

# GUIDE TO HISTORIC DESIGNATION



## I HISTORIC DESIGNATION PROCESS

Nominations for local historic structure or historic site designation, or requests to rescind a designation, shall be made as follows:

- a. The owner of a property may nominate that property for designation at any time by submitting a completed nomination form and any appropriate documentation.
- b. Any member(s) of the Historic Preservation Commission may nominate a property for designation if the member is of the opinion that the property may meet the criteria listed below. A completed nomination form and any appropriate documentation must be submitted.

For purposes of this ordinance, a local historic structure or historic site designation may be placed on any site, natural or improved, including any building, improvement or structure located thereon, or any area of particular historic, architectural or cultural significance to the City of Platteville such as historic structures or sites which meet the following criteria:

1. Exemplify or reflect the broad cultural, political, economic or social history of the nation, state or community; or
2. Are identified with historic personages or with important events in national, state, or local history; or
3. Embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type or specimen inherently valuable for a study of a period, style, method of construction, or of indigenous materials or craftsmanship; or
4. Are representative of the notable work of a master builder, designer or architect who influenced his age; or
5. Have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important to prehistory or history.

Designation of Local Historic Structures and Local Historic Sites.

1. Upon receipt of a nomination described above, the Commission shall, after notice, schedule a public hearing to consider the designation of local historic structures and local historic sites, or to rescind such designation or recommendation. At least ten (10) days prior to such hearing, the Commission shall notify the owners of record, as listed in the office of the City of Platteville's assessor, who are owners of property in whole or in part situated within two hundred (200) feet of the boundaries of the property affected.
2. The Commission shall then conduct such public hearing and, in addition to the notified persons, may hear expert witnesses. The Commission may conduct an independent investigation into the proposed designation or rescission. Within ten (10) days after the close of the public hearing, the Commission may, after application of the criteria listed above, recommend to the Common Council the designation of the property as either a local historic structure, or a local historic site, or recommend rescinding the designation.
3. The Common Council, upon receipt of the recommendation from the Historic Preservation Commission, shall either designate or reject the local historic structure or local historic site, or rescind such a designation. If the owner of the property is against the designation or rescission, such action shall not become effective except by the favorable vote of three-fourths (3/4) of the entire membership of the Common Council. After the designation or rescission has been made, notification shall be sent to the property owner or owners. Notification shall also be given to Platteville's Plan Commission.

## **II IMPACTS OF HISTORIC DESIGNATION**

### **Historic Preservation Commission Approval Required**

An owner or person in charge of a local historic structure, local historic site or structure within a local historic district shall not reconstruct, alter or demolish all or any part of the exterior of such property or construct any improvement upon such designated property or properties or cause or permit any such work to be performed upon such property or demolish such property unless a Certificate of Appropriateness has been granted by the Historic Preservation Commission. The Building Inspector shall not issue a permit for any such work until a Certificate of Appropriateness has been approved by the Commission. Demolition of such property shall also require approval by the Plan Commission and the Common Council.

Ordinary building maintenance and other work that involves repairs to existing features of a historic structure or site, or the replacement of elements of a structure or site with pieces similar in appearance may be undertaken without the approval of the Commission. A Certificate of Appropriateness is still required for this work; however, the work shall be approved by the Building Inspector or Community Planning and Development Director as designees of the Commission. The types of projects that can be approved by these designees is described below. Unless the Commission or the designee(s) approves a Certificate of Appropriateness, a building permit shall not be issued for any such work.

### **Staff Approval Allowed**

According to Section 27.04(B)(5) of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, the Building Inspector or Community Planning & Development Director, as designees of the Commission, may issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the following types of work to historic structures without Commission approval. When reviewing the projects listed below, the designees shall use the Standards for Rehabilitation & Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings as a guide to determine appropriate methods and materials to complete the work. Any time there is a question regarding interpretation of this policy, or interpretation of the standards and guidelines, the proposed work shall be submitted to the Commission for approval.

#### **Exterior Masonry:**

1. Cleaning of masonry according to approved methods.
2. Repointing mortar joints using mortar that is similar to the original in strength, composition, color, texture and hardness. The width and profile of the mortar joints are maintained.
3. Limited replacement of bricks or other masonry features if the same kind of material, or a compatible material, is used.
4. Repainting of historically painted surfaces does not require Commission approval if the appropriate colors are chosen, as described in the Painting section of this document.
5. Brick shall not be painted or coated with other materials such as stucco when such masonry has historically been unpainted or uncoated.
6. Replacement of veneer concrete foundation coating with veneer stone.
7. Use approved methods to prevent water damage to masonry.
8. Concrete shall not be used as a substitute for mortar in rock foundations.

