document the changing fortunes of family farms from settlement in the mid-nineteenth century to periods of crop surpluses in the early twentieth century, which constrained farmers' livelihoods even before the Depression began. Post-World War II development and prosperity offered new opportunities for serving a growing urban market in Nashville, but ultimately the shift toward economies of scale in agriculture led to serious challenges for the kinds of diversified family farms that characterized Bells Bend and much of middle Tennessee. As children of farm families found other kinds of employment and the economics of family farming became harder to sustain, some families sold land. By the late 1960s,

a corporate manufacturer, Eastman Kodak, began purchasing tracts of the Buchanan Farm in Bells Bend, setting the stage for a development battle to come. In the next decade, subdivided land of five- to ten-acre parcels was sold for suburban-style housing on Tidwell Hollow Road, and other lots were subdivided for houses, introducing more residential land use into the area (Price and Coco [2007?], 41). In spite of these pressures, Bells Bend residents are proud of how many families there have deep roots in the area. This persistence has been achieved in the face of significant shifts in the rural economy during the late twentieth century and the increase in development pressure directed toward Bells Bend as Nashville has urbanized and grown.

By the 1980s, large-scale development proposals began a process of galvanizing area residents to advocate for the kind of neighborhood they wanted to maintain, which meant working to protect its rural and natural qualities. A major challenge developed in 1988, when two sites on the Cumberland River emerged as likely locations for Metro Nashville government to site a new sanitary landfill. One site was on the west bank of the river, and one was on the east bank in Bells Bend, including the 808 acres previously acquired by the Eastman Kodak company but never used for manufacturing purposes. Differing perceptions about the rural qualities of the area were apparent in debate about the site selection: “These sites are remote,” the councilman who filed a bill related to landfill site selection commented at the time (Paine 1988). Residents, by contrast, saw the increased traffic from trash trucks and potential risks to water, wildlife, and other natural features as damaging to the essential qualities of quiet, agricultural use, and natural conservation that they

associated with life in the Bend. By 1990, debates about where to locate the landfill dragged on. Metro Nashville government was facing fines for not having closed its existing landfill. Another site in Bells Bend had entered the picture (Bouma 1990). In early February 1990, the Metro Council finally voted on site selection, choosing a location in the Bend on Old Hickory Boulevard (Floyd and McKnight, 1990).

Reaction from the community shifted from advocacy within Metro Nashville government proceedings to legal challenges, and the community began organizing to raise funds. (Floyd and McKnight 1990). Residents were committed to their goal of keeping Bells Bend rural and sought other avenues to demonstrate the incompatibility of the proposal with the area's landscape and environmental features, including by forming a new watershed district that would have more control over the operation of a landfill (Gordon 1990), a move that was later challenged in court.

Bells Bend's early history came into play in residents' efforts to stop the landfill project during the fall of 1990. The presence of Native American graves within the former Eastman Kodak site, which would be used for fill, led to protests by tribal activists who blocked access to core-drilling rigs sent to the property to conduct testing. Blockades dragged on for a month, from late September to October 29, 1990, when 30 Native American protesters and Bells Bend residents were arrested for trying to keep contractors from entering the landfill site (Floyd 1990, McCullough 1990). The next fall, however, Metro Nashville government's involvement was resolved by the state's denial of a solid waste management permit based on the proposal's design, "questionable construction methods," and risks to the environment (Majchrzak and Ritchie 1991).

The Bells Bend/Scottsboro Defenders, as resident activists called their group, soon found they had to fight a dump on another front. A private operator applied to the state directly for a solid waste disposal facility permit for the site on the east side of Old Hickory Boulevard in 1992 (*Nashville Banner*, June 30, 1992) and on the former Eastman Kodak site. The city came back to the matter in a different posture, trying to acquire the site to allow city use and to prevent trash from coming in from outside Metro Nashville. By March 1995, the Metro Council voted to approve \$12 million to acquire the property (Ippolito 1995). The matter was finally laid to rest after 13 years, in 2001, when the mayor formally promised 808 acres of the former Eastman Kodak/landfill site as city park land (*The Tennessean*, December 22, 2001). As the focus of Metro Nashville's involvement in Bells Bend land use shifted from waste disposal to park development, opportunities emerged for the wider community to appreciate this rural area as a community resource and a significant (agri-)cultural landscape.

While the community was still seeking closure of the landfill siting controversy, the Harpeth Valley Utilities District, which serves customers in the Metro Nashville neighborhood of Bellevue and neighboring Williamson County but not in Bells Bend, proposed a wastewater treatment facility in the Bend that would require a zone change from agricultural to industrial. The neighbors turned to the courts again, but the Tennessee Supreme Court eventually ruled in favor of the utility (Price and Coco [2007?], 116). The community did exact a promise that sewer service would not be installed in Bells Bend. As in portions of the landfill debate, the state of Tennessee emerged as a player in land use decision-making and in shaping the

cultural landscape of the area through its oversight of certain environmental laws and permits.

Through these development battles, residents of Bells Bend and Scottsboro and friends of the area organized as the Bells Bend Conservation Corridor. Its geographic area of interest reaches as far north as Beaman Park, in northern Scottsboro, another recent addition to the city parks inventory. At the suggestion of Metro Nashville's planning director at the time, the group launched a project to outline its own affirmative vision of how the area should develop (Kreyling 2008). They enlisted help from experts in land conservation as well as the preservation of natural, cultural, and historic resources and began to document and articulate specifics about the kind of natural and cultural preservation they wanted to achieve. A well-researched conservation corridor plan released by the organization around 2007 was prepared by a historic preservation consulting firm (Price and Coco [2007?]). It outlined the history of the area alongside descriptions of the rich natural resources, wildlife, historic standing structures, and archaeological sites found there. The publication concludes with recommendations for how the area can maintain its rural, agricultural, and forested qualities as well as its history and historic places. The corridor organization considers it a plan for their "third vision"—a term given by one of the community's activists to a future including something other than large-scale industrial or mixed-use proposals or the acceptance that the whole Bend would be subdivided for residential lots (Price and Coco [2007?]).

Private entities have also had a role in shaping the Bells Bend landscape. A pair of major development proposals in the mid-2000s proved to be a defining

moment for the community in articulating a resident vision for Bells Bend's future. The residents' vision contrasted with proposals by developers to build a 1,200-unit traditional neighborhood development at the southeastern end of the Bend or, later, a complex including residential, office, and commercial space and purporting to create a new type of downtown in the same area. Announcement of Bells Landing, the traditional neighborhood development proposed in 2005, promoted its embrace of new urbanism, maintenance of open space through clustered development, and energy efficiency. In a newspaper article, the developer was quoted as saying he was committed to keeping some acreage as working farms, while other areas would incorporate "farmstead architecture," which might include a single-family residence built to resemble a grain silo (Russell 2005). This is not the kind of rural character residents had in mind when they argued that Bells Bend should maintain a pattern of development that reflected its agricultural heritage. The new development's potential to increase the population in an area that had only around 150 households in the last decade (Price and Coco [2017?], 116) left residents worried about being able to maintain their community's character (MPC Minutes, February 23, 2006). A specific plan (SP) zoning application was filed for Bells Landing in January 2006. The zoning application required a plan amendment before the Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) would take a position on its consistency with land use policy. Ultimately, MPC disapproved the proposed plan amendment (MPC Minutes, February 23, 2006).

Not long after, a larger-scale new urbanist development proposal emerged for the same land area. In a damaging blow to community-planner relations, Bells Bend residents first learned of it while working with Metro Planning Department staff on a

detailed design plan. They were expecting to tailor planning policies toward long-term maintenance of the area's rural qualities following recent completion of the conservation corridor study and report. However, residents involved in the planning process saw a large area where proposed policies would support more intense development when planners came to present their draft concept plan (Kreyling 2008, Bells Bend Conservation Corridor n.d., "Development Pressure"). The proposed May Town Center was more extensive than Bells Landing, constituting a mixed-use town center allowing up to 8,000 residential units, eight million square feet of office space, 600,000 square feet of retail, and 600 hotel rooms, while preserving 900 acres of open space (MPC Minutes June 25, 2009, 23). While the planned town center may have been designed more progressively than traditional suburban development, it remained out of scale with Bells Bend. It would also have required significant infrastructure investments in new bridges across the Cumberland River, sewer service, and other upgrades. Some critics of the proposal worried that it would have a detrimental effect on downtown, since the development would include more office space than the entirety of downtown Nashville in 2008. One goal was attracting corporate relocations to Metro Nashville, many of which were presumed to prefer suburban locations (Kreyling 2008). The second development proposal also failed at the planning commission, by one vote, when the body did not approve a policy amendment for the "Alternative Development Area" that would have aligned policy with rezoning for such uses in an area zoned for agriculture and large-lot residences at the time (MPC Minutes, June 25, 2009). Curiously, arguments for the development followed the logic that the existing zoning allowed large lot (two-acre) subdivision

throughout much of the Bend already, so the proposal represented a more environmentally-friendly, smarter growth alternative. Residents were taken aback that planners presumed development was inevitable in Bells Bend and that its farming, pasture, and woodlot uses could be preserved by allowing an area of such intense development, no matter how restrictive land use policies were in the rest of the bend.

The residential and town center proposals were cast in sharper relief with the development of Bells Bend Park, opened in 2007. A portion of the sites proposed for private development was located directly across Old Hickory Boulevard from the park property. The 2003 master plan for the park describes it as an environmental park, where scenic and natural qualities prevail, and with recreation activities limited to those requiring minimal modification of the land, such as hiking, horseback riding, and camping (Greenways Incorporated 2003). The master plan also addressed cultural resources protection as a goal of park development. Old houses, barns, and a concentration of archaeological sites were located within the park boundary, and one building, the Buchanan House, was later determined eligible for the National Register in the opinion of the Metropolitan Historical Commission (MHC files). The plan noted multiple archaeological sites had been identified within the park area, including cemeteries and Native American burials, warranting careful planning to avoid disturbance and the need to consult with the affiliated Indian tribe (Greenways Incorporated 2003).





Figure 11. River view in Bells Bend Park. Photo by author.

Although Bells Bend Park developed to maintain habitat for plants and wildlife and offer recreational and outdoor learning opportunities in a natural setting, it is not cast as pristine or wilderness, and preservation of cultural heritage factors equally into park interpretation. The master plan treats the park area as “the product of more than 100 years of agricultural activity” (Greenways Incorporated 2003, 10) and proposes interpretation of the landscape as a cultural history record of settlement and use, including designing the outdoor center to resemble a dairy barn in keeping with the area’s agricultural heritage. The outdoor center was ultimately constructed with a tower resembling a silo and an arrangement echoing outbuilding complexes of the region.

In recent years, the agricultural heritage of Bells Bend has experienced a resurgence via the interest in organic farming and the growing market for local produce sold through CSA programs and at increasing numbers of local farmers’ markets. Examples of this trend include the Old School Farm, Bells Bend Farms, and Whooping Crane Farm (Vienneau 2015, 2016; Whooping Crane Farm, n.d.). Other agricultural-related endeavors are reimagining farming in Bells Bend, such as the young local distiller who is growing grains and grapes for spirits on the 300-acre farm he inherited in Bells Bend. A malt house on the property now supplies a distillery near downtown Nashville (Myers 2015). One of the area organic farms supplies hops for a Nashville micro-brewery offering called Bells Bend Preservation Ale, inviting the public to participate in a hop picking party each August (Bells Bend Farms 2018).

The active interest many Bells Bend residents and friends take in its rural qualities and agricultural heritage has emerged as a key shaping force of the area’s

cultural landscape. However, there are other, less public forces that may exert a shaping influence on the area. The first is the prevalence of large tracts of land, especially in the southern section of the bend. Absent some sort of evidence of commitment to land conservation or agricultural use, such as the dedication of a conservation easement or investment in farming ventures, the future of those tracts is unknown and will depend on choices individual landowners make about how to use their land. The views of all landowners on the community's sense of place were not comprehensively captured in the research for this study and may be unknown to all but themselves. However, their decisions about the use of their land in the future will have an effect on the extent to which Bells Bend maintains a sense of place strongly associated with agricultural heritage, rural lifeways, and conservation of the natural landscape. Under existing zoning, tracts in the AR2a zoning district, which covers land in Bells Bend that is not in floodplain or on steep slopes or other areas considered appropriate for natural conservation, can be subdivided into parcels of two acres or more, which means that most of the area could become large residential lots by right (Metropolitan Planning Department, n.d.). No subsequent development proposal has been introduced in the years following the rejection of the second proposal by the planning commission.

