



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

1995-2010

ELISABET NEY MUSEUM COMPREHENSIVE RESTORATION MASTER PLAN

and

ELISABET NEY MUSEUM BUILDING, ADA AND LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT #7551.002

1995

Community input from residents of the Hyde Park neighborhood in which the Elisabet Ney Museum is located, teachers from the Austin Independent School District, University of Texas professors and professional staff, Museum supporters and the general public recommended a comprehensive restoration of the former 1907 studio of Elisabet Ney, *Formosa*, to restore the historical integrity of the Museum as the former studio of Elisabet Ney and to enhance the Museum's programming for the public, as the first priority in a long-range plan for the Elisabet Ney Museum.

1997

Residents of the Hyde Park neighborhood and the Texas Fine Arts Association, today Arthouse, an organization closely associated with the Elisabet Ney Museum in its early years, participated in the development of the *Elisabet Ney Museum Historic Landscape Report (Report)* as a first step toward the comprehensive restoration of the former studio of Elisabet Ney. The scope of the restoration of *Formosa*, personally designed by Ney, included the 2.5-acre native Texas landscape, barn and servant's housing that comprised an important part of Ney's design and use of *Formosa* from 1892 until her death in 1907. The *Report* was funded by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The National Trust commended the *Report* for its thoroughness and quality.

2002

The Austin community, Hyde Park neighborhood residents and area university professors helped identify local funding sources and possible funding opportunities in development of a preliminary fundraising plan made possible by a grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation for the comprehensive restoration of Elisabet Ney's former American studio, *Formosa*.

2003

Professors from the Graduate Program in Historic Preservation of The University of Texas School of Architecture at Austin reviewed the City of Austin's application for a grant from the Save America's Treasures program of the Office of the United States President supporting a comprehensive restoration of the former American studio of Elisabet Ney. The application was approved by the Save America's Treasures program and a \$250,000 grant was awarded to the City of Austin for the restoration.

The Austin community and Hyde Park neighbors were invited to a public reception at the Museum for the announcement by U.S. Representative Lloyd Doggett of the designation of the Elisabet Ney Museum as an Official Project of the Save Americas Treasures program and the award of \$250,000 to the City of Austin for the restoration of Elisabet Ney's former American studio, *Formosa*. Major Austin media covered the announcement.

2004

Articles by the Museum were placed in the Hyde Park neighborhood monthly newsletter announcing additional grants from the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Texas Historical Commission supporting the restoration of Elisabet Ney's former studio, *Formosa*.

2006

Ney supporters from across Austin, Hyde Park, the state and nation helped place the Elisabet Ney Museum restoration on the 2006 bond. The citizens of Austin passed the bond issue including the Elisabet Ney Museum.

2007

The Austin community was actively involved in the development and review of the *Elisabet Ney Museum Comprehensive Restoration Master Plan* as follows:

Development of Master Plan

I. Discussions were held with Arthouse (formerly Texas Fine Arts Association) and the Violet Crown Garden Club, two organizations historically associated with the Museum, regarding plans to restore the former studio of Elisabet Ney including Ney's native Texas landscape and other features of the studio that had been removed over time.

II. Residents of the Hyde Park neighborhood in which the Elisabet Ney Museum is located were involved in the development of the *Comprehensive Restoration Master Plan* through the following outreach:

Presentation to the Hyde Park Neighborhood Association Prior to Beginning the Master Plan

The Museum gave a slide presentation to the May 2007 monthly meeting of the Hyde Park Neighborhood Association prior to initiating the *Master Plan* to detail the project for the Museum's neighbors and to provide them an early opportunity for comment. The presentation included:

- project intent – restoration of Elisabet Ney’s former studio, *Formosa* (1892-1907);
- project scope – restoration of the former studio of Elisabet Ney with accommodations for the day-to-day needs of the Museum including access, interpretation, sustainability, maintainability and safety;
- slides of Elisabet Ney’s personal photographs of her Austin, Texas studio, *Formosa*;
- professional background of the consultants who had been selected on the basis of qualifications as required by State law and who had been officially approved by the U.S. Department of Interior and Texas Historical Commission as required of the agencies’ grant support for the project;
- list of the funding sources for the *Master Plan*; and
- explanation of the City of Austin development and review process.

Interim Reports to Hyde Park Neighborhood Association Monthly Meetings.

Updates on the Hyde Park Listserve. Work with Hyde Park Landscape Architect.

The Museum

- reported on the progress of the development of the *Master Plan* to two Hyde Park Neighborhood Association monthly meetings. One report included the schedule of public briefings for the project and encouragement to the neighbors to participate in the review.
- posted the following documents on the Hyde Park listserv:
 1. schedule of the public briefings on the *Master Plan*;
 2. Executive Summaries on the *Master Plan* that had been distributed at the public briefings; and
 3. announcement that the *Master Plan* was on display in the Museum for additional community review and comment.

In addition, the landscape preservation architect on the *Master Plan* worked with a neighborhood resident to incorporate an offer from the Hyde Park Beautification Committee into the restoration of the Ney landscape.

Review of Master Plan

A four-month Community Review on the Master Plan was organized with the Austin Parks and Recreation Department Director’s Office and Cultural Affairs Division administration to enable the community to provide feedback on the *Master Plan* for consideration before it was sent to the U.S. Department of Interior and Texas Historical Commission for required review, approval and completion.

