

## **Historic Preservation Questions and Answers**

### **What is historic preservation?**

Historic preservation is about more than just saving bricks and mortar, and it is not just about the past. It is taking responsibility for saving special places and the quality of life they offer the people who live there. It has to do with the way individuals, families and communities come together to celebrate their heritage and plan for the future. Knowing that a place matters is knowing that its people matter, too.

### **Why did Winter Park include historic preservation in the Land Development Code?**

We live in an era and environment of change. In the last few decades, Winter Park has grown from a small town to a bustling urban village surrounded by one of the highest growth areas in America. During that time several historic resources were lost, some historic neighborhoods experienced incompatible new construction while a state of decline damaged others. Winter Park's unique character and outstanding quality of life attracts exciting prospects for our future. The local historic preservation policy provides an opportunity for Winter Park and its residents to preserve the character and quality that drew residents and businesses to the city in the first place, and to restore ageing neighborhoods.

### **What is historic about Winter Park?**

Winter Park's historic properties include both imposing estates and modest bungalow neighborhoods. Grove houses and winter cottages date from the early development years of Winter Park in the late 1800s. The Park Avenue commercial area contains several historic buildings built before 1950. The Florida Land Boom of the 1920s shaped many of the city's traditional neighborhoods. Winter Park has a rich variety of vintage architectural styles. The city has recorded over 700 historic structures representing slightly less than 5% of our commercial buildings and 7% of our residential buildings. It is these buildings and their settings that give the city its unique character.

### **What does the preservation ordinance do?**

The preservation ordinance:

- a. Establishes a Historic Preservation Board (HPB), whose members offer knowledge and expertise about preservation methods to the City Commission and citizens,
- b. States standard criteria for determining if and why a building, district or neighborhood is historic and procedures for property owners who want their building, district or neighborhood designated,

- c. Establishes a **Winter Park Register of Historic Places** for locally designated buildings, districts and neighborhoods,
- d. Offers incentives for owners of designated historic buildings and for owners in historic districts and neighborhoods,
- e. Provides for design review policies for the rehabilitation of, and additions to, designated historic buildings,
- f. Sets procedures for owners in districts and neighborhoods to participate in developing design review guidelines, and
- g. Enables the city to participate in the Certified Local Government Program, which provides funding, educational and technical assistance for preservation programs.

### **What makes a property, neighborhood or district significant?**

Generally, the property must be 50 years old and possess architectural, aesthetic or historical value. The Winter Park Historic Preservation Board uses the National Register of Historic Places criteria as it applies to local history as a guide. The historic value is judged by identifying specific criteria such as an:

- (A) Association with events that have taken place over the course of time, including our local pattern of development,
- (B) Association with a person(s) who has contributed to our history,
- (C) Association with a master architect or builder, or that expresses architectural distinction,
- (D) Or has yielded or is likely to yield information about our history or prehistory (archaeological history).

### **How could I designate my historic property?**

The property owner, the Historic Preservation Board, or a City Commission member who believes that the property meets the criteria for historic designation may submit nominations of individual landmarks to the HPB. Every individual nomination must have the written authorization of the property owner. A petition signed by 20% of the property owners in a potential historic district or neighborhood is required to trigger meetings to discuss the goals and boundaries for the area. When consensus has been established to move ahead, owners

will be polled and a two-thirds vote of all the owners in support of district or neighborhood is required for designation.

**What will it cost to be designated?**

There are no fees for individual, district or neighborhood designation.

**How long does historic designation last?**

The designation lasts as long as the property exists or until the property is so irreversibly altered that it no longer possesses those qualities that originally contributed to its significance. Thus if a designated individual landmark building is destroyed by storm or fire, the designation will be removed.

**What can the Historic Preservation Board do for me?**

By designating historic districts, neighborhoods and individual landmarks, the HPB helps retain and protect the character of the city's architectural past for residents both in the present and in the future. The HPB review process can help guard against inappropriate new construction or exterior renovations in your neighborhood. By doing this, the visual historic nature of your district is assured and property values are enhanced. The HPB can grant variances within the historic pattern of the property and/or district, which allow additions and alterations to your nonconforming buildings and lots. These variances are permitted through the HPB design review process because your property is in a historic district or is an individually designated property.

**Can I build a new building in a historic district and does it have to be a particular style?**

Yes, new construction can take place, and no, it does not have to imitate historic architecture. New construction should complement, reinforce and respect the traditional patterns of a historic district. To be successful, infill design should pick up significant themes such as height, materials, roof form, massing, setback, and the rhythm of openings to insure that a new building harmonizes with its context and setting. New construction in a historic district may receive variances from the Land Development Code through the HPB review process in order for new development to appropriately fit into the existing historic pattern.

**Does local historic designation increase the amount of assessed property taxes?**

No. Designated historic properties are not subject to increased property taxes solely because of their designations.

**Will historic designation prevent me from making repairs and changes to my home that I wish to make?**

Changes to historic properties are allowed and the Historic Preservation Board looks for their compatibility with the existing architecture. For example, it is recommended that additions be located on secondary facades and that they be in scale and character with the existing architecture. Character-defining features should not be changed, destroyed, or obscured. Historic properties are often non-conforming to the Land Development Code and thus, additions and changes may require variances. The HPB can grant variances that may be needed for appropriate changes and additions to historic properties as part of the review process.

**How does designation affect the value of my property?**

National, Florida and local trends have shown that property values have increased because of historic designation programs. Residential buyers appreciate the unique, authentic character and materials of historic properties, and understand the value of protective measures afforded by local designation as a means to ensure the stability of that community. Commercial buildings and areas have found that the irreplaceable quality and features of historic buildings and public places attract tenants and customers.

**Does the historic preservation ordinance affect my property rights?**

No. The preservation ordinance does not affect your existing or vested property rights.

**Would designation mean that I have to restore my house or commercial property?**

No. Designation does not require owners to restore or make changes to their property.

**Will interior remodeling of a designated structure be reviewed?**

No. Historic property owners will, however, want to be aware of the value of some desirable interior features such as heart pine floors, fixtures, cypress paneling and built-in elements that they may wish to preserve or reuse in their remodeling.