While Bells Bend residents and users hold its agricultural uses in high regard and celebrate the fact that this area contains some of Davidson County's last remaining farmland, the area has been significantly shaped by the city, even though it maintains an identity separate from Metro Nashville's urban and suburban one. Proximity to urban markets, combined with shifts in agriculture beginning in the

second half of the twentieth century, has allowed farms in the Bend to serve an urban constituency. Two sod farms in Bells Bend provide turf for development happening elsewhere in the region, and the small organic farms that have been established in the last decade serve CSA members and urban-dwelling farmers' market patrons. Other agricultural enterprises are growing for the needs of an urban market, including flowers for events and hops to supply a microbrewery. The tension of urban versus rural is currently generating agricultural innovation that takes advantage of the area's proximity to a growing city while continuing traditional land uses. While farming in the Bend is different now from points in the past, it still takes advantage of the quality of the area's farmland to serve its local market town.

#### Shaping the landscape

The meanings that Bells Bend's landscape holds for residents and users today is in some ways defined by what it is not. The area serves as a visible contrast to the rapid urban growth around it in Metro Nashville. Bells Bend recalls Davidson County's agrarian past, evidence of which has nearly disappeared within the city limits and is fading quickly in the wider metropolitan area. It has resisted wholesale change through the efforts of community members in opposition to development proposals led by local government and private entities. While the car is the only way to access the Bend except for the river, roads are narrow and parking lots are few, preventing it from being perceived as automobile-centric. Land uses are fairly limited. It is not the city, but it is in the city limits. Bells Bend allows residents, park users, and visitors to

see, hear, and feel the natural world in immersive ways that are not possible in suburban areas or smaller urban parks. This contrast—of Bells Bend being a green space where nature can be experienced in a developing urban area and where city residents could be educated about the value of rural life—was called out in the 2003 master plan for the development of Bells Bend Park (Greenways Incorporated 2003). In maintaining environmental qualities that have characterized it for decades, Bells Bend stands in contrast to Metro Nashville, where the pace and quantity of change in the built environment has been astonishing to long-term residents in the last ten years.

Conservation of Bells Bend's rural character currently benefits from community-based efforts to preserve its natural and cultural heritage and working farmland, and it remains a rare rural landscape within a rapidly growing city. Its historical importance is closely associated with its farming heritage. Current owners and residents are integrating farming into the future of the area, though in different ways than the subsistence or cash crop farming that characterized the bend in the nineteenth and much of the twentieth centuries. The establishment of new, smaller organic farms represents a change in scale and methods for Bells Bend's agricultural traditions, but in connecting to populations that are concerned about the sustainability of food production and how food is produced, the new farmers are developing another constituency for Bells Bend's rural preservation efforts. As Adam Nicolson notes in his description of renewed farming and food production at his family's famous house and garden at Sissinghurst, now in the care of the British National Trust, these activities can serve to reconnect both a landscape and its visitors to the agricultural practices that shaped it and the people who work(ed) the land (Nicolson, 2010). Bells

Bend's landscape has developed recent associations with health, environmental sustainability, and the local food movement. CSA and farmers' market customers now have a direct connection to the area and an interest in seeing it maintained for agricultural uses.

The community spirit galvanized by years of fending off large development proposals prompted Bells Bend landowners and residents to develop their own statement about what they value most about their community's character and heritage. Though residents had articulated their desire to keep the area's rural character before, the conservation corridor study was an important step in neighborhood self-determination, and its recommendations included steps the Bells Bend Conservation Corridor organization and interested residents could take themselves, such as pursuing conservation easements and developing educational opportunities to engage city residents with the natural environment and sustainable farming (Price and Coco [2007?], 119-131). It also offered an opportunity for those who live in the area to document what they think is most important about this place without relying on city planners, developers' consultants, or others who may be charged with making assessments of the Bend's land and its value.

### Summary

Bells Bend's heritage is representative of Metro Nashville as a whole in that it retains many of the landscape characteristics that once were prevalent throughout the county. As urbanization and land use shifts occurred in the late twentieth century, the history of development proposals in the area and the community's organized resistance records a cultural shift in looking at farmland, pastures, and woodlots as

undeveloped rather than productive zones of an agricultural economy. Residents, however, ascribed other meanings to the natural and cultural features of Bells Bend, including as important links to shared rural heritage, the continuity of agriculture, and longstanding family and social connections. Those meanings have now found a larger constituency as a broader population connects with the natural environment and sustainability issues through the Bells Bend Park, the area's produce, and its retention of historic landscape features.

## Chapter 4: Study Findings

The case studies examined in this research are two neighborhoods in Nashville, Tennessee. Music Row is urban and primarily commercial while Bells Bend is rural and primarily residential with a mix of natural conservation and agricultural land uses. They are both places where community identity tends to be associated with certain activities and land uses rather than historic architecture. Residents and users in both areas have reacted to development proposals they considered incompatible with the area's sense of place by calling attention to distinctive neighborhood qualities and features, often with a connection to heritage. Since both case study areas are located within the boundaries of Metro Nashville, they have access to the same set of planning and preservation tools at the municipal level. This chapter presents findings about the qualities residents and users of both areas most associate with the community's sense of place and discusses how these qualities relate to heritage.

As detailed in Chapter 2, the findings of this mixed methods study are derived from three sources: a cultural landscape description based on documentary research and observation presented in Chapter 3; an electronic survey; and face-to-face interviews and follow up questions involving an image rating exercise. The aim was to combine methods commonly used by preservation professionals to document historic structures and landscapes (documentary research and field observation) with structured input from individuals who are familiar with the study areas. The analysis moves from an overview of the neighborhood's history and development to the identification of particular places, features, or qualities associated with its character or



sense of place, and then examines those qualities for their relationship to history and heritage. A picture of qualities most associated with each of the case study areas emerges from the open-ended survey questions, the image rating exercise, and what respondents mentioned when asked which of the qualities on the response sheets they most associate with the case study area's sense of place. These findings form the basis for an assessment in the following chapter of how current local land use planning policies, historic preservation tools, and other efforts are positioned to preserve the qualities of sense of place that emerged as important to residents and users in this study.

The average ratings of each photo in the polar quality pairs were averaged over all 12 images to produce a summary rating of each quality for each study area. Then, those summary ratings were assessed in terms of how far they diverged from the midpoint of the five-point assessment scale. Thus, a rough idea of strength of feeling about that quality emerges for the study area as a whole. This method has limitations in that it presumes the images constitute a well-rounded representation of the area and that they are all of equal importance. While those critiques are valid, the method offers one way to generalize about the qualities that residents and users associate most strongly with places within these areas as a starting point for identifying appropriate preservation and planning strategies.

### *Music Row*

Music Row is a cluster of music industry businesses and supporting enterprises located southwest of downtown Nashville. It continues to represent the most intense concentration of music industry businesses in the country (Jones and Brackett, 2016). The area, centered on two one-way streets, 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Avenues South, was first built out as a streetcar suburb in the early twentieth century. By mid-century, new suburban development and the middle-class residents that drove it had begun moving farther out from downtown as houses in the area were converted to rental units serving students in the nearby colleges and universities (Jones and Brackett, 2016, E8). With the accompanying drop in property values, some of the old houses began to be converted to recording studios and other music-related businesses in the mid-1950s. These houses provided affordable and flexible space for studios, music publishing houses, publicists, record label management and other offices in the early years of country music's development as a popular genre of recorded music and Nashville's growth as a center of activity in the industry. The converted houses had the benefit of being near downtown but not in downtown, making them affordable, and accommodated additions and modifications for the needs of small and growing firms. As the music industry consolidated and became more corporate, and as country music grew into a powerful and profitable industry, some businesses began replacing the old houses with purpose-built office buildings and studios. The resulting amalgam of new and old within an area that retains urban design elements of a low-rise, walkable, traditional neighborhood reflects the ongoing evolution of the industry that

overwhelmingly shaped this urban landscape. Music Row's uniqueness in the city, state, and nation has inspired recent historic preservation efforts to protect its place identity in the face of rapid urbanization and demand for residential and office space in proximity to Nashville's downtown and the two major universities on the district's immediate boundary. The present study seeks new approaches for identifying and understanding place identity for unique locations like Music Row and Bells Bend.

### Survey Results

Respondents returned 43 surveys overall for Music Row, out of which 35 contained complete responses. Of those answering the question about whether Music Row has a distinctive character different than other parts of Davidson County, 27 agreed strongly and six somewhat agreed (representing 94% of responses to this question). Of the same number, 30 strongly agreed and five agreed somewhat that Music Row is historic (100%). Fewer identified Music Row as a place of personal memories: 17 agreed strongly, and nine somewhat agreed (74%), while six were neutral and three others disagreed somewhat or strongly. The very strong response to the question about whether Music Row is historic could have been biased by the distribution pattern of the survey, as it was shared with a group formed to discuss historic preservation planning options in the area and others among the author's preservation-related community contacts.

Text analysis of two open-ended survey questions designed to elicit information about sense of place yielded a wealth of information about the qualities and features that respondents associate with the study area. One question asked how

respondents would describe the natural or manmade features that distinguish Music Row from other areas. The following question asked about anything else that contributes to making Music Row special or memorable. Of those features or qualities that respondents mentioned most frequently, *historic* was used as a descriptor in nine responses, while aspects of intangible or cultural heritage were referenced 19 times across the two open-ended questions, which received a total of 67 text responses in the Music Row survey. In total, historic character or associations with intangible or cultural heritage factored in 28 responses, reflecting a 42% rate of occurrence. Connections with history and heritage, therefore, are strongly represented in Music Row's sense of place for participants in this study. It is notable that intangible heritage and cultural associations were mentioned twice as often as the descriptor *historic*, with its connotation of an official designation or determination based on age value.

The use of buildings on Music Row figured prominently in survey responses. Music-industry uses were referenced 25 times across 67 text responses, representing a 37% occurrence. Related comments, collected under the term *creative activity*, spoke to the importance of area as a site of artistic endeavor where the activity going on within the buildings and district—and the presence of recording artists, musicians, and songwriters—contributes directly to its distinctiveness (12 responses). These responses indicate that Music Row's historical significance is tied to the continuity of these uses within the area and that the use of buildings for purposes unrelated to the music industry could diminish sense of place and place identity. Some respondents pointed out that the area is characterized as commercial (five responses) in addition to

the music industry-related uses discussed above. New, larger-scale construction of condominiums, apartments, or hotels was cited in six responses as a threat to the community's character. Such comments point to questions of scale, since multifamily residential and hotel construction in the area in the last five years has tended to be taller than neighboring buildings, as well as the compatibility of increased residential use or visitor accommodations with this business district.

Table 4. Responses to survey question: How would you describe the natural or manmade features that distinguish Music Row from other areas?

Quality or feature	Number of responses mentioning the quality or feature
Residential architecture	20
Music industry uses	13
Adaptive reuse	12
Historic	9
Varied	8
Loss of character	7
Trees/mature vegetation	7
Walkable	6
Commercial	5
Intangible/cultural heritage	4
Density/compactness	3
Inaccessible (parking)	3
Low-rise	3
For locals	3
One-way streets	3
Proximity	3
Small-scale	3
Authentic	2
Comfortable/friendly	2
Quiet	2
Additions	1
Alleys	1
Churches	1
Lacking historical interpretation	1
Open/accessible	1
Restaurants	1
Well-maintained	1

Table 5. Responses to survey question: What else contributes to making Music Row special or memorable?

