

CHAPTER 13: HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Fort Worth's historic preservation program seeks to balance sustainable growth, protect historic resources, invest in compatible new development, and provide incentives for the rehabilitation of historic properties. This chapter defines the resources of the City's historic preservation program, identifies the tools and methods of protecting and growing those resources, and describes the existing policies and goals for future historic preservation efforts in Fort Worth.

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

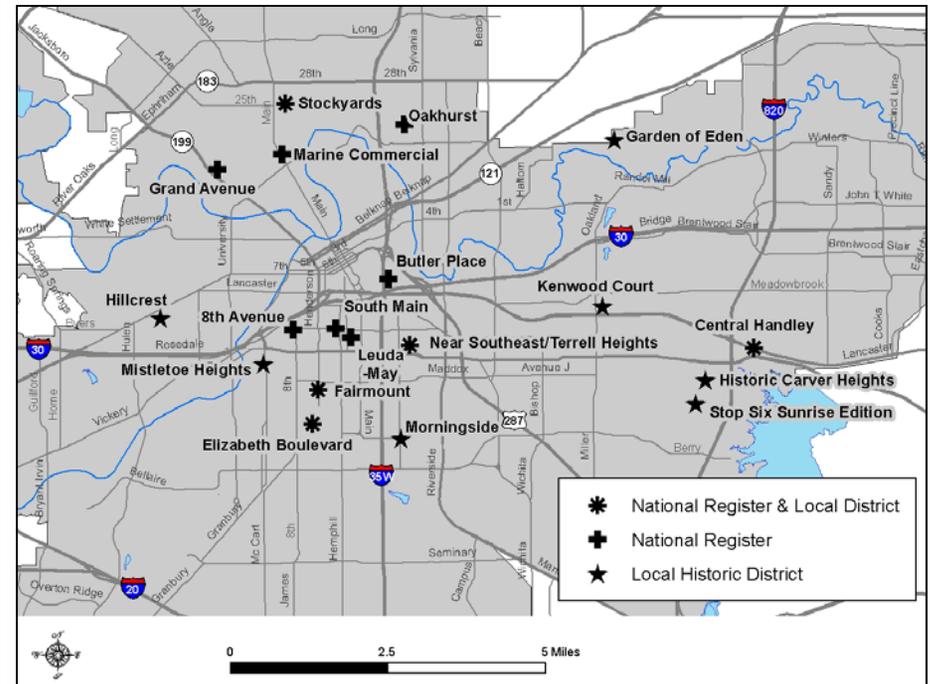
Historic preservation has been at the heart of City policy throughout much of Fort Worth's history. From the careful preservation of the Nineteenth Century Van Zandt Cottage for the Texas Centennial in 1936, through the redevelopment of Sundance Square beginning in 1978, and on to the adoption of the Citywide Historic Preservation Plan by the City Council in 2003, the City has been focused on preserving its heritage. The first attempts to catalog historic resources in the city came in the 1960s, when the Junior League asked noted architect Blake Alexander to identify the most significant historic buildings. In 1976, the North Fort Worth Historical Society was formed, and it completed a survey of resources that would culminate in the nomination of the Fort Worth Stockyards to the National Register of Historic Places. Local efforts began in earnest in 1980 with the first local historic district, Elizabeth Boulevard, whose guidelines were updated in 2007. However, the most significant changes occurred in the 1990s, when the Preservation Ordinance was rewritten following the demolition of the historic Quality Hill neighborhood. The new ordinance created a stronger, more effective preservation program and more recent proposed updates will continue to improve historic preservation.

Basic Resources for Historic Preservation

A solid historic preservation program leverages available resources. Those resources need to provide information and incentives that result in preservation of and increased investment in historic properties. The City of Fort Worth benefits from a wealth of historic preservation resources that include local, state, and national support for preservation.

The federal government provides a mechanism for appropriate historic rehabilitation in the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, which acts as a guide to regulation, but it is the Certified Local Government Program (CLG), that provides technical and financial assistance to local programs. The CLG program provides a top-down resource structure for communities by providing funding, training, and technical assistance via the State Historic Preservation Office. Local communities that participate in the program receive the highest priority for funding from historic preservation grants. To be a CLG, the City has adopted a preservation ordinance and design guidelines, engaged a professional staff to monitor its program, and reports annually to the State Historic Preservation Office on preservation activities. Fort Worth has been in the CLG Program since 1986.

Fort Worth Historic Districts



Local historic districts and National Register historic districts are depicted above, indicating the highest concentration of historic properties is located within the central city. (Source: Planning and Development Department, 2009.)

