



Ninth Street Historic Park

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We hope we helped!

We hope this brochure answered some of your questions about owning a historic property. For over 40 years, Historic Denver, Inc. has been integral part in preserving buildings and neighborhoods like yours. It is our mission to be a resource for the thousands of citizens who are the stewards of our city. To support educational efforts like this or to become a member of Historic Denver, Inc, a 501c(3) non-profit, please visit our website at www.historicdenver.org.



OWNER'S MANUAL For Historically Designated Homes & Buildings



Historic Designation: What Does it Mean to Me?

You are receiving this brochure because your property is either a locally designated landmark, is located in one of Denver's local historic districts or because you have expressed interest in learning more about historic designation.



We have included a list of important resources meant to help you take care of your historic home.

We hope that you keep this brochure with your other important household documents and reference it when you are planning exterior changes to your property.

To check if your building

is locally designated or if you live in a designated historic district, visit www.denvergov.org, and click on 'Neighborhood Information' and then on 'Historic District/Landmark Preservation'.



By owning a designated building you are a steward of Denver's heritage. Living in a historic building is the best of both worlds—you can celebrate historic character while enjoying the benefits of modern living.

Historic Denver, a private non-profit, has partnered with the City of Denver's Landmark Preservation Commission to provide helpful information concerning designation and the processes required when making changes to your building. We hope to debunk common misconceptions and clarify the processes, benefits and responsibilities that are part of owning a designated home.

The city's preservation program recognizes the need for contemporary and economical use of historic buildings, and the design review process was put in place to balance the historic qualities with the demands of today. Many successful projects have resulted from the collaboration of the Landmark Preservation Commission and property owners, and the more you know about the process before beginning your project, the simpler it will be. >>>

What Are the Benefits of Landmark Designation and Preservation?

Whether designated on the National Register, State Register or as a Local Landmark, you can benefit from owning a designated structure.



Benefits include:

- Honoring your building's place in Denver history
- Local historic districts protect owners' investments to a greater degree compared to similar areas that are not in a local historic district.
- Ensuring the protection of your building's character for future generations
- Qualifying for the State Income Tax Credit for Historic Preservation

Additional benefits may apply in certain circumstances, such as:

- Eligibility to compete for funding from the State Historical Fund, particularly if your building houses a non-profit or demonstrates broad public benefit
- Potentially qualifying for a Federal Investment Tax Credit if your building is an income-producing property
- Access to Landmark Preservation Commission staff for their guidance on creating sensitive alterations if your structure is designated at the local level

National, State and Local Designation: What's the Difference?

There are three types of landmark designation, each put in place to honor a building's historical, architectural or geographical value. A building can be listed on just one or all three levels. This brochure will focus mainly on local designation, because it is the only level of designation that requires review when alterations are made, but we want you to know a little about all three.

1

The National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is managed by the National Park Service in conjunction with the State Historic Preservation Office. Unless a property is exceptionally significant, a structure must be at least 50 years old to be considered. Listing your building on the National Register recognizes its significance, but does not provide any protection from demolition or alteration. Buildings listed on the National Register are eligible for tax credits for rehabilitation projects. For more information, visit www.nps.gov.

2

Colorado State Register of Historic Properties

The State Register is managed by the Colorado Historical Society's Preservation Office. Properties listed on the National Register are automatically listed on the State Register. Buildings can also be listed separately on the State Register. Like the National Register, properties must be at least 50 years old to be considered, are not protected from demolition or alteration, but may be eligible for the State Income Tax Credit. In Denver, such projects are reviewed by the Denver Landmark Preservation Commission. For more information, please visit www.denvergov.org/preservation >>>

3

Local Landmark Designation

In Denver, local landmarks and historic districts are regulated by the city of Denver’s Landmark Preservation Commission. The city ratified the Landmark Preservation Ordinance in 1967. Since then, over 300 individual landmarks and nearly 50 historic districts have been designated. Designation can apply to a single structure or a district.