Quality or feature	Number of responses mentioning the quality or feature
Intangible/cultural heritage	15
Creative activity	12
Music industry uses	12
Familiar/community	6
Small-scale	4
Proximity	3
Rapid change	3
Unique	3
Authentic	2
Comfortable/friendly	2
Informal	2
Organic, gradual development	2
Affordable	1
For locals	1
Hard to define	1
Mixture of building types	1

Twenty responses specifically referenced residential architecture as a characteristic of Music Row, and adaptive reuse of older buildings was specified in 12. From a planning perspective, survey participants noted the compact (three responses), walkable (six responses) quality of the area inherited from its development as a streetcar suburb. Other amenities derived from its history as an early twentieth-century residential neighborhood garnered notice, including alleys (one response) and trees or mature vegetation (seven responses). The scale of buildings is unexpected for a business district and industry cluster. Music Row often defies expectations about the kind of built environment that houses a major industry, as most buildings are small scale (seven responses) and low-rise (three responses). These urban design considerations present challenges for the continued evolution of the area as a commercial district, since maintaining a sense of place based on traditional neighborhood characteristics would limit the bulk and density of new construction or additions.

On a positive note for maintaining some qualities of sense of place mentioned in this study, the south end of the study area has been designated a conservation zoning district, requiring review of additions, demolition, and new construction by the Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission (MHZC) since 1997 (MHZC 1997). The overlay, encompassing the entire southern-most block on 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue South below Horton Avenue and most of the southern-most block on 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, is focused on the historic residential architectural styles found here. The design guidelines state that the overlay zone “serves as record of the original residential development of



Music Row” (MHZC 1997), ensuring that a small concentration of the adaptively reused residential character of Music Row will continue. This end of the row is somewhat less affected by development pressure and has retained its residential feel with businesses in converted houses, some residential use, lawns, and mature trees.

#### Interview Results

In the image rating exercise, interview participants viewed a series of 12 images (see Chapter 2) selected by the researcher to capture features, specific places, or types of places mentioned frequently in survey responses as having a relationship to Music Row’s sense of place; they could be positive or negative relationships. The selection of images was also informed by a recent oral history project in which participants recalled places on Music Row that they thought were important and described their own experiences living or working there. During the interview, participants were asked which places shown in the 12 photos they most associated with Music Row’s sense of place (no limit was placed on the number they could choose, but no participant selected all of them). The place most frequently mentioned, by eight of twelve respondents, was the Frost Specialty/Waylon Jennings Music building at 1117 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue South.



Figure 12. Frost Specialty/Waylon Jennings Music building at 1117 17th Avenue South. Photo by author.

This adaptively reused house is recommended as National Register-eligible in the multiple property documentation form (MPDF) prepared for “Historic Resources on Music Row, Nashville, Davidson County, Tennessee” in 2016 (Jones and Brackett 2016). This discussion will refer to all places listed in the MPDF by the historic names included in that study. The Frost Specialty/Waylon Jennings Music building is typical of local music publishing houses in that “[t]he vast majority of publishing houses are repurposed private residences that were altered with additions, renovations, and restructured floor plans in order to accommodate the new use as publishing house” (Jones and Brackett 2016, F196). The structure embodies many of the qualities of sense of place mentioned by survey respondents: residential architecture, adaptive reuse, music industry use, historic, low rise, small scale, with mature vegetation. It is also located at the corner of Grand Avenue and 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, capturing the walkable characteristic of the area. The specific qualities participants most strongly associated with this place in the image rating exercise were *with charm, historic, and familiar*.

The adaptive reuse of a residence resonated for respondents in association with this place, and the fact that it had a history prior to its music industry-related use was mentioned by several as representative of the area (Interviews #1, 7, 14). One participant noted that its presence in the district, along with the fire hall discussed below, at the time that the first studios were established in the mid-1950s, contributed to its strong association with the area’s sense of place, since it is the kind of building that was here when Music Row took shape (Interview #16). Its individual residential history is also an interesting story, as the house served as the rectory for a stone

church located diagonally across the intersection that today functions as a recording studio. The evolution from church-related residence to music business home of Waylon Jennings, one of the “outlaws” of country music, offers a pleasing juxtaposition for those who know the building’s history. Jennings added his signature flying W logo detail to one of the upstairs windows facing Grand Avenue during his tenure.

Three other places were mentioned almost as frequently, by seven participants each, as being most representative of Music Row’s sense of place. These include the former Quadrafonic Sound Studios at 1802-1804 Grand Avenue, Fire Hall Engine No. 7 (Tree/Sony Songwriter’s Studio) at 16 Music Square West, and the Broadcast Music, Inc. (BMI) building, 10 Music Square East, at the north end of Music Row.



Figure 13. Former Quadrafonic Sound Studios, 1802-1804 Grand Avenue. Photo by author.

The former Quadrafonic Sound Studios (Quad Studios) building continues to function as a recording studio under another name. Recordings at Quad Studios, which opened in 1969, were not confined to the country genre. The studio is best known for hosting sessions for pop acts like Joan Baez, Neil Young, who recorded his album “Harvest” here in 1972, and the Pointer Sisters (Jones and Brackett 2016, E66). It is typical of the conversion of former residences into music recording spaces, an adaptation pioneered by Owen and Harold Bradley when they established the first recording studio in the area in 1954, setting the stage for the development of Music Row. While an older Colonial Revival house remains part of the studio complex, additions and modifications tailored to recording were not designed to be harmonious with the historic architecture. Rather, they were built to accommodate the specialized use inside.

Additions like the windowless enclosures on the facades of these buildings would usually be considered incompatible with historic architecture if evaluated against preservation standards like the *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation*. In this context, however, the additions enabled the significant music history moments that happened in the building. Therefore, Quad Studios is recommended as National Register-eligible in the MPDF consistent with the thematic definition of significance for music recording studios under Criterion A for performing arts and commerce and Criterion C for architecture, although the MPDF does not specify whether the property might be considered eligible under one or both (Jones and Brackett 2016, 170-173). Among all the images of Music Row in the quality rating exercise, the former Quad Studios was second-most associated with the

quality *historic* after the Frost Specialty/Waylon Jennings Music building. This studio points to the difficulty in applying traditional preservation tools like the National Register or historic preservation districts to Music Row as a tool to maintain sense of place, since the historic significance and community meaning of radically adapted architecture requires a nuanced understanding of how physical form relates to music-related functions. It also challenges preservation approaches based on the application of historical perspective, such as the National Register's general requirement that properties achieved significance at least 50 years ago unless they are exceptionally important (National Park Service 1997). While the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Quad Studios' opening occurs this year, many of the important recording sessions that took place there through succeeding decades, suggesting a likely period of significance extending into the very recent past.

Respondents mentioned that they selected this place based on its independent studio function and continued use in music making (Interview #7, 17, 21). The specific qualities participants most strongly associated with this place were *manmade*, *distinctive*, and *friendly*.



Figure 14. Fire Hall Engine No. 7, 16 Music Square West. Photo by author.



The Tudor Revival fire hall at 16 Music Square West (formerly 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue South) was designed in 1930 by notable Nashville architect Christian Asmus, who lived in a Craftsman house on the same street (Jones and Brackett 2016). The city of Nashville commissioned a group of similar brick fire halls, designed in popular revival styles, during the same period to provide service to its expanding suburban neighborhoods. A similar fire hall is still in service on 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue South nearby (MHZC 1989). A music publishing company, Tree/Sony, purchased the building and renovated it for use as a songwriter's space in 1991 as the business expanded (Jones and Brackett 2016, F206).

The fire hall exemplifies the tradition of adaptive reuse on Music Row and is a successful example of how very different uses can be accommodated in the same building in a manner sympathetic to its design and materials. One participant specifically pointed to how the fire hall demonstrates the adaptability of older buildings on Music Row (Interview #10). It recalls the neighborhood history of the area through a building form, particularly the bay door (now window) that speaks to its prior use. Today, it serves a core music business-related use in housing songwriting, one of the central creative processes of music making and one held in high esteem by the community. Finally, it is unique in being the only fire hall on Music Row and, as a former public building, stands out among the older residential buildings in the district. It has been recommended as eligible for the National Register (Jones and Brackett 2016, MHC survey notebooks). The specific qualities participants most strongly associated with this place were *manmade*, *distinctive*, *beautiful* and *with charm*.



Figure 15. Broadcast Music, Inc. (BMI) building. Photo by author.

The Broadcast Music, Inc. (BMI) building is a monumental, easily recognizable office building on the north end of Music Row. BMI is one of the three performance rights organizations, along with ASCAP and SESAC, with offices in Nashville on Music Row. Performance rights organizations help maintain copyrights by licensing music for performance or broadcast and distributing royalties back to performers, songwriters, and publishers. BMI represents country music performers and writers, but it also serves all other musical genres. The BMI Southern Regional Office opened in Nashville in 1958 and completed its first headquarters building at 710 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue South (10 Music Square East) in 1964. The headquarters was significantly expanded in 1974 in the mid-century modern style. Later, a six-story concrete and glass building with triangular elements designed by Nashville architect Earl Swensson was added in the mid-1990s (Jones and Brackett 2016). Figure 15 shows the 1990s brutalist concrete addition in the center of the frame, while the 1960s modernist brick portion of the complex appears to the far left.

BMI, unlike the other places selected by respondents, is not identified as historic. In fact, only two other places were considered less historic in the image rating exercise. The qualities respondents most associated with this place were *manmade*, *familiar*, and *distinctive*. BMI contrasts with many of the qualities survey respondents said they associated with Music Row's sense of place—it is not historic in the preservation sense of meeting the National Register's usual 50-year old threshold, an adaptively reused building, or small scale. It is a modernist corporate statement complete with an impressed logo on the side of the building. As a performance rights organization, BMI plays a key role in the functioning of the music

industry and in supporting the livelihoods of artists, writers, and publishers. BMI's arrival and growth in Nashville under the leadership of Frances Preston is a local and national business success story (Binnicker 1998). The construction of the later wings are reminders of the changes that took place in the music industry in Nashville during these periods. The 1970s additions mark a new maturity, followed by consolidations and a transition to a more corporate, less personal mode of doing business by the time the large 1990s wing of the building was constructed. Two respondents mentioned those associations in selecting this place as one of the most characteristic of Music Row (Interview #14, 21).

The building stands as a marker, visible from points downtown, of one corner of Music Row. One participant mentioned it as an example of how the larger, more intense office uses cluster at the north end of Music Row while the height tends to step down, and the building stock become more residential, as one moves south (Interview #9). The BMI building design may not be charming in the way that the old houses on Music Row are perceived by those who live and work there, but it is easily recognizable, distinctive, and unlike any other corporate headquarters in the city (Interview #15). Its business function is also closely associated with the creative endeavor of music making. For these reasons, participants found it strongly associated with the district's character. This points to the importance of institutions that serve as anchors for related activities or that help the members of a community sustain a sense of place based on traditional practices within a community. In this case it is what's inside that counts—by serving the community of music makers on Music Row, BMI is seen as closely linked to the perpetuation of the area's identity.

While the Frost Specialty/Waylon Jennings Music building and the fire hall share common attributes of multilayered historical association emanating from their recognizability as artifacts of the early suburban development of this area, these four places present a varied picture of Music Row's character. Where they harmonize is in their current use for music industry purposes, a theme that presented prominently throughout comments in all the interviews and emerges as one of the most important qualities associated with Music Row's sense of place. Music history and ongoing use are tightly interwoven in participants' reactions to the place images as well as in open-ended comments submitted in the survey. While innovation and creativity are celebrated in the generation of new music, there remains a strong sense of connection to songwriters, performers, songs, and places where music was made in the past. This relationship to music heritage can be seen as a contributing factor in a number of other history and preservation-related phenomena in Nashville, such as designation of the Ryman Auditorium, which housed the Grand Ole Opry until the early 1970s (C. West 2015, 54), as a National Historic Landmark in 2001, the outpouring of public support for RCA Studio A when it was threatened with demolition in 2014, and other local initiatives, including the recent application of local preservation landmark overlays to the suburban homes of country music notables such as the Carter Family (2016) and Hank Snow (2018) by the Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission (MHZC 1989/2015/2018).

### Prevailing Qualities of Sense of Place

Music Row places, overall, were most strongly associated with the characteristics *varied*, *manmade*, and *familiar* in the image ratings exercise. Varied reflects the diversity in building types, materials, and styles found in the study area. While several respondents in the survey and interviews mentioned conceptualizing of Music Row as a neighborhood of converted single-family residences, it is also highly diverse, particularly outside the conservation zoning district and within the northern half, and includes many purpose-built offices and multifamily residential buildings. One interview respondent noted the lack of uniform character in citing the *varied* quality, especially in terms of how the area steps down in intensity and height from north to south (Interview #9). The remaining adaptively reused single-family residential architecture can also be thought of as varied, as it encompasses several turn-of-the-century and early twentieth-century architectural styles, including Queen Anne, Craftsman, and Tudor and Colonial Revival, and building heights from one to three stories.