The National Park Service (NPS) lists buildings and sites of local, state, and national significance on the National Register of Historic Places. It is an honorary designation that does not require public access to a property, nor an obligation to restore a property according to any restrictive guidelines. Benefits of the designation include federal recognition, eligibility for financial incentives such as tax credits, technical assistance from the Texas Historical Commission, promotional advantages to draw customers, and protection from the impacts of federally funded projects. In Fort Worth, historic areas listed on the Register include properties representing most neighborhoods in the central city including eleven National Register Districts and approximately 65 individual National Register properties.

The National Historic Landmark (NHL) Program is used to designate buildings and sites that are of national importance, such as the San Jacinto Battlefield and the Alamo. Only three percent of properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places are designated as National Historic Landmarks. In addition to the prestige gained by the designation, other benefits include the availability of grants through the Historic Preservation Fund and technical preservation assistance provided by the National Park Service. There are no NHL designations in Fort Worth; however, places such as the Stockyards may be eligible.

The State of Texas recognizes historically significant buildings with Recorded Texas Historic Landmark (RTHL) and State Archeological Landmark (SAL) designations. In addition, the State Marker Program has placed about 13,000 Official Texas Historical Markers across the State to provide educational links to the state's history.

Architectural surveys are an exceptional source of information for historic preservation efforts. In Fort Worth, large scale surveys were done in the 1980s, which ultimately surveyed more than 50,000 buildings in the county. From these documents more than 1,700 historically or architecturally significant structures were identified to be eligible for local, state, or national designation. In addition, neighborhood specific surveys have been completed to document local and national historic districts. In 2007, a primary goal of the Citywide Historic Preservation Plan was realized when the City Council allocated \$200,000 to complete the first phase of a citywide historic resources survey. Phase one included intensive surveys of four local historic districts and one urban village, as well as windshield surveys of one other local historic district and two more urban villages. In 2008, the consulting firm of LopezGarcia Group finished intensive historic resource surveys for five areas and windshield surveys for three areas. The five areas included Carver Heights, Mistletoe Heights, Morningside, Berry-Riverside Urban Village, and Garden of Eden. The windshield surveys included Stop Six, Six Points Urban Village, and Polytechnic/Wesleyan. Eventually this data will be available to the public via the internet and may result in possible National Register nominations.

At the local level, numerous community organizations engage in aspects of historic preservation ranging from public education to adaptive reuse. Since the early twentieth century, community organizations like the Junior League and Girls Service

National Register Districts



There are currently eleven National Register Districts in Fort Worth. The Near Southeast Historic District (top left), listed in 2002, was first platted around 1880 and flourished under the streetcar system. By 1910, it was a predominantly African-American working class neighborhood. It is a locally designated historic district known as Terrell Heights. The Grand Avenue National Register District (top right) was listed in 1990, and most of the houses were built between 1906-1919. The district is designated Demolition Delay by the City. (Source: Planning and Development Department, 2009.)



Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976, the Fort Worth Stockyards District exemplifies the City's Western heritage. It contains 42 buildings, most of which have some level of local designation. (Source: Planning and Development Department, 2009.)

League have sponsored preservation efforts as part of their service to the community. Other organizations were created specifically to promote history and preservation, including the Tarrant County Historical Commission, Historic Preservation Council for Tarrant County, Tarrant County Black Historical and Genealogical Society, North Fort Worth Historical Society, Historic Fort Worth, Inc., Southside Preservation Association, and Historic Landmarks, Inc. Fort Worth is also home to the office of an important national partner in preservation: the Texas Regional Office of Partners for Sacred Places.

In 1999, the City of Fort Worth participated in a statewide initiative to document the economic impacts of historic preservation throughout Texas. The study examined property values, historic museums, building rehabilitation, and heritage tourism and came to the conclusion that historic preservation makes sound economic sense. According to the study, an estimated \$193 million is spent annually on historic rehabilitation in Texas. Nationwide, heritage travelers spend nearly \$1.25 billion each year. The study also suggests that, on average, property located within locally designated historic districts appreciates in value at higher rates than property not located within local historic districts. In Fort Worth, this effect is demonstrated in the Elizabeth Boulevard Historic District, where property values are 22 percent higher than houses of comparable size that are not located in a local historic district. Another example is the Fairmount-Southside Historic District, where property values are 6.8 percent higher than non-district houses. Cultural tourism in the United States in 2005 generated about 650 billion dollars to the US economy.