A historic district designation considers the value of a collection of buildings, rather than just one. Buildings within the district are distinguished as ‘contributing’ or ‘non-contributing.’ Contributing buildings were present during the district’s period of significance. Non-contributing buildings are located within the district boundaries but were constructed outside the period of significance or are no longer recognizable as such.

The Landmark Preservation Ordinance gives the City of Denver the authority to:

- Designate, preserve, protect, enhance and perpetuate outstanding buildings;
■ Foster civic pride;
■ Protect and enhance the city’s attraction to tourists and visitors;
■ Promote the use of outstanding historical or architectural structures or districts for the education, stimulation and welfare of the people of the city;
■ Promote good urban design; and
■ Encourage ownership and utilization of historic buildings.

Locally designated buildings and contributing buildings in a historic district may be eligible for the State Income Tax Credit. In Denver, applications are reviewed by the Denver Landmark Commission. For more information, please visit www.denvergov.org/preservation

What Makes a Building or District Eligible for Local Designation?

According to Denver’s Landmark Preservation Ordinance, a building or district may be designated at the local level if it meets at least one criterion in two of the three following categories:

1. History: Be 30 years or older and have extraordinary importance and:

- Have a direct association with the development of the city, state or nation;
■ Be the site of a significant historic event; or
■ Have direct and substantial association with a person or group who had influence on society.

2. Architecture: To have architectural significance, the structure or district shall:

- Have design quality and integrity, and embody distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style;
■ Be a significant example of the work of a recognized architect or master builder;
■ Contain elements of architectural design, engineering, materials, craftsmanship or artistic merit which represent a significant or influential innovation; or
■ Portray the environment of a group of people or physical development of an area in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style.

3. Geography: To have geographical significance, the structure or district shall:

- Have a prominent location or be an established, familiar and orienting visual feature of the contemporary city;
■ Promote understanding and appreciation of the urban environment by means of distinctive physical characteristics or rarity; or
■ Make special contribution to Denver’s distinctive character.



What changes can I make to my locally designated property?

Living in a designated home doesn't mean you cannot update some of the building's dated elements. Acceptable projects include compatible additions, alterations, rehabilitation and restoration. However, if your building is a locally designated landmark or in a historic district you are required to have proposed changes that affect the exterior of your property reviewed and approved by the Landmark Preservation Commission (LPC).



The rear addition to this designated landmark is successful because it is sensitive to the design of the original house. It went through city review in 2004.

What is the LPC?

The Landmark Preservation Commission (LPC) is responsible for “designating, preserving, enhancing, and perpetuating structures or districts of architectural, historical, or geographical significance within the City”. The LPC is comprised of nine members who are appointed by the mayor with nominations from the chair of the planning board, the Denver chapter of the American Institute of Architects, the Colorado Historical Society and the Colorado Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects. Each member serves a three year term, and is not compensated. There is also a Lower Downtown Design Review Board and an advisory board for the Country Club Historic District.

What resources are used in reviewing a project?

The LPC has adopted the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties for guidance in reviewing projects. The Standards are a publication created by the National Park Service and are heavily relied on by preservation professionals across the country. The city also uses local guidelines which are specific interpretations of the *Standards*.