Varied also carries connotations of uniqueness and creativity. Some interview respondents noted that the creative aspect of the music industry should be housed in buildings and environments that are not uniform and that do not appear the same as those found in other places. By distinguishing the exteriors of buildings from other kinds of offices, the creative work of the music industry can be marked to outsiders and perpetuated to the extent the environment inspires those who work in music-related fields. In the words of one survey respondent, the feature that makes Music

Row distinctive is “[v]aried architecture where music is made, promoted and sold. Varied being the key word. Due to its creative nature, the lack of ‘sameness’ is essential.” An interview participant worried the music business might lose some of its “creative edge” in an environment other than adaptively reused properties (Interview #6). Others connected variety and creativity in architecture to the creative spirit of music making (Interview #15) and mentioned eclecticism as a characteristic of Music Row (Interview #10, 14, 15). Respondents also indicated that variation could appropriately include modern as well as historic architecture. Based on the image rating exercise, “distinctive” on Music Row runs the gamut from old to new. The fire hall (1.5), former Quad Studios (1.58), *Musica* statue and roundabout (1.67), and BMI building (1.67) all averaged similar ratings on the five-point scale *distinctive (1) – ordinary (5)*.

The presence of *manmade* as a common image rating reflects the urban qualities of the district. Though street trees are prevalent and a couple of small parks are located within the study area boundary, most of Music Row is built up or covered with concrete sidewalks or paved roads, alleys, or parking areas. It is an area where wildlife, topography, and vegetative cover are secondary to structures and transportation facilities. The features mentioned as characteristic of the area’s sense of place in the open-ended survey questions included mature trees and vegetation, but these are usually oriented around manmade features like streets, or structures in the form of foundation plantings or small yards. Music Row is clearly perceptible as a neighborhood within a city; it is not rural or a primarily natural environment. Visual clues identify its urban quality, where the built environment has been modified for

human convenience and accessibility through the addition of things like bike lanes, sidewalks, bus stops, fire hydrants, and street lights.

In a highly-traveled district like Music Row, most of its area can be traversed by cars, pedestrians, or cyclists every day. Thus, the sight of buildings and other features in the district may be common for respondents, or *familiar*. The term also connotes an acquaintance or personal connection to place and may reflect the social connections that are frequently mentioned in connection with the music industry on Music Row and the strong sense of camaraderie. Respondents with multiyear associations with the district may have personally used places included in the image rating exercise or maintained social connections with people who lived or worked in the places.

Respondents were also asked to flag the qualities on the rating sheet that they considered most closely associated with Music Row's sense of place during the interviews. The summary qualities volunteered by respondents most often were 1) *with charm*, 2) *historic*, and 3) *distinctive*, none of which overlapped with the strongest quality associations emerging from the image rating exercise. There are several potential ways to account for the difference. First, in responding about the area as a whole, respondents may have selected qualities conveyed by the ensemble of buildings and features on Music Row rather than the particular qualities of any—even a majority—of individual buildings. That is not inconsistent with the way National Register of Historic Places documentation for historic districts locates significance in the ensemble rather than individual components. A district “may even be considered eligible if all of the components lack individual distinction, provided



that the grouping achieves significance as a whole within its historic context” (National Park Service 1997, 5). There could also be more direct associations between the varied character of Music Row’s appearance and mix of uses that is charming for those who know it or go there on a regular basis. The frequent mention of historic could have resulted from respondents being primed for that aspect of the area’s character based on a description of the research project. It may also reflect the current debates about future development on Music Row and recent, highly-publicized losses or threatened losses of music heritage-related buildings in the area. In describing the area as historic overall, interview participants could also be pointing to the cultural and intangible heritage associations that were referenced in the electronic survey 19 times. Though Music Row has experienced continual change and evolution in the built environment since music-related businesses were first established there, those changes have followed the growth of the country music genre and the technological and business evolution of the music industry in general. Those who have a close association with that industry may see history in the changes themselves and in the locations where pivotal moments in music history occurred. Finally, the frequency of *distinctive* being mentioned as a quality most connected to Music Row’s sense of place speaks to respondent comments about the uniqueness of this district, not just in Nashville but throughout the country, as a music-related industry cluster, and reinforces the sentiment expressed in survey responses, wherein 33 of 35 complete responses agreed Music Row has a distinctive character different from other parts of Davidson County.

Music Row's sense of place is strongly tied to its history and continued use as a location where the creative work of music writing, performing, recording, publishing, and marketing is centered. All of the places selected as most associated with the neighborhood's sense of place in this study have a current functional relationship to the music industry, and music industry uses were mentioned most frequently as a key characteristic of the neighborhood's distinctiveness in responses to the online survey. Strong historical and heritage connections also emerged in both the survey and interview results, though cultural and intangible heritage themes were mentioned more frequently than artifacts of built heritage. Overall, the early twentieth-century neighborhood character, including residential architecture and urban design features like low-rise construction, street trees, and sidewalks that enable walkability, is another aspect of Music Row's sense of place, though this character is retained more consistently in the southern half of the study area. Music Row's sense of place is therefore rooted in a series of contrasts that exist in creative tension: it is a business district in the form of an old residential neighborhood; it has historical associations based on locations and stories as much as building form; and it serves as an international industry center that is often experienced with the familiarity and charm of a campus with a strong sense of camaraderie.

### *Bells Bend*

Bells Bend is one of the last areas of farmland remaining within the boundaries of Metro Nashville. It is formed by an oxbow bend in the Cumberland River in the northwest section of Davidson County (see Figure 3). Because only one

two-lane road provides access, Bells Bend feels very remote and isolated despite its proximity to urban areas of Nashville. Area residents have worked steadily since the 1980s to fend off a series of public and private development proposals that would have dramatically changed the Bend's land use and character. They ultimately defeated a proposed landfill, and the site was subsequently converted by the city into an 808-acre natural park. In the mid-2000s, local activists worked with a group of consultants and advisors to prepare a conservation corridor plan that articulates the community's vision for how the area can remain rural, continue agriculture, and preserve natural resources and wildlife habitat while becoming an outdoor recreation and nature education resource for the broader Nashville population. Residents and those who know the area celebrate how it remains unchanged, its strong sense of community, and the peace and tranquility of its natural environment surrounded by the river. Even though new houses have been built in the Bend over the years and the type of farming practiced there has evolved for a modern urban consumer market, the community is taking the initiative in defining an identity for their neighborhood that is rooted in its agrarian past, rural lifeways, and suitability for natural conservation and recreation.

#### Survey Results

Of 21 surveys returned for Bells Bend, 19 included complete responses. Response volume for Bells Bend was lower likely given the very small population. The area is home to a small number of households, and there are few sites of employment in the area, including farms, one human services firm, and a restaurant.

Responses were unanimous that Bells Bend has a distinctive character different from other parts of Nashville/Davidson County. All agreed strongly (17) or somewhat (2) that the area is historic. It was somewhat less strongly associated with personal memories, with 14 agreeing strongly (74%), four agreeing somewhat (21%), and one registering a neutral response (5%). Length of association was split between long-term associations of 20 years or more (10 responses), 10-20 years (4), 5-10 years (3), and a newcomer of less than one year.

In response to the two open-ended questions about features or qualities that contribute to Bells Bend's sense of place, participants highlighted elements of the natural landscape, including the Cumberland River, trees and woodland, the flat land of river bottoms, hills, fields, and high elevations, which totaled 32 occurrences over 19 responses. Wildlife was also mentioned in five responses. Natural conservation has been identified with the area in recent years through the establishment of Bells Bend Park and the formation of the Bells Bend Conservation Corridor organization.

Agricultural references occurred with similar frequency. In characterizing the area, respondents strongly associated Bells Bend with the presence of farmland and agricultural activities (10 responses) and with rural quality in general (8 responses). Structures or activities commonly found on farms were mentioned an additional 15 times: barns and outbuildings, farm animals, farm houses, fences, cultivation, and local food production. Explicit references to historic character or historic places were much less common. The quality *historic*, archaeological sites, Native American occupation, historic buildings, Civil War history, and a specific historic building (the former Wade School), were mentioned a total of eight times.

Another theme emerging from the text exercise is the sense of isolation or inaccessibility presented by Bells Bend and its distinctive geography in a river bend. Eight responses specifically noted its isolation. Related features, such as a dispersed residential pattern, two-lane roads, and an undeveloped quality, were mentioned an additional 10 times. An interesting contrast emerges, however, as four respondents noted Bells Bend's proximity to the city as a distinguishing feature. Interviewees for the Bells Bend/Scottsboro Oral History Project made similar observations about its being part of the country in the city in their descriptions of the area (McDonald 2012, Winfrey 2012). Maintaining its sense of place as a place apart, an oasis of rural life within the city limits, has been noted as a critical goal in the community's conservation plan (Price and Coco [2007?], 1). The relative isolation sets Bells Bend and its community physically as well as mentally apart, aiding development of a neighborhood identity separate from that of Metro Nashville.

Responses to the second question, which asked what else makes Bells Bend special or memorable, clearly reflected the social component of community identity. Ten of 19 responses included a reference to community (53%), while four mentioned the preservation spirit upheld in the community, and two more called out friendships as something that makes the area special. Interview participants described locals as both "tight-knit," (Interviews #2, 13) and diverse (Interview #12). Respondents mentioned community-based social rituals and gathering places as they described what makes the area distinctive, including potluck dinners, sharing of farming equipment and maintenance, revivalist square dances for a younger generation at one

of the local organic farms, and festivals at the community club (Interviews #3, 4, 5, 11, 12, 13).

Table 6. Responses to survey question: How would you describe the natural or manmade features that distinguish Bells Bend from other areas?

Quality or feature	Number of responses mentioning the quality or feature
River	12
Agricultural/farmland	10
Rural	8
Trees/woods	8
Isolation	7
Barns/outbuildings	4
Dispersed residences	4
Flat land/river bottoms	4
Hills	4
Two-lane roads	4
Unchanging	4
Wildlife	4
Cultivation	3
Diverse	3
Fields	3
Nature/natural	3
Archaeology	2
Farm animals	2
Historic	2
Outdoor recreation	2
Trailers	2
Undeveloped	2
Vistas	2
Beauty	1
Community pride	1
Farm houses	1
Fences	1
Gardens	1
High elevations	1
Historic buildings	1
Peaceful	1
Wade Elementary School	1

Table 7. Responses to survey question: What else contributes to making Bells Bend special or memorable?

Quality or feature	Number of responses mentioning the quality or feature
Community	10
Farming/local food production	4
Preservation spirit	4
Proximity to city	4
Friendships	2
Nature/natural	2
Unchanging	2
Civil War history	1
Isolation	1
Love of land	1
Multi-generational	1
Native American occupation	1
Park	1
Quiet	1
Wildlife	1



## Interview Results

Interview participants for Bells Bend, when asked which of the 12 places in the image rating exercise they most associated with the area's sense of place, selected a view of hills taken within Bells Bend Park in seven of nine responses. The hills were unanimously rated at the most natural end of the *natural – manmade* scale. The absence of any houses or other structures in the view from this point in the park helps explain the very strong rating on that scale, as may the fact that it is a view within the park and thus protected from development within that boundary. The view also looks west, toward the river, which has a definitive shaping influence on the bend, and its western bluffs. Unlike the south end of the bend, where postwar and later suburban homes are visible and new multistory residential buildings now rise across the river in west Nashville, these western bluffs do not have visible development. This surrounding context may have influenced respondents who identified the direction of view and/or are sensitive to the effect of undisturbed viewsheds on the area's rural character. The hills were also considered highly *quiet, peaceful* and *with charm*. These characteristics were also cited most often when respondents were asked to flag the qualities within the list of polar descriptive pairs they thought most characterized Bells Bend's sense of place, although in the order *quiet, peaceful, with charm, and natural*.

