

desirability of a neighborhood, resulting in increased real estate market activity, which could be reflected in higher assessed valuations by the Bexar County Appraisal District.

WILL THE HDRC TELL ME WHAT COLOR TO PAINT MY HOUSE?

No. Neither the HDRC nor OHP staff dictates what color your house can be painted. The OHP staff review paint colors chosen by the owner and are available for consultation regarding historically appropriate paint colors. Some of the newest historic districts, such as Government Hill and Lavaca, have chosen not to regulate color through their design guidelines.



Office of Historic Preservation website:

www.sanantonio.gov/historic

Office of Historic Preservation email:

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CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

**ADVANTAGES OF
HISTORIC
DESIGNATION**

*OFFICE OF HISTORIC
PRESERVATION (OHP)*

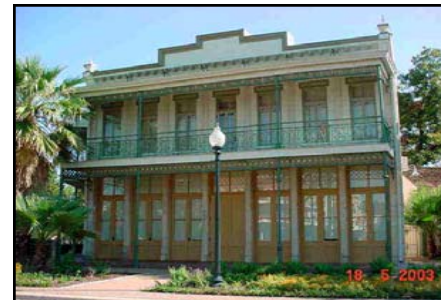


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The City of San Antonio is internationally known for its beauty, friendliness, and historical significance. San Antonio's unique qualities have proven increasingly attractive to residents, business interests, and tourists.

The City aims to preserve, enhance, and perpetuate those aspects of the city and the San Antonio River having historical, cultural, architectural, and archaeological merit. Such preservation promotes and protects the health, safety, prosperity, education, comfort, and general welfare of the people living in and visiting San Antonio.

Historic Preservation is achieved through the designation of areas as historic districts (San Antonio has 27 historic districts) and through the designation of properties as individual local landmarks (San Antonio has about 2000 individual landmarks). Both types of designation provide for a design review process in which exterior modifications must be reviewed for their appropriateness before a building permit can be issued. This brochure outlines the advantages and guidelines of designation, as well as answers our most frequently asked questions.



Advantages of Historic Designation:

- The Historic and Design Review Commission (HDRC) process protects the unique physical assets in a community.
- Tax Exemption for substantial rehabilitation: property owners who **substantially rehabilitate** a historic property can (1) have their City property taxes frozen at the assessed value prior to the improvements for up to 10 years (for residential properties), or (2) owe no City taxes for the first five years and then have City property taxes assessed at 50% of the post-rehabilitation assessed value for the next five years (for residential or commercial properties). Substantial rehabilitation requires certification and verification by HDRC. *The tax exemption remains with the property regardless of a change in ownership or sale of the property.*
- 20% Tax Exemption for owner-occupied residences in new historic districts: All residential properties occupied by the property owner at the time of district designation receive a 20% tax exemption on their City taxes for up to 10 years. For those receiving the 20% exemption for new historic districts that remain in the same house for the entire 10-year life of the exemption, a maximum 5-year Long-Term Resident Extension of the exemption is offered. The exemption and extension are only effective for as long as the property owner is living at the address for which the exemption is given.
- Protects historic buildings and potential historic landmarks from hasty demolition

Advantages Continued...

- Encourages better design through a comprehensive review by HDRC design professionals
- Studies have shown that historically designated properties appreciate at a greater rate than comparable properties that are not designated.
- Increases neighborhood pride and awareness
- Provides a good tool for neighborhood revitalization
- Protects the investment of owners and residents of historic properties from incompatible development
- Helps curb urban sprawl by: 1) reusing existing resources in downtown area neighborhoods and can be part of a comprehensive community environmental policy; and 2) by promoting infill development
- Local districts can benefit from heritage tourism. A historic district that is aesthetically cohesive and well promoted can be a community attraction and an economic generator.



Historic Designation Requirements:

Administrative review of projects:

Applications for certain minor alterations, additions, and ordinary repair and maintenance on the exterior of your property are reviewed administratively by the Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) and do not require review by the HDRC. Ordinarily the applications for administrative review (Administrative Certificate of Appropriateness) are handled the same day that you apply for the building permit. Examples of administrative review include changes in paint color, removal of non-historic siding to uncover historic siding, small rear additions, etc. *For a full list of administrative review activities refer to the UDC Amendments on the OHP website at www.sanantonio.gov/historic.*



HDRC review of projects: The HDRC reviews most proposed changes to the exterior of your property such as major additions, changes in exterior material, etc. HDRC applications must be submitted at least 2.5 weeks prior to the HDRC public meetings, which occur on the first and third Wednesdays of each month.

Design Review Committee: The Design Review Committee meets on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month (opposite weeks from HDRC meetings). Property owners can coordinate a meeting with the

Design Review Committee through OHP staff for a preliminary review of a project before submission of a full HDRC application.

Denial of an application by the HDRC:

Although it is a rare occurrence, sometimes an application will be denied by the HDRC. Usually, however, the HDRC will make recommendations to which the applicant is agreeable. OHP staff works closely with applicants to inform them of potential problems, to avoid unexpected concerns by the HDRC at the public meeting.

Exterior work limitations: Inappropriate work on the exterior of a historic property will not be approved by the HDRC. Most owners understand this limitation and view it as a mechanism for ensuring compatible development to preserve the character of the neighborhood or historic resource.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

WILL DESIGNATION AFFECT THE USE OF MY PROPERTY?

No. Whatever uses are permitted by the zoning for the property are not affected by historic designation. District and landmark designation is concerned with aesthetics, not the uses of the property.

DOES DESIGNATION REQUIRE ME TO "RESTORE" MY PROPERTY TO HAVE A MORE HISTORIC CHARACTER?

No. Historic designation will not require restoration. If a property owner elects to make an exterior alteration to their property after designation, the alteration will need review and approval by the HDRC or

administrative approval by OHP staff where applicable.



DOES DESIGNATION AFFECT CHANGES TO THE INTERIOR OF THE PROPERTY?

No. The HDRC only reviews exterior modifications.

WILL I ALWAYS NEED TO HIRE AN ARCHITECT IF I WANT TO MAKE CHANGES TO MY PROPERTY?

No. Just as before designation, minor changes to a property probably would not need the services of an architect. However, just as in undesignated areas, a property owner would probably elect to hire an architect or other design or engineering professionals to assist in plans for a major change to his/her property. The employment of an architect is at the discretion of the property owner.

WILL USING APPROPRIATE PRESERVATION TECHNIQUES MAKE MY PROJECT MORE EXPENSIVE?

No. In many cases, design review and the technical assistance provided by the OHP staff can result in a substantial savings for property owners and ensures that improvement expenditures will be a better long-term investment.

WILL MY TAXES INCREASE?

Not necessarily: Historic designation alone does not increase taxes. Property taxes are based on the assessed valuation (property value) of the land plus the improvements on the land. Historic designation may add to the