
A GUIDE TO THE LOCAL LANDMARK DESIGNATION PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

Highland Park is predominantly a suburban residential community characterized by fine examples of many significant architectural styles dating from the 1870s to the present. Excellent Victorian (Gothic Revival, Italianate, Second Empire) structures stand side-by-side with Prairie School residences, historic revival style buildings (Tudor and Colonial Revival, etc.) and International Style homes. Some are very large; others are quite modest. But all contribute to the rich fabric of Highland Park architecture, which illustrates not a single period of outstanding significance, but a broad overview of the development of architectural styles.

In 1984, the City Council passed the Highland Park Historic Preservation Ordinance. The purpose of this Ordinance is to promote the educational, cultural, economic and general welfare of the community by protecting the City's heritage. This overview is not intended to be a substitute for City Ordinance Chapter 24: Historic Preservation. The Ordinance is available in its entirety for download, through the Department of Community Development, or from the City Clerk.

WHAT IS THE HIGHLAND PARK HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCE?

The Highland Park Historic Preservation Ordinance provides a mechanism to identify and preserve the distinctive historic, architectural and/or landscaping features of Highland Park that represent the City's cultural, social, economic, political and architectural history. By encouraging preservation, rehabilitation and restoration, the City fosters civic pride in the beauty and noble accomplishments of the past as represented in Highland Park's landmark buildings and historic districts. Preservation efforts enhance the attractiveness of the City to its residents, home buyers, tourists, visitors and shoppers, and thereby support and promote business, and provide economic benefits to the City.

WHAT IS THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION?

The Preservation Ordinance created a need for the Historic Preservation Commission in 1984. The Commission is composed of nine citizens appointed by the mayor with a demonstrated interest, knowledge, ability, experience, and expertise in architectural restoration, rehabilitation, and local history. The Commission meets every third Thursday at City Hall to carry out its responsibilities, which include making recommendations to the City Council on preservation issues, identification of landmark buildings and areas, and review of alterations to landmarks. The Commission presents a variety of public awareness programs including walking tours of historic districts, an annual preservation awards program, and activities to celebrate National Preservation Week. These activities inform and educate residents on the importance of preserving historic resources. Note: Meeting dates vary. If you would like to attend a meeting, call the Department of Community Development at (847) 432-0867 to confirm the date and time.

WHAT IS A HIGHLAND PARK LOCAL LANDMARK?

The City of Highland Park is empowered by ordinance to designate objects, structures, buildings, districts and sites as local landmarks if they have aesthetic, architectural, cultural and/or historic value. Highland Park's local landmark designation affords properties more protection than state or national landmarking programs do. Once a property is locally designated, any exterior alteration, construction, demolition or removal requiring a building permit is reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission. The review process is handled in a timely fashion and careful consideration is given to the owner's needs. The Commission serves as a resource for owners of landmark properties. Property owners can rely on the Commission's technical expertise to aid them in developing their plans.

WHAT ARE THE CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING HIGHLAND PARK LANDMARKS?

In making decisions about whether a nominated property qualifies as a Highland Park Landmark, the Preservation Commission will consider the criteria listed below:

- Its character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or culture characteristics of the community, county, state or country;
- Its location as a site of a significant local, county, state or national event;
- Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the community, county, state or country;
- Its embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural and/or landscape style valuable for the study of a period, type, method of construction or use of indigenous materials;
- Its identification as the work of a master builder, designer, architect or landscape architect whose individual work has influenced the development of the community, county, state or country;
- Its overall embodiment of elements of design, detailing, materials, or craftsmanship that renders it architecturally and/or culturally significant and/or innovative;
- Its unique location of singular physical characteristics that makes it an established or familiar visual feature;
- Its character as a particularly fine or unique example of a utilitarian structure or group of such structures, including, but not limited to farmhouses, gas stations or other commercial structures, with a high level of integrity of architectural significance;
- Its significant historical or archaeological qualities. The site or structure also must have sufficient integrity of location, design materials and workmanship to make it worthy of preservation.

STEP 1 - LOCAL LANDMARK NOMINATION

In order to nominate a property for designation as a Highland Park Landmark, a member of the Commission, property owner or interested party must complete a simple nomination form which is available online or from the Historic Preservation Commission staff liaison at the Department of Community Development. You can contact City Planning Staff at (847) 432-0867 for assistance in completing this landmark nomination form.

STEP 2 - HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION REVIEW

At the next regularly scheduled Commission meeting, the Historic Preservation Commission will review the nomination form and determine whether the property meets the criteria for Landmark designation. The nominator and property owner will be invited to make a presentation to the Commission at this preliminary review meeting.

STEP 3 - PUBLIC HEARING NOTIFICATION

Properties nominated with consent from their owners do not need a public hearing separate from the regular meetings of the Historic Preservation Commission, and these nominations go directly from the Commission to City Council for action. However, if a property is nominated from the a member of the community, a public hearing is a necessary step. This hearing helps the Historic Preservation Commission decide whether to recommend official designation by City Council. Notice of the hearing must be published at least 15 days prior to the hearing, but not more than 30 days prior to the hearing. All interested parties are encouraged to attend and will be heard by the Commission. If the Commission supports the landmark designation, a "Request for Council Action" stating the site or structure's qualifications will be sent to City Council. City Council makes the final determination on all landmark nominations from the Historic Preservation Commission whether consent is granted or not.

STEP 4 - CITY COUNCIL ACTION

Upon City Council approval, a local landmark or district will be designated by ordinance. The owner, nominator and the City's Building Division will be notified of the designation in writing, and will receive a copy of the designating ordinance. The property owner also will receive a framed certificate, signed by the Mayor, which contains a statement of significance.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF OWNING A HIGHLAND PARK LANDMARK?

Highland Park landmarks receive community-wide recognition and protection under the Preservation Ordinance. A certificate signed by the Mayor is presented to the owner(s) of a landmark property containing a statement of significance. Because Highland Park's Historic Preservation Ordinance is certified by the Illinois State Historic Preservation office, landmark owners are eligible for tax benefits. State legislation provides an eight year property tax assessment freeze for owners of single family residences that are substantially rehabilitated, following the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation. For more information on the Property Tax Assessment Freeze Program call the Local Government Services Coordinator at the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency at (217) 785-4512.

CAN ALTERATION, CONSTRUCTION OR DEMOLITION OF A DESIGNATED LOCAL LANDMARK OCCUR?

Once a site or structure has been designated as a local landmark, the property is subject to Commission review for exterior alterations, construction or demolition plans requiring a building permit. Generally, building permits are required for any action other than basic maintenance and upkeep. This review process is an effective way to protect and preserve Highland Park's historical and architectural heritage and provides an excellent opportunity for property owners to receive technical advice from the

Commission which may improve the proposed plans or alterations. The Building Division will forward the application for a building permit to the Historic Preservation Commission within seven days of receipt of the application. The Commission will review the proposed action based on the criteria set forth in the Preservation Ordinance, which includes the effect of the proposed change upon the historic, aesthetic or architectural value, characteristics and significance of the landmark or historic district. When the Commission finds the proposed action is consistent with the spirit of the Ordinance, it will issue the Certificate of Appropriateness required for a building permit.