While historic as a descriptor did not factor as frequently into qualities cited as most characteristic of Bells Bend (it was mentioned by two of nine respondents), historic properties occupy a space in participants' conception of the area's distinctive

character. Two historic buildings, the West house and Wade School, were second-most often mentioned as associated with Bells Bend's sense of place, appearing in five of nine responses each. Both are relatively visible within the area, and each has a recent history of rehabilitation that has been celebrated in the community and by the Metropolitan Historical Commission, the city's historic preservation agency. Both also reflect the recent trend toward outreach efforts to share the community's farming past and present with a broader population through modern innovations in farming and agritourism.



Figure 16. West house. Photo by author.

The West house was acquired by the West family as part of a farm of approximately 200 acres in 1918 or 1919. It is estimated to have been built in 1910, though that date may refer to a renovation that brought an earlier center hall structure into its present form. The house remained in family ownership when it won a local preservation award in 2008 (Price and Coco [2007?], 51; Metropolitan Historical Commission 2008, Overstreet 2008). The house is a side-gable bungalow form used frequently for farm houses of the period. Its red roof is easily spotted on Old Hickory Boulevard and Cleeces Ferry Road. The house looks west over bottomland toward the Cumberland River, while a large barn on the east side of the property, at the rear of the house, can be seen from Old Hickory Boulevard.

The West house has associations with several Bells Bend heritage themes, including the persistence of family farms with long-time ownership. The qualities most strongly associated with this place in the image rating exercise were *quiet*, *peaceful*, *with charm*, and *familiar*. Familiar, in this case, could be understood in multiple ways—as an everyday sight for those traveling the main roads of Bells Bend, as a place known to respondents because they have visited the house or its surrounding farmland, and as a place that has a relationship to longstanding social connections in the area.



Figure 17. Wade School. Photo by author.

Wade School, 5022 Old Hydes Ferry Pike, was constructed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA), a Depression-era program that supported a large program of school construction in the city of Nashville as well as Davidson County, in 1936. The brick Classical Revival style, one-story school building replaced an older frame school building located on the opposite side of Old Hydes Ferry Pike (Price and Coco [2007?], 49). The 1936 design embodies characteristics of progressive school design of the period: large windows for ample natural light and ventilation, individual classroom spaces, and brick construction for safety and durability. A large addition added a cafeteria and two classrooms on the rear in 1953, and other smaller alterations were made before the school closed in 1999 (Price and Coco [2007?]; Semmer 2005). The Metropolitan Historical Commission has opined that Wade School is eligible for the National Register for its significance in the county's educational history as an example of the influence of New Deal school building programs of the 1930s, consistent with Criterion A (Roberts 2005).

Wade School was remembered by long-term residents of Bells Bend as a community institution and landmark in a 2012 oral history project (for example, Creekmur 2012, Brown and Langley 2012). Located in the community of Scottsboro at the north end of the bend near the railroad tracks and modern Ashland City Highway, it was one point where families from Bells Bend were drawn together with those who lived in Scottsboro and nearby communities north of Bells Bend. Shared community institutions, like Wade School, the Scottsboro United Methodist Church, and the Scottsboro Community Club help link the history and identity of these areas together today. Interview participants noted the school is still the site of events that tie

the community together. Though it has changed uses, it is becoming another sort of gathering place (Interviews #8, 11).

Wade School's future was in question after the school closed in 1999. A developer began, but did not complete, a renovation project in 2007 (Metropolitan Historical Commission 2015), having sought and received designation for the property as a neighborhood landmark district, a local zoning overlay that offers certain flexibilities in terms of land use in exchange for the retention of "buildings, structures, objects, sites, and areas of historic, cultural, civic, neighborhood, or architectural value and/or importance to Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County." One stated purpose of the overlay is "to enhance a neighborhood by providing a strong sense of place" (Metropolitan Zoning Code 17.36.400 – 17.36.420). Eventually, the school was acquired by a company that provides services to adults with intellectual and physical disabilities, which undertook an extensive renovation in 2013 to convert the deteriorated school building to use as office space. In 2014, the organization launched a non-profit organic farm, the Old School Farm, that provides work opportunities for persons with disabilities on the grounds to the rear and east of the building (Vienneau 2015). The farm supplies a community-supported agriculture program (CSA), sells at local farmers' markets, and grows vegetables for the Old School Farm-to-Table, a restaurant opened in 2016 in the historic school building. The current incarnation of Wade School as the Old School Farm and restaurant has generated a new community institution based on respect for recollection of the area's past. In addition to farm and food-related activities, the facility now hosts pottery classes, stargazing events, occasional live music, and other

reasons for people to gather. Wade School's transformation was recognized by a preservation award granted by the Metropolitan Historical Commission in 2015.

In spite of its historic *bona fides*, the Wade School building was not particularly strongly associated with the quality *historic* by interview participants. Rather, it was most associated with the qualities *with charm* and *familiar* (1.33 average on a scale of 1 to 5). It was nearly as strongly rated as *friendly* and *accessible* (1.56 average). This may reflect local identification of the place now in association with the Old School Farm and the restaurant, as well as the other events and activities that take place there since its rehabilitation. Its location at the top of the Bend, a short distance from Old Hickory Boulevard on Old Hydes Ferry Pike, makes it quicker and easier to get to than many of the other Bells Bend places included in the image rating exercise for those coming from outside the community. Community institutions and public buildings play an important role in the conception of community identity, particularly when they are tied to a shared history, as the school is through the memories of those who attended it. That legacy has been enhanced rather than overwritten by the adaptive reuse of the building in a way that highlights its history and historic architectural features.

#### Prevailing Qualities of Sense of Place

While *quiet*, *peaceful*, *with charm*, and *natural* were qualities most frequently mentioned as characteristic of Bells Bend sense of place by interview participants, the same group selected two historic buildings, the West house and Wade School, among the top three frequently cited places they considered most associated with the area's



unique character. The West house was the place rated most strongly as *historic* in the image rating exercise, while the Scottsboro Community Club and the boat ramp at the Cumberland River followed. Notably, neither of these later two are historic buildings or sites in the traditional or obvious sense. The community club building, built in the early 1960s, is of utilitarian concrete block. It serves as a community gathering point for entertainment as well as meetings (McDonald 2012; Price and Coco [2007?], 52). The community club also played a role in volunteer-led efforts to preserve the Bend's rural character in the face of development proposals. The boat ramp may have elicited associations with the river as a historical and cultural force shaping settlement patterns, boundary line, transportation corridor, or recreational site. Other old and historic buildings in the Bend resonated with interview participants, and one mentioned the Buchanan House (the historic house on park property) and the Scottsboro United Methodist Church as important contributors to sense of place that might have been candidates for the image rating exercise (Interview #8).

In the results of the rating exercise, the qualities that participants associated most strongly with the places in the images, overall, were *friendly*, *open*, and *with charm*. *With charm* appears in both the top qualities selected by participants as characteristic of the area's sense of place and in this measure. There is clearly a sense of affection and delight about Bells Bend among those who know the area. One interview respondent observed that the area may not appear "especially unique or beautiful," but it is "special because of the sense of belonging" felt by residents (Interview #13). One response to the survey framed another facet of this affective quality in terms of "love of the land." Places that are valued for their heritage

associations can have the ability to “enchant” or provoke a sense of connection in those who experience them, yet this aspect of heritage interpretation receives little emphasis compared to explaining sites in service of their educational value, argues cultural heritage scholar Russell Staiff (2013, 148-158). Responses selecting *with charm* point to this experiential quality of Bells Bend’s landscape.

Bells Bend tended to show more consistency across responses in terms of those qualities most associated with its sense of place. The importance of natural environmental features, of quiet and tranquility, and of the continuation of small- or family-scale agriculture are apparent. One respondent mentioned that an organic farm should have been included as one of the important features or places in the rating exercise (Interview #11). Several interview participants said that for the area to maintain its sense of place, farming must be part of the mix of land uses (Interviews #2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 11, 12, 19). This emphasis on farming makes Bells Bend increasingly distinct from other areas of Metro Nashville, given the decline in the number of acres within Davidson County in farm operation, from 62,081 (18.44% of the total county land area) in 1997 to 34,447 (10.23%) by 2017 (USDA Census of Agriculture 2017). Another participant mentioned the importance of Bells Bend remaining a place where people earn a livelihood from the land (Interview #13), although there is some disagreement about the kind of agriculture that should be considered farming. As one participant asked, “Is a sod farm a farm?” (Interview #19). Another participant noted the community connections of farming, since it takes the support of local produce buyers to keep small organic farms in business (Interview #2). The findings of this study show that Bells Bend’s sense of place is somewhat more sensitive than Music

Row to development and land use changes given how firmly its unique character is grounded in persistence—of rural practices, of families, of characteristic views, of well-known buildings that evolve new uses without changing the visual character of the area very much—and familiarity.

Sense of place in Bells Bend is most associated with its rural qualities and natural environmental features: the river, the topography of river bottoms and hills, the presence of wildlife, and trees and woodland. The long history of the area as a farming district is captured in survey responses that almost equally mentioned agricultural activities and features, like farm animals and outbuildings, as characteristic of this place. Responses to the electronic survey and interviews reflect that history in this area is understood in large part as continuity of environmental features, agricultural activities, and community relationships. This continuity is commented on by Thompson Mayes in his recent collection of essays on *Why Old Places Matter*. Mayes identifies the concept of continuity and its fundamental relationship to personal orientation and well-being as essential to understanding place attachment (Mayes 2018, 1-5). In Bells Bend, this connection to the past is facilitated by the persistence of natural environmental features and certain experiences and activities, such as participating in or observing at close hand farming and food production and engaging in social and community interactions that build familiarity within a small population. These elements of continuity relate to other concepts Mayes highlights in association with the roles that old places (and heritage) play in our lives, including community, memory, individual identity, as well as a connection to ancestors (Mayes 2018).

While survey respondents identified Bells Bend as having historic character, the qualities and features most associated with its sense of place have an inherent evolutionary quality. The natural environment is subject to cycles of growth and dying back; community members change over time; and local farming has adapted, particularly in the period since World War II, to new technologies and markets. The two historic buildings flagged by interview participants as strongly associated with the area's sense of place have also evolved new uses over time that still relate to the Bend's rural quality. This concept of heritage allows flexibility and adaptation and can be thought of as resilient in the way Sies, Gournay, and Freestone (2019, 3) apply that concept to iconic planned communities, another kind of historic place in which sensitive, community-driven changes to accommodate the needs of current residents and users can make the difference for retaining essential elements of sense of place (5).

Bells Bend and Music Row share common characteristics of sense of place and heritage in that residents and users of both frequently mentioned continuity of traditional activities as an important component of the respective area's distinctive character and intangible heritage. In an interesting contrast, the rural lifeways, river, and rolling hills of Bells Bend are often extolled in the lyrics of country music songs written, recorded, or produced on Music Row in its very urban setting. Though production on Bells Bend's farms may have changed over the years, agriculture and natural conservation persist as land uses in the area, albeit now interspersed with large residential lots and in different forms than in the nineteenth century. Music Row's sense of place, on the other hand, is significantly defined by markers of how its land

use changed over time, transitioning from residential to commercial. Music Row offers a juxtaposition of familiarity and hominess alongside the sophistication of large corporate music enterprises. That contrast captures cultural elements of country music, the origins of which have connections to traditional music made at home or as part of the community rituals of rural life and expresses the tension between country music's cultural meanings and its modern existence in Nashville as an industry (Kreyling 1998). Music Row's distinctive character is in many ways that of a changing neighborhood, with parts of both past and present visible on most blocks.

## Chapter 5: Conclusions

### Introduction

This chapter expands upon the findings in the previous chapter about key characteristics of sense of place and heritage associations in both case study areas through a discussion of how existing planning policies and approaches in Metro Nashville either support or conflict with the preservation of such features. Each case will be examined in turn, followed by observations on the success of the methodological approach of this study and its potential applications to practice. The chapter concludes with a discussion about how current preservation planning practice in the U.S. attempts to sustain distinctive local character. This section will consider where adaptation of preservation planning tools or further study could offer improvements to current approaches.

