



Columbia Historic Preservation Commission

Historic District Designation FAQs

Frequently asked questions about designating a group of properties as a historic district.

What is an historic district?

A historic district is one or more properties having a significant historic, cultural, or architectural value as part of the heritage of Columbia, Boone County, or the State of Missouri. Districts are represented on the City Zoning Map as Historic Preservation Overlay Districts (HP-O).

What qualifies as a historic district?

Properties within the district must have sufficient integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship to make them worthy of preservation. Districts are historically or culturally significant, sites of historic events, identified with significant individuals or architects, architecturally unique, or are otherwise historically important. (For a complete list of criteria, see Section 29-3.3(c)(6) of the City's Unified Development Code.)

What are some examples of historic districts?

The David Guitar House, the Miller Building, the Taylor House Inn, and the Wright Brothers Mule Barn are all dual-designated as historic districts and landmarks. The Crane and Fischer Buildings at 910 & 912 E. Walnut comprises one district, but are each individually designated as local landmarks.

What is the process for historic district designation?

A petition for historic district designation must be made by at least 60% of the owners of the properties within the proposed district boundaries. Properties in the district must be contiguous and form a distinct area. The petition should identify all historic and architectural features that contribute to the historic character of the district that are recommended for regulation. The petition is reviewed by staff then forwarded to the Historic Preservation Commission who prepares a

report for the Planning and Zoning Commission. After a public hearing, the approved petition is sent to the City Council for final approval.

What effect does the designation have?

Designation brings attention to an area as a historically significant addition to the city. Designation identifies unique features of the district and regulates alterations and removal of those significant features to maintain the character of the district. Resources that have been significantly altered or recently constructed are considered to be 'non-contributing,' but are not regulated by the district.

May structures within historic districts be altered?

Any construction, alteration, removal, or demolition, whether in whole or in part, affecting the historical or architectural features outlined in the petition is restricted. Alteration of the interior of a structure is allowed, except when regulations have been placed on interior features of a landmark structure. Before any of these actions can occur, however; the owner must submit a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) application to the City. The purpose of the COA procedure is to ensure historically appropriate alterations, consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings.

How do I begin the district designation process?

Begin by contacting the Community Development department at (573) 874-7239 or at Planning@CoMo.Gov. They can explain the program in depth and help you start this process.