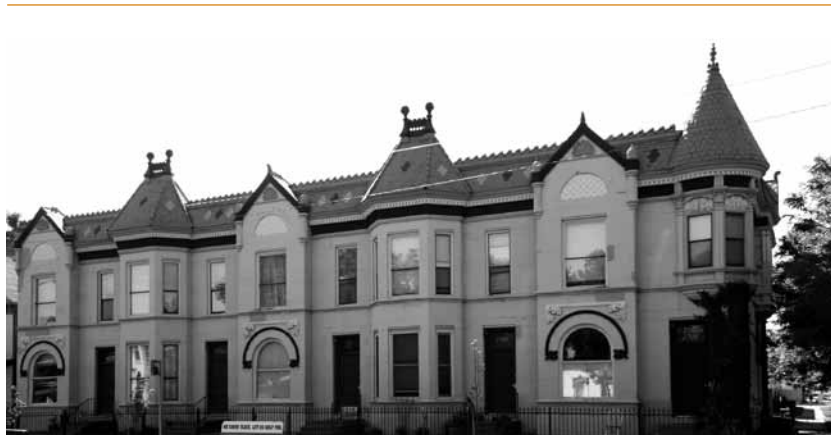


All of the design guidelines are available on the city's website, www.denvergov.org. The *Standards* are available online at www.nps.gov.



What Does the Design Review Process Entail?

First, determine if your project requires review. A phone call to the city's preservation staff can answer your questions and assist you in the process. Projects that require review include proposed demolition, new construction, additions and exterior alterations, including window replacement. Projects that do not require review include interior work that does not alter the exterior and work that does not require a building permit. Once you have determined the scope of your project, it is time to begin the city review process. Remember, staff members are available for questions!



Kinneavy Terrace, located in Curtis Park E Historic District

What about Demolition?

Buildings that are individually landmarked or located in a historic district (at the local level) cannot be demolished without approval from the LPC, which is granted only in unusual or extreme circumstances. For information, please contact city staff.

1. Application:

First, submit a Design Review Application and supplemental materials (photographs, plans, elevations, etc.) to the Landmark Preservation Commission staff. Applications are available online at the city's website or from the cashier on the second floor of the Webb Building, located at 201 W. Colfax, Dept. 205, Denver, CO 80202.

2. Preliminary Staff Review:

Next, staff will review the proposal based on the applicable design guidelines. This is a great opportunity to gain valuable feedback about your project. At this time your project may receive an administrative approval, and you'll be ready to go. Being well prepared will help you get through this step smoothly.

3. Formal Review:

Projects that require additional analysis are reviewed by the members of the LPC. A typical meeting includes presentations by staff and the applicant, questions from the review board, discussion and action. The project is then approved, approved with conditions, held until additional information is submitted and continued to a later meeting or denied.

4. Approval:

Once a project is approved, a staff member will issue an approval letter to the applicant. Applications must meet all applicable zoning and building codes.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I really make changes to my property?

Many homeowners are concerned about heavy restrictions if they live in a designated home or are considering applying to have their home designated. In reality, there is significant flexibility. The design review required as part of a proposed project can be very helpful and result in a successful project that provides you with new, modern amenities that are sensitive to your property's historic character.

What about energy efficiency?

In the preservation world, the phrase “the greenest building is one that is already built” has become a mantra. Many historic homes are inherently ‘green’: thick masonry walls help keep buildings cool in the summer and retain heat in the winter, operable windows were designed with passive cooling in mind and houses were often constructed with local materials. The embodied energy, or total energy, used to construct and maintain the building is significantly less than the energy consumption required to demolish an old structure and construct a new one. Learn more about easy upgrades you can make to increase efficiency by visiting the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s website www.preservationnation.org.

What is the economic impact of designation?

It's widely accepted that historic preservation is a tool for economic development, and studies have shown that property values for buildings located in historic districts are often stabilized. This occurs in part because of the investments made to rehabilitate the homes as well as the added prestige of owning a designated structure. In Denver's local historic districts you are assured that alterations to adjacent properties must go through the review process, to help insure that the neighborhood's overall character remains intact. To view studies on the topic visit the National Trust for Historic Preservation website: www.preservationnation.org.

What are other options to preserve my historic building?

While designation is the most common tool for preservation, preservation easements offer an additional possibility. Property owners can elect to donate an interest in their building to an approved non-profit or government organization, which can then monitor and enforce the preservation of the property. Preservation easements generally protect a building from demolition or damaging modifications and require that the property be maintained in good condition. While most preservation easements specifically protect the exterior facades of a building, in certain circumstances easements can be used to protect the interior features of a historic structure. An easement “runs with the land” – meaning it is perpetual and remains in place when the property is sold. Buildings designated at the national, state or local level are eligible to donate a façade easement. For more information, please visit www.historicdenver.org.