### Fit Between Sense of Place, Heritage, and Planning Approaches

The findings from the electronic survey and interview phases of this study led to conclusions about the features and qualities of sense of place that stand out as most important for residents, users, and others who know the two case study areas. Those features and qualities were examined for their connections to history and heritage. The following sections consider how local planning policies, including historic preservation-specific tools as well as more general land use and physical planning policies, can support the sustainability of those features of sense of place. The

discussion will also consider how other related strategies of heritage interpretation may have utility for conveying a sense of history in these neighborhoods.

#### Music Row

The prevailing qualities of sense of place on Music Row point to considerations in the planning process, such as how to maintain its historically residential neighborhood character in the face of rapidly increasing property values and how to maintain the eclecticism and variety in the built environment without sacrificing the organic quality of a business district that developed by accident. The importance of variety to the area appears to caution against planning tools that are highly prescriptive in terms of style or massing. It also indicates that planning interventions maintaining a strong sense of place on Music Row would encourage the tradition of adaptation and creative expression in its architecture that has made and continues to make Music Row's built environment so diverse. One respondent commented about the modern apartment building in the photo exercise, saying that it could be found anywhere, in any city (Interview #17). By contrast, "at least [the] BMI [building] is funky, trying to be different or unique" (Interview #7). The emphasis on variety also reflects design diversity within the study area. The shared urban design elements of the blocks where converted single-family residences predominate at the southern end contrasts with the interplay of early twentieth-century houses, midcentury office buildings, and statements of corporate identity like the BMI and ASCAP buildings at the north end. Music Row is inherently quirky and incompatible, a product of its organic evolution, not unlike the evolution of country music itself, and it is very difficult to replicate the unique circumstances that precipitated this kind

of development (Interview #9). Maintaining the characteristic transition from low-rise and residential scale at the south end to mid-rise, purpose-built offices on the north end and the eclectic transition in between would also embody Kevin Lynch's ideas about how traveling a path through a city can be "melodic," a particularly apt description of Music Row's imageability (Lynch 1960, 99) and linear form. The 2019 *Music Row Vision Plan* calls for increased height and density at the north end of Music Row, while "character areas" of decreasing height and progressively less intense use step down to the south end of the area (Metropolitan Planning Department 2019). South of Grand Avenue, areas are "generally residential in character" according to the plan's recommendations for urban form (34).

The importance of familiarity to the district indicates the risk of introducing changes to an area well known to users. The issue also calls into question how social relationships are affected by changes in the built environment on Music Row and how those relationships are changing as a result of dramatic shifts in recording technology and music distribution. Social behavior, culture, and place identity can be intertwined, as community planner Randolph Hester found in a planning study in Manteo, North Carolina. Through behavior mapping, the study revealed relationships between present-day social patterns and collective memory, often in connection with otherwise unremarkable places that had not been identified as important to retain through more straightforward public involvement efforts and planning analyses (Hester, 1993). A similar category, referred to as "places of the heart," is used in the Massachusetts Heritage Landscape Inventory planning process to elicit information about places with similar kinds of social or community significance (Berg 2011, 32). When



planning efforts fail to identify such places, “the existing planning and design mechanisms developed precisely to preserve local cultural heritage ignored almost entirely the places most critical to the present lifestyles, most valued patterns, and local memory” of the town (Hester 1993, 280). Places with social and cultural significance to a community may also be difficult to fit into the protective coverage of existing, traditional zoning mechanisms, historic preservation ordinances, or related tools (Hester 1993; King 2011; Buckley and Graves 2016). A risk, as Hester notes, is that preservation of certain social rituals and cultural heritage in an inequitable environment could perpetuate social meanings that serve to bolster the power of one group while minimizing the needs or narratives of those who have been historically disadvantaged (Hester, 1993). Thus, thoughtful consideration of the use of heritage should inform planning processes. In the case of Music Row, it would take additional research to determine whether the familiarity extolled by multiple participants in this study is shared across demographic groups and types of users, as well as whether it is uniformly experienced as welcoming.

The deep concern with stories about who wrote or recorded what song in what location, or respondents’ personal experiences interacting with others who worked on Music Row (e.g. Interviews #16, 17, 18; Bell 2015; Bruce 2015; Williams 2015), points to the importance of collective memory in this district. Interpretive efforts to mark and share those stories could contribute meaningfully to sustaining the area’s sense of place. Though some participants in this study tended to advocate for the retention of buildings to convey heritage stories, others emphasized the importance of memory and celebrating the creative work that comes from Music Row as an

ensemble rather than the individual vessels (Interview #15). Interpretation, particularly through means that integrate art and music into the environment, could offer opportunities to bolster community identity and to help visitors understand the contributions of Music Row to local and national history. Collaborative efforts by arts and community organizations, public officials, and the private sector to energize places and shape neighborhood character using cultural activities have come into focus as a community revitalization strategy called creative placemaking (Markusen and Gadwa 2010). Creative placemaking approaches, by seeking to benefit livability through the celebration of distinctive local character, heritage, and culture, seem particularly well suited to Music Row, as does their encouragement of arts and culture activities as economic generators (Markusen and Gadwa 2010, 7).

While there have been past efforts to celebrate the area's music history via public art, not all connect with place-based stories that interpret its unique history. For example, the *Musica* statue (Alan LeQuire, 2003) addresses music in general without specific elements referencing country music, Nashville, or Music Row. One participant remarked it would be more meaningful if it had been a composition of notable figures in country music (Interview #16). A bronze of Owen Bradley at his piano sits near a historical marker in Owen Bradley Park at the north end of Music Row, which provide a direct reference to Bradley's opening of the Quonset Hut studio in 1955. Other elements of the streetscape integrate more general references to music. A utilities box near the corner of Music Square West and Division Street, alongside Owen Bradley Park, plays country music, and a bike rack in the shape of a microphone and cord is part of recent streetscape improvements across the

roundabout. Seeking additional sites for public art in the area is another way to enhance the landscape with meaningful references to Music Row's heritage (Brackett and Gross 2016, 66).

Other aspects of Nashville's history have benefitted from thoughtful interpretive treatment and placemaking activities. The 2017 *Witness Walls* installation by artist Walter Hood on the Davidson County Courthouse grounds interprets Civil Rights activism in Nashville with specific reference to the lunch counter sit-ins and marches in the 1950s and 1960s. *Witness Walls* obligates the visitor to move—to take action—in order to see the artist's interpretation of sitting and marching. Distinctive concrete and aggregate graphic techniques reveal figures from historical newspaper images to the viewer at different times and different angles based on his or her position and the position of the sun. Music of the period plays once an hour. Its location next to the courthouse downtown reinforces the importance of place in Civil Rights history, as it was here Nashville's mayor met marching students in 1960 and affirmed that lunch counters should not be segregated. The artwork is supported by a website and educational curriculum (Metro Nashville Arts Commission, n.d.). Similar placemaking activities drawing on the rich stories of Music Row history could help imprint past events on the landscape even when a standing structure no longer remains.



Figure 18. Walter Hood, *Witness Walls*, 2017, downtown Nashville.

Perpetuation of uses and activities that are part of or support the music industry should be part of any planning strategy to maintain the distinctive local character identified by participants in this study. That finding presents challenges for traditional preservation approaches, such as historic preservation districts, which generally leave the base zoning that regulates use untouched while achieving aesthetic control to maintain historic appearance through a set of design guidelines. It also raises questions about how compatible contemporary urban planning approaches are within this unique area. For example, the creation of compact, walkable urban neighborhoods that locate density where existing infrastructure (such as sidewalks, sewers, schools, and transit) is in place and that offer opportunities for living and working in close proximity are in tune with the principles of smart growth. Yet in this case, participants did not identify strong associations with established residential buildings as part of the district's history and sense of place. The construction of new, large-scale condo and apartment buildings on Music Row, particularly when they supplanted music-related uses, was mentioned as a threat to neighborhood character. Thus, policies that work well elsewhere in Nashville to guide the development of mixed-use urban neighborhoods may need modification here to acknowledge Music Row's status as a unique business district, a fact fortunately acknowledged by the 2019 plan (Metropolitan Planning Department 2019).

The residential qualities cited by survey respondents refer to the area's past as a neighborhood and provide visual clues to its evolution over time. Maintaining features associated with historic neighborhoods like sidewalks and walkable streets, low-rise buildings, street trees, and lawns or set-backs even with the depth of lawns

could contribute to the continuity of heritage values in a number of ways. Where the urban form continues to read like a residential neighborhood with small-scale buildings providing a rhythm of walkways, porches, and windows to passers-by, Music Row reveals its past and how the neighborhood transitioned over time. Where adaptively reused older buildings are retained, residents and users are reminded of how offices, studios, and other uses were made to work in former residences. The continued existence of groups of adaptively reused older buildings, when viewed alongside newer, sleeker, purpose-built offices, speaks to the growth of the country music industry in Nashville over the last 60 years and to what the genre has achieved in terms of widespread popularity. It is music with a past, and thus relatable in unique ways to visitors who come to Nashville to seek out Music Row and identify with its songs and performers as part of their own personal histories. As Lynch notes, “It is the signs of the near past which we connect with our own continuity as a living person...” (Lynch 1972, 61). Music Row’s story of evolution and growth can be told through selective retention of elements of its built environment if it is approached as a temporal collage (Lynch 1972), particularly since traditional preservation approaches like National Register district listing or local historic districting are a difficult fit. Planning policies that link interpretive efforts with physical changes could help explain the area’s complex heritage to users and visitors.

Fortunately, the Metropolitan Planning Department’s efforts as of this writing to develop a new small area plan for Music Row are yielding draft recommendations that would support many of these characteristics. In concept, the policies in the *Music Row Vision Plan* (2019) would maintain variety of heights and intensity within the

area by stepping down from larger office buildings at the north end, through a transitional area with smaller-scale offices and supporting uses like bars and cafes, to the conservation zoning district where low-rise development on a residential scale would be maintained (Metropolitan Planning Department 2019). The framework for the plan also includes language about encouraging music industry-related uses and incentivizing preservation of certain “historically and culturally significant” buildings, perhaps through a transfer of development rights (TDR) program (Metropolitan Planning Department 2019, 48-49). Though the tailored zoning code that would be enacted to implement these recommendations is yet to be developed and would still require adoption by the planning commission and council, the policy direction of the Music Row plan addresses several key elements associated with the area’s sense of place: residential scale and architecture, continuity of music-related uses, preservation of historic properties, and variety. The test now is for the community to come together to develop consensus around steps to implement the vision plan and related strategies like appropriate tourism and economic development incentives.

#### Bells Bend

Sense of place in Bells Bend is characterized by an emphasis on the affective quality of this area of natural beauty and community social relationships. Its quiet and peaceful quality, linked to its geographic isolation from urbanization in Metro Nashville, and its openness and natural quality were prominent in responses of interview participants in this study, aligning with the visual and environmental

components of sense of place (McMahon 2010). Study results indicated that sense of place in Bells Bend also encompasses social and cultural elements, rounding out McMahon's four-part definition. A strong sense of community is expressed by the way many places in the image rating exercise were described as friendly and how interview participants mentioned various social rituals as part of their descriptions of the area's distinctiveness. This connectedness also extends into the past, as continuity of farming, land tenure, and rural lifeways emerged as another facet of the Bend's character.

The conservation plan developed by the organization that became the Bells Bend Conservation Corridor strategically recommends ways to open up knowledge of Bells Bend and its natural and cultural resources to a wider audience by framing the area as a resource for all Nashvillians. If Bells Bend is understood as a place that city dwellers are welcomed to experience nature, learn about farming and rural life, disconnect from urban hustle and bustle through outdoor recreation, and take a personal interest in where their food comes from, then preservation of its landscape, natural resources, and isolation becomes a goal shared with a much larger population. As one respondent observed, the more the area is known in greater Nashville, the more allies residents have in their conservation efforts (Interview #12).

The degree to which Bells Bend's sense of place is grounded in agricultural heritage points to the promotion of agriculture and education and interpretation of farm work and farm life as a focus of maintaining its sense of place. The conservation corridor organization links to local farms that run CSA programs from its website, and those farms are active in promoting their products at farmers markets, online



through website and social media presences, and in partnerships with local restaurants and other food and beverage producers (e.g., Bells Bend Farms 2018). Programming at Bells Bend Park further serves to educate the public about agriculture through a demonstration garden and an annual Farm Day festival. These activities maintain links between the area's identity and agriculture, even if fewer acres are in production today than in the past.

