

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The rich character of Downtown Pleasanton stems from its abundance of historic buildings constructed over the past 160 years. The architectural styles, small-town scale of buildings, and tree-lined streets all combine to create a setting unique to Pleasanton. This character is highly valued by the community and desired to be preserved and enhanced wherever feasible.

The City's General Plan, Downtown Specific Plan, Downtown Design Guidelines, and Municipal Code contain policies, guidelines and regulations for protecting the City's historic resources from demolition and ensuring exterior changes and additions will be compatible with the Downtown's traditional design character and scale. This information guide is intended to inform and assist individuals who are interested in modifying historic residential resources in residentially zoned properties in the Downtown Specific Plan Area.

WHAT IS A HISTORIC RESOURCE?

The City established the following policy for determining whether a residential building in a residential zoning district is considered a historic resource:

If a residential building in a residential zoning district built before 1942 is determined using the *Pleasanton Downtown Historic Context Statement* to be eligible for listing in the California Register, then it is considered a historic resource by the City.

Based on this definition, the City conducted a Historic Resource Survey to determine which residential structures are historic resources. A total of 88 structures were determined to be historic resources. In addition, three structures were previously determined to be historic resources based on other historic surveys. A list of the 91 historic resources and the Historic Resource Survey are available [online](#).

CAN A HISTORIC RESOURCE BE DEMOLISHED OR MODIFIED?

The City prohibits the demolition (see definition below) of a residential building in a residential zoning district determined to be a historic resource unless such building is determined by the City's Chief Building Official to be unsafe or dangerous, and if no other reasonable means of rehabilitation or relocation can be achieved.

"Demolition" of a residential building for purposes of historic preservation shall be defined as the removal of the front façade or the most visible façade from the street, or changes to the roof and roof line, but excluding the replacement of windows and doors, where such replacement is determined by the City to appropriately maintain the building's historic character. The front or most visible façade shall be considered the forwardmost ten feet of the structure and roof/roofline. If the portion(s) of a building that is (are) required to remain as described above are later determined by the Director of Community Development to be unusable (e.g., due to dry rot, termite damage, etc.), then said portion(s) may be removed and reconstructed provided the new exterior construction matches the look of the original in material, composition, design, color, texture, shape, and dimensions. Changes to the front

façade or roofline as described above that are determined to be consistent with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation shall not be considered a demolition.

The City can impose a substantial fine for an unauthorized demolition of a historic resource. In addition, the City does not allow "Demolition by Neglect." "Demolition by Neglect" is a term used to describe a situation in which a property owner intentionally allows a historic structure to suffer deterioration from long-term neglect in order to circumvent historic preservation regulations. The Pleasanton Municipal Code requires property owners to maintain structures in good repair in order to prevent deterioration, dilapidation, or decay. For further information, please see [Pleasanton Municipal Code](#) Sections 9.28.025 and 18.140.030.

Additions and other exterior modifications to buildings considered to be a historic resource are permissible and will need to comply with the applicable City regulations such as the Zoning regulations (setbacks, height, etc.), Downtown Specific Plan Policies, and Downtown Design Guidelines. These documents are available from the Planning Division counter or [online](#).

One of the Downtown Specific Plan Policies states the addition/modification should complement the original building exterior in terms of architectural style and all other exterior design elements, and should be consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (see below).

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION

Originally published in 1977 by the National Park Service as the regulations for the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program, the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation have since been widely used by State and local governments across the country to guide their design review processes. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation are ten basic principles created to help preserve the distinctive character of a historic building and its site, while allowing for reasonable change to meet new needs:

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work

shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

CITY REVIEW PROCESS

Single-Family Design Review (SFDR) is required for all additions and the exterior modifications/alterations listed below to one of the 91 historic homes:

- a. Wall and foundation cladding including, but not limited to, material, finish, shape, orientation, and joinery.
- b. Porches and balconies including, but not limited to, banisters/railings, balusters, posts/supports, and material.
- c. Windows including, but not limited to, window shape, size, placement, operation, material, trim/surround, mullions/glazing pattern, and recess from the exterior wall.
- d. Roofs including, but not limited to, roof form, eaves, material, color, and pitch.
- e. Chimneys including, but not limited to, material, finish, location, size, and shape.
- f. Front doors.
- g. Architectural trim and details including, but not limited to, corbels, knee braces, brackets, cornice, dentils, etc.

When your application is submitted, it will be reviewed for completeness and assigned to a staff planner. Once the project is deemed complete, a notice will be sent to neighbors within a 300-foot radius informing them of the proposed project. For two-story additions, story poles depicting the height and mass of the addition may need to be installed prior to public noticing of the addition. The neighbors will have seven days to review the plans, provide comments, or request a Zoning Administrator (ZA) hearing. If no comments or hearing requests are received, and the project complies with applicable zoning regulations, Downtown Specific Plan Policies, Downtown Design Guidelines, and Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, the project will be approved administratively and an approval letter will be mailed to you. This approval is subject to a 10-day appeal period.

If a hearing is requested during the seven-day noticing period, a ZA hearing is scheduled. All concerned parties will be notified. At the hearing, the ZA will decide whether to approve or deny the project, or approve it with specific conditions. If the ZA action is appealed, the item is forwarded to the Planning Commission and property owners and occupants within a 1,000-foot radius of the project site will be notified. If the Planning Commission action is appealed, the item is forwarded to the City Council. Actions taken by the City Council are final unless challenged in a court of law.

An additional information guide is available which explains the Single-Family Design Review process and submittal requirements in more detail. This is available from the Planning Division counter or [online](#).