Why should I keep my historic windows?

Many people jump to window replacement as a solution to making their home more energy efficient. This happens because of the common misconception that single-pane glass or wooden frames lead to energy loss, when in fact most of the problems are caused by gaps or ‘leaks’ in the window surround, which can be addressed without extensive work or replacement. Maintaining original windows retains the historic character of your building, keeps debris out of landfills and if taken care of, older windows can last centuries, while newer brands often last only a few decades. For these reasons rehabilitation or restoration of historic windows is almost always preferred to replacement. However, if windows are deteriorated beyond repair or are non-historic, window replacement is an option. Design guidelines specify that such replacements be comparable to the original windows in terms of material, size and configuration.



George McMeen House, located in the East Washington Park neighborhood. The divided-light windows are an integral part of the historic and architectural character of this house.

Resources

Historic Denver's Preservation Hotline

If you have a question about your house, designation or a project you'd like to do, you can call Historic Denver's office at (303) 534-5288 for general advice and pointers.

Contractor Resource List

Members of Historic Denver, Inc. have exclusive access to a Contractor Resource List- a comprehensive list of experts, contractors and craft-people specializing in the restoration, repair and maintenance of historic homes. Please visit www.historicdenver.org for more information.

National Parks Service Preservation Briefs

For detailed information on how to successfully preserve, restore or rehabilitate your home, the National Parks' Preservation Briefs are invaluable. Topics include how to properly clean masonry, repair windows, and dispose of lead paint. The preservation briefs are free and available at nps.gov/history/hps/tps

Secretary of Interior's Standards

Initially created to determine the appropriate method of preservation, rehabilitation and restoration for projects benefiting from Federal Tax Incentives, the *Standards* are now widely used by homeowners and city municipalities for guidance. The guidelines are available at nps.gov/history/hps/tps/standards_guidelines.htm.

Rehab Yes/No Online Learning from NPS

The National Park Service's Rehab Yes/No Online Learning website is an interactive resource to illustrate compatible and incompatible preservation projects. Visit nps.gov/history/hps/rehabyes-no/

Historic Research at the Denver Public Library

The Denver Public Library is a great resource for researching your building and has an extensive online database of historic images. Located at 10 W. 14th Avenue, Denver, CO 80204. denverlibrary.org

Researching the History of Your House (or Other Favorite Building)

The Colorado Historical Society provides a comprehensive guide to researching a building using the resources available in the Denver area. This guide may be found at: coloradohistory-oahp.org/publications/identifying.htm

Contacts

City of Denver Community Planning and Development

The City of Denver's Planning Services
Contact for questions regarding permit requirements
201 W. Colfax Avenue, Dept. 205, Denver CO 80202
720-865-2915 or www.denvergov.org

City of Denver's Landmark Preservation Commission

The City of Denver's review board for Landmarks and Historic Districts.
General hotline: 720-865-2709
201 W. Colfax Avenue, Denver CO 80202
Email questions to: landmark@denvergov.org
www.denvergov.org/preservation

Historic Denver, Inc.

A private non-profit that advocates for preservation in the Denver metro area
1628 16th Street
Denver, CO 80202
Contact 303-534-5288 or www.historicdenver.org

Colorado Historical Society

A non-profit and state agency committed to collecting, preserving, and interpreting Colorado's history
1300 Broadway, Denver, CO 80203
Contact 303-866-3682 or www.coloradohistory.org

National Trust for Historic Preservation

A non-profit organization dedicated to helping people protect, enhance, and enjoy places that matter to them
1785 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20036
Contact 202-588-6000 or (800) 944-6847 or
www.preservationnation.org