Land preservation for farming, wildlife and plant species habitat, and natural resources management is another emphasis of the conservation corridor plan and is similarly reflected in Bells Bend Park programming and interpretation. The park frequently offers guided hikes to see certain species of plants and animals. Members of the community have taken steps to preserve land, including farmland, for the long term through conservation easements held by the Land Trust for Tennessee.

Currently, 350 acres are so preserved, according to the Bells Bend Conservation Corridor organization (Bells Bend Conservation Corridor n.d., "Conservation Programs"). By maintaining land for conservation purposes inside and outside the park, the community increases its ability to maintain qualities strongly associated with its sense of place, including quiet and peacefulness, and natural characteristics.

Agricultural historian Sally McMurry notes there can be conflicts between agricultural land preservation programs and historic preservation, but in circumstances with smaller scale or part-time farm operations, an interest in agritourism, or an emphasis on natural resource conservation, there tends to be greater chance for land preservation programs to successfully integrate farmland and historic

buildings (McMurry 2016, 15-16). These kinds of farming are more typical in Bells Bend than large-scale operations.

Another aspect of heritage preservation dependent on land use decisions in this area involves archaeological preservation. The conservation corridor study recommended development of a predictive model as a tool to guide conservation efforts and future archaeological study as well as establishment of an archaeological survey requirement for new development in areas with a high potential for archaeological finds (Price and Coco [2007?], 58). While there is no city archaeological protection ordinance, the Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission has taken steps to protect archaeological resources within Bells Bend Park via the historic landmark overlay that requires local preservation commission review of proposed work and calls out archaeology as one of the aspects of historic significance to which it responds (MHZC Historic Landmark Overlays 2018). In recent years, the park has hosted an annual archaeology day in partnership with the Tennessee Council for Professional Archaeology. Educating the public about this important aspect of the area's long habitation should contribute to greater public awareness of the sensitivity of archaeological resources within the landscape and provide a fuller picture of its history of occupation and use.

Current zoning and policy, as reflected in the *Bordeaux-Whites Creek-Haynes Trinity Community Plan* (Metropolitan Planning Commission 2015/2017), last updated in 2017, anticipates this area will remain rural and residential. Land use policies in Bells Bend stipulate that the area will retain similar development characteristics with a small area of slightly more intense use in a "rural neighborhood

center” at the intersection of Old Hickory Boulevard and Ashland City Highway at the north end of the Bend. Due to slopes and floodplain or floodway, large areas of Bells Bend fall into conservation policy. Conservation policy is “intended to preserve environmentally sensitive land features through protection and remediation” (Metropolitan Planning Commission 2015/2017, 28). It is applied to areas like steep slopes, wetlands, floodway and floodplains, and rare animal habitats. The remainder of the Bend is planned for open space, which includes public parks and private land in conservation easements, rural maintenance, or single-family residential use along Old Hydes Ferry Pike. Rural maintenance policy is intended for uses like low-density residential and agriculture. The policy description notes new residential development should come in the form of conservation subdivisions (Metropolitan Planning Commission 2015/2017, 28). Land in Bells Bend is currently zoned AR2a, an agricultural zoning district allowing residences with a minimum two-acre lot (Metropolitan Planning Department, n.d.). Only AG, or agricultural zoning, requires larger lots in Metro Nashville’s zoning code, at five acres minimum. The two-acre minimum lot size still allows for a significant degree of subdivision, and it would not preserve tracts large enough for most agricultural activities. Thus, continuity of agricultural uses and large-scale natural conservation areas will likely require pairing existing zoning with the use of additional conservation tools or incentives to maintain the current level of natural environmental character in the area.

Finally, Bells Bend’s isolation from transportation networks contributes to how it maintains a sense of separation from the urban areas of Metro Nashville. At present, the city’s *Major and Collector Street Plan* does not propose new river

crossings or new connections to Old Hickory Boulevard (Metropolitan Planning Department, *Major and Collector Street Plan*, 2015/2017). Any change to the degree of transportation connectivity from Bells Bend to west Nashville's neighborhoods at its southern tip could have a dramatic effect on the area.

While local planning policies reflect an intention for Bells Bend to remain much as it is today, community members have taken important steps to define the qualities that they see most associated with the area's place identity by developing a consensus about what they value about their neighborhood in contrast to public and private development proposals and in the proactive development of a conservation corridor study. This community-led articulation of key characteristics has been linked to better preservation outcomes in other contexts. As Sies, Gournay, and Freestone observe, "[O]nce residents determine the tangible or intangible heritage they most value in their communities, they find ways to sustain it, frequently for decades" (2019, 9). The qualities are often associated with natural features and the persistence of practices like farming and outdoor recreation rather than specific historic properties, although some of the Bend's older and historic buildings emerged as places most associated with its sense of place in this study. With the amenity of the park providing a natural outlet for public engagement, interpretation of natural and cultural heritage is educating a wider population about the area's past. The park still has other heritage resources to build on, such as a future restoration of the Buchanan House and research and interpretation of its archaeological resources, which offer additional opportunities to tell the story of Bells Bend's cultural history. It serves as a focal point for heritage education as well as outdoor recreation and ecological

programming and will contribute to helping the community sustain a sense of place tied to the natural environment. Elsewhere in the Bend, land use choices that could shift the area away from its rural roots will depend largely on decisions made by individual landowners under current zoning and land use policies.

The community-generated nature of the local conservation plan indicates a certain level of consensus about what is most important to retain within the Bells Bend landscape. The organizations in the neighborhood have been able to achieve two of the benefits cited of the Massachusetts Heritage Landscape Inventory process, prioritization of important landscape features that are meaningful to local residents and validation of key issues for the planning process (Berg 2011, 40), without the assistance of a government-sponsored program. The establishment of a cohesive preservation vision through community involvement and initiative is likely to help Bells Bend sustain its distinctive character into the future, even though formal preservation tools like historic districting may play only a minor role in maintaining its connections to heritage.

### *Rural and Urban*

Music Row and Bells Bend are very different neighborhoods with contrasting senses of place and defining characteristics. One is urban, busy, and in a highly sought-after location next to downtown, two universities and other amenities that intensify current development pressure. The focus of Music Row's heritage associations began just over a half-century ago, and the area has experienced physical evolution ever since. Bells Bend, by contrast, is quiet, rural, isolated, and has a

history of continuity as well as a committed base of local activists who have shaped its recent development in favor of retention of rural and natural qualities. However, they have more in common than simply being within the confines of Metro Nashville. Both celebrate and seek to maintain continuity of activities that are deeply connected to the heritage of each place and intertwined with the place identities of those who live, work, or spend time there. Each has a few places that are or would be considered eligible for formal preservation recognition or protection programs among a larger group of others that might not meet such criteria but are equally important to the neighborhood's sense of place. And in both areas, retention of distinctive place characteristics connected to heritage in the view of those who know the neighborhoods will require use of a combination of tools from historic preservation, local government land use planning, education and interpretation, as well as incentives and tools brought by community-based partners.

Metro Nashville fortunately has a range of land use and preservation planning tools at the municipal level that can be directed at sustaining the sense of place of both case study areas. While Bells Bend has benefitted from interpretive work at Bells Bend Park, heritage-focused efforts on Music Row have so far been limited to private tours and historical markers and could be more fully integrated into planning strategies. The increased attention on Music Row's history that has accompanied the National Trust for Historic Preservation's involvement and the Metropolitan Planning Department's multi-year effort to develop a new small area plan for the district have focused community attention on what makes this place unique. Hopefully, that interest and dialogue can be channeled into forming a strong community consensus

around what aspects of the area are most essential to its sense of place, as Bells Bend community members have done through their community conservation plan. Each area contributes significantly to Nashville's identity and reflects its origins, growth, and recognition as a creative industry center and is worthy of the application of creative planning and preservation strategies to retain the meaningful associations rural life and the music industry have for the city's residents.

### Methodological Considerations

This project combined mixed research methods in an attempt to achieve a more holistic understanding of sense of place and how that concept relates to history and heritage in two case studies. Rather than extensively testing a single method, the combination of document-based research, field observation, survey, and interviews allowed resident and user perceptions to inform an understanding of what qualities contribute most to local character and what features and places are most associated with community heritage in the case study areas. This type of contextual understanding allows the diverse range of values that may be associated with place to emerge. Advancing that understanding is important in making planning decisions or reacting to development proposals that could affect historic environments (Townend and Whittaker 2011).

While the survey and interview portions of the study produced interesting qualitative information about how consistent residents' and users' perception of sense of place is in each case study area and the interplay of old and new in those valuations, the sample size is too small to be considered statistically significant in

quantitative terms. It is also impossible to characterize the group of respondents as representative of community demographics since personally identifiable information was purposefully left off the survey instrument in order to encourage responses by maintaining anonymity unless respondents volunteered contact information. Response rate can also be a challenge in any survey method, and this proved true in this study. In preservation planning, survey response rate might improve if the query were related to a specific planning intervention or development proposal and respondents felt that their input would count toward influencing a decision. It might also rise if a survey or input opportunity were organized or endorsed by a community organization so that members were encouraged to participate. This study would have been improved by earlier and more thorough cultivation of local contacts, particularly in Bells Bend, where three resident community organizations engage with issues related to planning, land conservation, and preservation. Though outreach brought the online survey to the attention of two, and perhaps all three, an endorsement or group distribution was not sought, and the nature of the survey distribution did not allow the researcher to see whether or not it was shared with all members of an organization. On Music Row, the recent dissolution of two organizations formed in the midst of the Studio A demolition threat, the Music Industry Coalition and the Music Row Neighborhood Association, meant that there was not an organizational point of contact for a group with a focus on Music Row as a location or neighborhood. The stakeholder group working with local planners on a small area plan for Music Row was informed of the survey and encouraged to participate. This may have led to greater congruity between the study results and recommendations in the vision plan



recently developed for Music Row if there were a high degree of crossover participation. An inherent challenge of using an electronic survey is reaching individuals and organizations that do not maintain an online presence. Participation in similar research might be increased by face-to-face interaction and recruitment, such as at community events and festivals, membership meetings, or in a public place.

Distribution of the surveys was carried out in a way that does not provide any information about the representativeness of the respondent pool, since survey links were originally shared by the researcher with contacts within the historic preservation field and local preservation agencies and organizations, among other personal contacts. Though participants were encouraged to share the survey link with others they knew who lived, worked, or spent time in the case areas, the limited response numbers show that this method did not reach as far as anticipated into populations familiar with the case study neighborhoods. Finally, it is possible that the bias of those responding, since they are likely to have had some connection to preservation organizations, may have influenced the results to magnify the importance of history, historic buildings, or other aspects of heritage to which they might be more sensitized than other residents or users.

These limitations may not mean that the methodological experimentation in this project is in vain. As planning consultants Stephen Townend and Ken Whittaker (2011) observe about the challenges of translating community values about heritage and the perception of sense of place, structured surveys designed for random distribution to yield statistically significant samples are subject to forces that could skew their results, and the pursuit of quantitative analysis could so limit queries as to

miss information about the meanings and significance residents and users attach to places. Instead, they propose that “any discursive or expressive representations,” ranging from written and spoken accounts to film and other media can be used as source material (71). They propose feedback in focus groups or public forums might be most useful for structured environmental review processes required by government regulation in the United Kingdom, but their suggestions about using open-ended responses that are then coded to discover patterns of meaning and relative significance have elements in common with the survey component of this study.

The open-ended survey questions yielded diverse responses about participant associations with sense of place and called attention to a number of features through the frequency with which certain elements of the built and natural environment were mentioned. The ease of collecting such data electronically and analyzing it in this format have advantages for working within the confines of project planning timetables, though it would be challenging to validate that respondents are members of a specific community if establishing such credentials were required. The image rating exercise, while focusing attention on certain characteristics that emerged as having associations with sense of place in the two case study areas, needs further refinement. Some of the polar quality pairs, such as *open – closed* and *varied – uniform*, required additional explanation from the researcher. Just as researchers have developed standard lexicons for discussing environmental qualities (Kasmar 1988), additional work might be focused on refining standard sets of terms that work well in discussing heritage in the environment. Even without the descriptions afforded by the polar quality pairs, posing questions with images about why participants associate

certain places with the neighborhood's sense of place or history is a useful tactic for researchers interested in capturing resident or user perspective on place. Images can focus attention and reaction, and an open-ended query offers an opportunity for participants to tell their own stories about what a place is, was, or means. The resulting narratives or visual information can be coded and aggregated to see if patterns of meaning emerge.