#### **Building Exterior-Wood:**

1. Retain and preserve wood features that are important to the historic character of the building.
2. Materials used in exterior repairs shall duplicate original wood in texture and appearance.

3. Use approved methods to prevent water damage to wood.

**Building Exterior-Metal:**

1. Retain and preserve metal features that are important to the historic character of the building.
2. Cleaning of metal surfaces according to approved methods.
3. Use approved methods to prevent water damage to metal.

**Building Exterior-Roofs:**

1. Re-roofing that maintains or restores the historic character of the building's roof.
2. Re-roofing that does not change roof shape, or remove or cover any decorative features of the roof or cover any portions of the building facade.
3. Chimneys not visible from the street or other public use area may be removed. Metal chimneys are prohibited.
4. Use the appropriate roofing material, such as slate, wood, clay tile or metal, according to the original historic character of the building.
5. Re-roofing may be done with asphalt, fiberglass or other rectangular composition shingles similar in appearance to 3-in-1-tab asphalt shingles when such materials do not affect the historic character of the building.
6. Re-roofing that does not involve the addition of features such as air conditioning, skylights, decks, terraces, dormers, solar collectors or other items readily visible.
7. Rubberized membranes, rolled roofing, tar-and-gravel, and other similar roofing materials may be used on flat or slightly sloped roofs.

**Building Exterior-Windows:**

1. Use methods acceptable for rehabilitation of existing historic windows.
2. Repairs to existing historic window frames, sashes and surrounding trim, such as caulking, weatherstripping, patching and splicing, reglazing, and replacement of broken glass.
3. Replacement windows that fill the masonry or rough-framed opening and the features of the new window match those originally installed in the building.
4. If the window is being proposed as a replacement for a non-original window, then the appropriate style for the window shall be based on the style of other original windows on the building, or on historic photos of the building, if available. When neither of these options are available for comparison, the replacement window should be based on the style of original windows used in other similar buildings in Platteville.
5. The addition of storm windows where none existed originally is allowed as part of a replacement window unit. Storm windows must be painted or stained. Raw aluminum shall require Commission approval.

**Building Exterior-Entrances and Porches:**

1. Rehabilitation of entrances and porches using acceptable methods that maintain or restore original features.
2. Storm door designs of wood and glass to match the original design on the building are encouraged. Storm doors of simple design with no stylistic reference may also be used. Storm doors with metal grills may be approved if they blend with the style of the building.
3. Storm doors must be painted or stained. Raw aluminum shall require Commission approval.

**Building Site:**

1. Use approved methods to prevent water damage to rock foundation walls. Examples are the maintenance or addition of gutters and downspouts, installation of drain tile along the building foundation and providing adequate site drainage.
2. Rehabilitation of features that are not missing such as walks, paths, roads, driveways and parking areas.

**Re-siding:**

Re-siding that replaces or covers clapboards or non-original siding on historic buildings originally sided with clapboards is allowed provided that the new siding imitates the width of the original clapboard siding to within one (1) inch and that all architectural details including, but not limited to, window trim, wood cornices, and ornament either remain uncovered or are duplicated exactly in appearance. If more than one layer of siding exists on the building, all layers except the first must be removed before the new siding is applied. If insulation is applied under the new siding, all trim must be built up so that it projects from the new siding to the same extent it did with the original siding.

**Painting:**

Painting a building or a building component within the Main Street Commercial Historic District does not require approval or the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness if the paint color is chosen from a historic color palette. Painting using other colors, and the painting of a building or portion of a building that has never previously been painted, requires Commission approval. For example, a request to paint a brick building that has never previously been painted requires approval of the Commission and the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Painting a building or a building component on other locally-designated properties outside the Main Street Commercial Historic District does not require Commission approval if the building or building component is being repainted the same color, or if the paint color is chosen from a historic color palette. Painting using other colors requires Commission approval.

**General Repair and Replacement:**

Repairs to, or limited replacement of, building materials and building components if the work uses the same materials, or compatible substitute materials, and provided that the work does not substantially change the exterior appearance of the structure or site.

**III COMMON QUESTIONS REGARDING HISTORIC DESIGNATION**

**What is historic designation?**

Designation means that the City of Platteville officially recognize a property as being significant to the community and State due to its historical associations, its architectural features or both.

**Does historic designation of a property have any benefits for the owner?**

Yes, designation brings many benefits.

Historic designation improves property values and protects the value of your investment. Real estate experts have found that historic designation of a property increases the salability of a building. Historic buildings tend to attract a wider market and a higher selling price than do non-historic properties.