The Community Review included the following:

Briefings on Master Plan to Community

Four briefings on the *Master Plan* were given to the:

- Austin Parks and Recreation Department Board;
- Historic Landmark Commission;
- Elisabet Ney Museum Save America’s Treasures Restoration Campaign Committee; and
- General Public.

Note - The *Master Plan* preservation architect and preservation landscape architect gave the briefings with the exception of the presentation to the Austin Parks and Recreation Department Board to which the consultants were unable to present due to a scheduling conflict.

Postings were placed in the Austin media as well as on the Hyde Park neighborhood listserv inviting the community to the briefings. In addition, personal invitations were sent to the following organizations associated with the Museum and its history:

- Arthouse
- Violet Crown Garden Club
- Heritage Society of Austin
- Austin History Center Association
- Elisabet Ney Museum Save America's Treasures Restoration Campaign Committee
- Preservation Texas.

Display of Draft Master Plan in Elisabet Ney Museum for Three Months

The *Master Plan* was displayed in the Elisabet Ney Museum from October through December 2007 for additional community review and comment. Notices of the display were posted in the Austin media and on the Hyde Park neighborhood listserv. The Museum's visitors during this period were personally advised of the display.

Meeting with Three Hyde Park Residents Opposed to the Restoration of the Elisabet Ney Museum Landscape to the Design of Elisabet Ney

A meeting with three residents of Hyde Park unhappy with the restoration of the Elisabet Ney Museum landscape to the design of the former studio of Elisabet Ney was held in November 2007. The opinions of the three neighbors were shared with the Department of Public Works Project Manager on the *Master Plan*, the *Master Plan* landscape preservation architect and the senior management of the Austin Parks and Recreation Department for consideration.

Presentation to Hyde Park Neighborhood Association

The Museum presented the draft *Master Plan* to the January monthly meeting of the Hyde Park Neighborhood Association.

Austin Community Reception to Master Plan

The *Elisabet Ney Museum Comprehensive Restoration Master Plan* was well received by the Austin community including the community at large, professors from area universities, preservationists and Museum supporters with the exception of a few residents of the Hyde Park neighborhood in which the Elisabet Ney Museum is located.

As noted, the objections to the landscape restoration registered by the few residents of the neighborhood were shared with the related City bodies directly associated with the restoration. While the views of the residents were fully considered, the City of Austin was unable to modify the *Master Plan* to the residents' wishes due to the requirement to comply with the standards and guidelines of The Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* in the care of the Elisabet Ney Museum and the City of Austin's contractual agreements with the U.S. Department of the Interior, Texas Historical Commission and National Trust for Historic Preservation to restore the Elisabet Ney Museum as the former studio of Elisabet Ney.

Aside from these few residents, no other objections were encountered to the *Master Plan* from other residents of the Hyde Park neighborhood, the Austin community or the City of Austin boards and commissions. In a presentation to the Hyde Park Neighborhood Association monthly meeting in January 2008, the objections by the same few neighbors were raised again. Other neighbors who expressed thanks and appreciation for the restoration as presented in the meeting were applauded by the audience.

Approval of Master Plan by U.S. Department of Interior and Texas Historical Commission

The Master Plan was approved by the U.S. Department of Interior and Texas Historical Commission for conformance with The Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* as required by the Museum's landmark designations and the agencies' grant support of the project. The Department of Interior and Texas Historical Commission commended the *Master Plan* for its thoroughness and quality.

2008

Long-time Museum supporters and residents of Hyde Park active in the neighborhood were consulted on the proposed scope for the Elisabet Ney Museum Building, Landscape and ADA Improvements Capital Improvement Project (CIP) that included subgrade waterproofing of the historic building, redesign of the ADA access to the Museum and partial restoration of the landscape of Elisabet Ney. The scope was based on priority recommendations in the Master Plan vetted by the community and the work that could be accomplished with the available funding.

The CIP was formally announced on the Hyde Park listserv.

2009

An announcement of the date of the Austin Historic Landmark Commission review of the Elisabet Ney Museum Building, Landscape and ADA Improvements Capital Improvement Project (CIP) was posted on the Hyde Park neighborhood listserv.

The Austin Historic Landmark Commission approved the Ney CIP.

The Austin City Council approved the Ney CIP.

The Ney CIP plans were presented to a Hyde Park Neighborhood Association monthly meeting.

A community meeting on the Ney CIP was held with presentations by the Project Consultants.

A six-page summary of the Ney CIP community meeting was posted on the Hyde Park listserv.

Three onsite meetings attended by a small number of Hyde Park residents opposed to the restoration of the Elisabet Ney Museum landscape to the design of Elisabet Ney were held with Parks senior management and the Public Works CIP Project Manager.

2010

The Austin Parks and Recreation Department Director met with Hyde Park residents supporting restoration of Ney's Vegetable Garden in the CIP.

The Austin Parks and Recreation Department Director met with Hyde Park residents opposing the restoration of the landscape of Elisabet Ney.

A community meeting to allow the local neighbors who oppose the plans to restore the Elisabet Ney Museum to the former studio of Elisabet Ney was held for them to present their case against the landscape restoration. The landscape preservation architect on the Museum's *Master Plan* participated on video feed from Paris where she had been asked to speak for UNESCO at a conference on historic urban landscapes.

Prepared by the Austin Parks and Recreation Department, August, 2010