While there are precedents for consultative processes in planning decision-making related to heritage resources in the United States, such as the review process required by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (54 U.S.C. 306108), planners are not always equipped with tools to carry out the dialogue and public input aspects of those processes effectively. The development of methods using online tools, images, and other means of eliciting community feedback without first applying the filter of professional evaluation (or regulatory language) should be a goal for preservation planners working in both public and private spheres. This study tests a couple of those methods in ways that produced useful information about what aspects of local character are valued in these neighborhoods and why. That information, used alongside the professional evaluations required by some historic preservation programs, can help tailor management and treatment strategies so that they direct preservation efforts in ways that will address community values.

### *Preservation Practice and Sense of Place*

In order to take sense of place into account in management decisions about old and historic places, and to assess how elements of heritage contribute to a

community's sense of place, preservation planners need additional tools to understand resident and user experience of place. Without a grasp of how meaning is attached to a landscape by those who spend time there, professional evaluations of landscape features, buildings, and design are likely to miss information relevant to making planning decisions appropriate in neighborhood or community context. While critiques of contemporary historic preservation practice stress how professionals have influenced the types of places designated as historic or otherwise selected for government-sanctioned benefits or recognition (e.g., King 2009, 2011; Pannekoek 1998), professionals play a valuable facilitation role when applying their expertise to help match qualities communities say define their place with planning, historic preservation, and interpretive tools useful in sustaining those qualities. Existing laws, regulations, and planning systems can be a part of achieving community heritage preservation goals when they are employed thoughtfully, in ways that respect resident and user knowledge about the features that matter most.

In practice, preservation planners are faced with the question of how to be more responsive to community understanding of heritage and sense of place using the tools available. In historic properties evaluations, they can strive toward fuller recognition of association and feeling in assessing the integrity of properties under the National Register of Historic Places listing criteria (Michael, 2016). While some property types are more sensitive to changes in association or feeling, these elements of integrity are often treated as of secondary importance because they are more subjective. Guidance on applying the National Register criteria clarify that feeling or association must be accompanied by one or more of the other elements (location,

design, materials, workmanship, and setting) for a historic property to retain integrity (National Park Service 1997). Feeling relates to the overall impression that a historic property makes. “[Feeling] results from the presence of physical features that, taken together, convey the historic property’s character” (National Park Service 1997, 45). Association hinges on whether the property is still able to connect that character to physical evidence and on whether it still is the place where a historic event occurred or a pattern developed. These elements of integrity are responsive to a property’s historic significance, however, and certain aspects of integrity will be more important than others depending on why a property is considered important. Buildings significant for their architectural design or fine craftsmanship can tolerate less change in materials or workmanship than houses in a mill village considered significant for the story it tells about community planning or labor history, for instance.

Certain resources on Music Row show how feeling has implications beyond conveying a sense of the past. A connection with heritage can inspire the present where continuity of use has meaning for the community that values the historic property. A Nashville newspaper article illustrated this point when it profiled the success producer Dave Cobb had in garnering 12 Grammy nominations in 2019 for albums or songs he produced in National Register-listed Studio A (Rau 2019). In the article, Cobb describes how the history of the studio was an incentive to work there, and how he feels a connection to those who built the studio and worked there before. In this sense, feeling conveys a sense of participating in a creative community that is both past and present.

Assessing feeling and association offers opportunities to more fully explore a historic property's contributions to sense of place: what feeling does the community experience there? Is that experience of immersion in historical context dependent on factors or features that are not physically part of the property being assessed? Would a change in use alter feeling or association? How is the property valued in the community beyond its age or historical value? A potential modification to the guidance on application of feeling and association in the National Register evaluation procedure would be to include use as well as physical features in the definition of feeling and association. Does the persistence of historically associated uses of place, taken together with its physical features, convey the historic property's character? Is a place still recognizable in its physical features by the community as the place an event occurred or a pattern developed, and is it still used in a way that acknowledges or is shaped by that event or pattern? This is not to imply that changes in the use of historic properties significant for their architecture, for example, would be detrimental to integrity, but rather that existing National Register guidance could be moderately broadened to also encompass aspects of heritage for which physical intactness has less importance. For example, a festival site where structures have been reconfigured through the years might retain integrity of association and feeling if the changes contributed to the perpetuation of arts or cultural traditions that now incorporate new technologies. Whether the guidance on applying the eligibility criteria is changed or not, raising the profile of these two aspects of how historic places communicate their importance to those who value them could help balance the National Register's reliance on professional evaluations of physical form and historic significance. It

could also generate information for the future evaluation of planning proposals where sense of place has ties to heritage, including federal projects that must be assessed in terms of whether they could cause adverse effects (defined as changes that diminish the integrity of the historic property [36 CFR 800.5(a)(1)]) to historic properties to encourage better consideration of characteristics that contribute to sense of place.

The importance of place and the sense of personal meaning and connection to community that some places provide has filtered into preservation planning and advocacy efforts following publication of Dolores Hayden's influential book, *The Power of Place* (Hayden 1995) and other works that reveal the distance that sometimes exists between properties considered officially worthy of preservation, as in the "authorized heritage discourse" (Smith 2006), and those that have importance for collective memory and community identity but do not fit designation or protection criteria (e.g., Kaufman 2009).

The New York City-based initiative Place Matters, of which heritage conservation scholar Ned Kaufman was a founder, incorporates recognition of history alongside shared traditions and memories in recognizing places that are meaningful to New Yorkers and that contribute to making the city distinctive. This integrated approach to cultural heritage includes an identification effort, the Census of Places that Matter, that invites simple nominations from the public (Place Matters, "Mission," 2019). The organization uses this information to support educational efforts and advocacy aimed at ensuring places identified as meaningful are known and considered in planning and development. Other organizations have developed alternative heritage inventories based on public recognition of significant places. The

Massachusetts Heritage Landscape Inventory Program, started in 2001, works to “expand the parameters of historic surveys to encompass neglected resources, especially those that have not been addressed in traditional surveys, that are valued by the community, and that are potentially threatened” in part by asking participants to identify special places in their communities (Berg 2011, 30-32). The National Trust for Historic Preservation takes a similar approach in its social media campaign called This Place Matters, in which participants photograph themselves with places they care about and then post those images to Twitter or Instagram using the Trust’s #ThisPlaceMatters hashtag. (National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2019).

In encouraging members of the public to advocate for places to which they have an attachment, the Place Matters toolkit suggests three possible avenues for sustaining places: “preserving the structure, retaining longstanding use, and interpreting the story” (Place Matters, “Toolkit,” 2019). This represents an expansion of heritage management strategies over the preservation planning tools commonly available at the local level. Local preservation commissions often have the ability to require review of certain exterior physical changes to buildings within locally-designated districts. Commissions, especially those that have Certified Local Government status through the National Historic Preservation Act program jointly managed by state historic preservation offices and the National Park Service, also carry out surveys to identify historic properties in their jurisdictions. While commissions may conduct other programs like history education efforts or heritage-based events, interpretive work is less often standard practice, and programs focused on intangible heritage preservation are rarer still.



This is where Place Matters' toolkit approach offers a different practical paradigm for tailoring the heritage management strategy to qualities that mean the most to the users who ascribe value to a place: it can be physical preservation, sustaining distinctive uses, interpretation, or all three. The most responsive preservation strategy may need to be flexible, to accommodate a greater extent of physical change than a historic district might allow, and instead emphasize interpretation, as Hayden demonstrated through projects that brought the stories of women and minority populations into relief within the urban landscape (Hayden 1998). In that case the preservation planning conversation could consider how much and what kind of marking, referencing, or identifying could help sustain heritage values in a living environment. More recently, San Francisco has found ways to recognize places that define community identity in a series of cultural heritage planning efforts for neighborhoods associated with ethnic minorities and other constituencies underserved by traditional preservation practice (Buckley and Graves, 2016).

When preservation planning assumes that all roads to sustaining sense of place and place meanings flow through established designation or protection processes, it misses opportunities to be responsive to a broader range of heritage values. Mayes' work (2018) helps define a vocabulary to serve a broadened concept of preservation, or heritage conservation, focused on place identity and sense of place. Preservation practitioners have a choice of strategies to avoid being too limited in approach. The field can take steps to alter the structure and criteria of programs that have served as the foundation for preservation practice in the U.S., including the

National Historic Preservation Act, to encompass a wider range of heritage values, including elements that are more intangible, or it can use existing programs focused on the preservation of the built and archaeological environments, like the National Register, as a complement to other heritage conservation strategies focused on landscapes, sustaining distinctive uses of place, identifying and preserving intangible heritage, or interpreting history and heritage in ways that are meaningful to communities. While some scholars have expressed anxiety about preservation's relevance should it not be able to tackle all of these heritage concerns as a discipline (Allison and Allison 2008), a practical course probably combines both ways of modernizing the practice. Preservation can function as a component of planning while connecting its work with the tools related disciplines offer and can find alternative means of recognizing and sustaining places that may not meet the criteria for listing in register programs. At the same time, practitioners and policymakers should work to assess how the official benefits of designation, protection, and incentive programs run by units of government are distributed. Integrating new tools may require preservation planning to embrace strategies drawn from the social sciences (Wells 2015), the arts and placemaking, land use planning, and economic development.

Making advances in preservation of sense of place and broader heritage values in the built and natural environment will require preservation planners to become more comfortable with imprecision in terms of strategies that are not purely regulatory (Allison and Allison 2008). Some strategies may depend more on education and persuasion, as planners and urban historians James Buckley and Donna Graves find with San Francisco's experiment with a social heritage district (Buckley

and Graves 2016). Solutions may need to be tailored to the unique circumstances of a particular area or neighborhood, and they may lead to the creation of policies or tools new to the planning jurisdiction, as is occurring in Nashville through a proposal for a Music Row Cultural Industry District (Brackett and Gross 2016). Tools are needed to support assessment of heritage values and elements contributing to sense of place, community involvement in decision making, and evaluation of the effects of development proposals and planning policies on historic places and community character, recognizing that solutions may be location specific. This study represents one attempt to create and test methodologies for the first of these three operations.

### Conclusion

The parameters of this study included case examples where history and heritage were likely to be linked to activities or practices more than architecture or design. The cases, therefore, did not fit neatly into historic preservation protection strategies that turn on designation criteria emphasizing physically intact remnants of past periods of significant events or patterns in development. The results of the study showed residents and users of both Bells Bend and Music Row mentioned uses—historic, present, and those that bridge the divide between past and present, as part of their neighborhood’s sense of place. Both case study areas have experienced threats to place identity based on changes to land use and have sought to manage those threats through local planning processes as well as efforts led by community or national non-profit organizations.

Historic preservation practice has not ignored land use. Land use is interwoven with history and community heritage through its relationship to longstanding uses, traditional practices, and the production of urban form. But there is space to make cognizance of land use and land use planning decisions a better integrated part of planning for the historic environment, as well as to integrate consideration of heritage values into land use planning that is responsive to other community needs while sustaining sense of place. Preservation professionals and advocates should understand how land use is regulated and how policy decisions are made, often far in advance of specific development proposals, and how those decisions are balanced on scales at the city or regional level. When heritage, including historic places and intangible heritage that contributes to sense of place, is treated as a resource in planning processes, informed decisions can be made about its role in place identity and how the community will make use of its past. To inform those decisions, neighborhoods or whole communities can and should articulate what they see as the essential elements of sense of place in *their* place. Ideally, public planning processes will provide room for dialogue between planners and users of place, but when neighborhoods take the initiative to define the essential qualities of their own sense of place, they are even better equipped to advocate for the meaningful retention of local character. Planning policies, however, cannot guide or control every quality that contributes to sense of place or that maintains a community's meaningful connection to its past, nor are all preservation planning tools appropriate to all expressions of heritage. Into this mix must step thoughtful planners and people who care about their places to find ways integrate community heritage in the environment

in ways the community finds meaningful. That process begins with methods to listen to those who value history and heritage in their surroundings.

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