Historic designation of a group of properties can help protect your neighborhood against inappropriate development, preserving the character of its architecture and its quality of life.

Historic designation may improve your environment, motivating residents to sponsor neighborhood clean-up and other beautification projects.

If you have restored your house, historic designation will protect your work; it can provide the assurance that future owners will preserve what you have accomplished.

As the owner of a historic property, you would be able to receive free technical assistance from the staff and board members of the Platteville Historic Preservation Commission. They can save valuable time and money by advising you on where to locate materials and contractors sensitive to the historic character of your property and how to achieve your home improvement goals.

Historic designation reflects pride in the character of neighborhoods and a desire on the part of the city and its residents to protect their assets.

Historic designation is an important planning tool for the city, a way to improve the quality of life, and a means to protect neighborhoods from unmanaged change.

Because the review process involves public comment, private citizens are given a voice in development affecting their own neighborhoods.

**Does it cost anything to designate a property?**

No. Historic designation honors properties. You do not have to pay for it.

**Will historic designation raise my property taxes?**

No. A historically designated property is not taxed differently from a non-historic property. Improvements to a designated property are considered the same as improvements to a non-historic building for the purposes of taxation.

**In addition to providing guidelines for the creation of Local Historic Districts, what else does the Historic District Ordinance do?**

The Ordinance sets forth guidelines for building alterations and new construction on, or near, historic buildings or districts, and creates a review process to ensure that these guidelines are applied. It also establishes the membership of the Commission and the procedures by which they perform their work.

**Is an owner of historic property required to restore it or to get permission for ordinary maintenance?**

Owners are not required to make any alterations or changes to historic property, nor is permission necessary for ordinary maintenance. Owners of historic property should be aware, however, that some common work items that impact the exterior appearance do require approval and the issuance of a building permit. If you are uncertain about permit requirements, contact the Building Inspection Department.

**What types of alterations require review by the HPC?**

The HPC reviews any alterations or repairs to the exterior of the property that would result in an irreversible change in the design, materials, or outward appearance of the structure.

**Do interior alterations require HPC review?**

No.

**Am I required to undo changes made to my property before it was designated?**

No. Property owners are not required to correct or remove alterations or construction done prior to the time their property was designated as historic.

### **How do I obtain permission from the HPC to alter my property?**

Before obtaining a building permit, the Building Inspector will inform you if approval is required, and guide you through the approval process. If your proposed alterations are exempt from HPC review, the Staff will issue a Certificate of Appropriateness and a building permit. If your alterations are not exempt, you must apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness from the HPC. You will be asked to discuss your plans with members of the HPC at a monthly public meeting. (If you do not wish to appear at the public meeting, you may appoint someone, including your contractor or the Staff, to take your place.) If the HPC finds the proposed changes compatible with the historic character of your property, it will issue a Certificate of Appropriateness. The HPC may also issue a Certificate of Appropriateness on the condition that you modify your plans according to its recommendations.

### **What is a Certificate of Appropriateness?**

A Certificate of Appropriateness is a permit issued by the HPC that allows you to proceed with alterations to your property and receive a building permit.

### **Is there a filing fee for the Certificate of Appropriateness?**

No.

### **If I am planning alterations to my property, when should I contact the HPC?**

It is best to contact the Staff of the HPC as soon as you have an idea of what alterations you would like to make to the exterior of your property that are visible from a public way. The Staff is knowledgeable about historic properties, architecture and contractors experienced in working on older buildings, and can save you time and money achieving your goals.

### **Can the HPC assist me in renovating my historic property?**

Yes. The Commission is comprised of knowledgeable people in many different fields. As such, they offer professional advice, practical information, and pertinent references about materials and techniques used in historic preservation and restoration. The Commission's Staff will also provide technical assistance, help you complete the permit application, answer questions, and direct you to valuable resources needed for work on your property. If your income level qualifies, you will also be eligible for one of the City's housing improvement programs.

### **What happens if the HPC denies my request for a Certificate of Appropriateness?**

The HPC will tell you at its meeting, and will recommend how to modify the proposed changes. The HPC will also identify sources of additional assistance and information to help you modify your plans appropriately. The Staff is also available for additional technical assistance and advice.

### **Can I appeal a denial of a Certificate of Appropriateness?**

Yes. You may appeal to the Platteville City Council.

### **Where can I learn more about historic preservation in Platteville?**

Our website, [www.platteville.org](http://www.platteville.org) has a downloadable version of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, our Design Guidelines, as well as many public education materials and links to other relevant websites. Also, you can call our staff members at (608)348-9741 with any questions: Joe Carroll, Community Planning & Development Director or Ric Riniker, Building Inspector.