Tools for Historic Preservation

Cities must engage the right tools to manage a historic preservation program. In 2002, Mayor Kenneth Barr appointed a volunteer steering committee to oversee the preparation of a citywide preservation plan. The plan was produced, as required by the Zoning Ordinance, to provide direction to the long-term efforts of historic preservation in Fort Worth. The steering committee was given the task of ensuring that the plan 1) addressed the current status of historic preservation, 2) defined the weaknesses of the program, and 3) identified goals for historic preservation. The resulting product, the Citywide Historic Preservation Plan, is used by the City and community to promote the role of historic preservation in Fort Worth, and to address the needs of the City's historic resources through project planning, resource allocation, and organizational needs. In February 2009 the Historic and Cultural Landmarks Commission (HCLC) reviewed all 65 strategies from the 2003 preservation plan, and only 12 were identified as needing further implementation.

The Zoning Ordinance set out the powers of the Historic and Cultural Landmarks Commission to administer the preservation program. Chapter 4, Article 5, otherwise known as the Preservation Ordinance and updated in July 2007, contains the basic building blocks for local historic preservation, including the designation process for three types of designation: Highly Significant Endangered (HSE), Historic and Cultural Landmark (HC) and Demolition Delay (DD). The ordinance also contains the processes for receiving the Historic Site Tax Exemption and for acquiring a Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior changes to property.

National Register Districts



Central Handley (above) was designated as a Fort Worth historic district in 2001 and a National Register District in 2002. It is a commercial district built between 1910-1930 that was home to the easternmost stop in the City of the Dallas-Fort Worth Interurban rail line. (Source: City of Fort Worth, 2009.)



The Marine Commercial District along North Main Street (center, left) was a pivotal commercial area of North Fort Worth. It was listed on the National Register in 2001. The Eighth Avenue District (center, right) is comprised of one block of residential structures from the area once known as Quality Hill. It was listed on the National Register in 2006. The Leuda-May District (bottom) was listed in 2005 and is a collection of early 20th century apartment buildings. (Source: Planning and Development Department, 2009.)

Properties designated as HSE are recognized as some of the most important historic structures and sites in Fort Worth. They have also been deemed as some of the most endangered due to prolonged vacancy or deterioration. They must embody at least five of the ten criteria for designation and have documented evidence of endangerment. Often HSE buildings are large structures that have proven difficult to redevelop. For this reason, the City offers special economic incentives for stabilization and rehabilitation of HSE structures. Properties designated as HSE include the T&P Terminal on West Lancaster Avenue and the Farmers & Mechanics Building on Main Street. Examples of successful rehabilitations of HSE buildings include the Lockheart Gables Bed & Breakfast on Locke Avenue and the Blackstone Hotel in Downtown.

The Historic and Cultural Landmark (HC) designation can be applied to individual properties and districts. HC designated properties are important to the history and culture of Fort Worth. To be designated HC, a property must meet three of the ten designation criteria as listed in the preservation ordinance. For a district nomination, at least two contiguous properties must meet three of the ten criteria. In 2007, the Stop Six: Sunrise Edition, the Terrell Heights Historic District, and the Hillcrest Tremont Historic District were designated. Currently, there are six potential districts being considered by property owners.

Demolition Delay properties have been identified as resources that meet at least two of the ten designation criteria. Under the Demolition Delay designation, the City may delay the structure's demolition for up to 180 days in order to pursue alternatives. This time frame may be shortened or waived at the discretion of the City.

In total, the City has designated more than 7,000 historic properties using all three designations, and the HCLC has the responsibility of monitoring each property.

The HCLC consists of nine citizens appointed by the Mayor and the City Council. It is their responsibility to recommend eligible properties for historic designation based on documented significance and the designation criteria. They are also responsible for granting Certificates of Appropriateness for exterior changes to historic property based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and, where applicable, historic district design guidelines. They also verify projects for the historic site tax exemption.

The historic site tax exemption is used as a tool to promote owner investment in a historic property. Both HSE and HC designated properties are eligible to receive tax incentives on the City portion of the ad valorem taxes based on pre-renovation assessed values. This incentive encourages a substantial investment in designated properties, while ensuring that projects are consistent with appropriate historic preservation practices.

Fort Worth Historic & Cultural Landmark Districts



There are eleven local historic districts in Fort Worth. Elizabeth Boulevard (top), named after the wife of its developer John Ryan, was the City's first historic district and is also listed on the National Register. Fairmount-Southside (middle) was locally and nationally designated in 1990 and remains one of the largest residential historic districts in the country. Mistletoe Heights (bottom) was designated by the City in 2002 and is an excellent example of a middle to upper class early 20th century neighborhood. (Source: Planning and Development Department, 2009.)

Current Trends in Historic Preservation

Continuing the useful life of historic buildings is a creative process that requires a joint effort by the City, nonprofit organizations, and private developers. The most challenging adaptive reuse projects involve large, often vacant buildings originally designed for specific uses like warehouses, historic railroad terminals, and theaters. In Fort Worth, the Texas & Pacific Terminal, the Swift & Co. building and the Montgomery Ward building are examples of historic buildings for which adaptive reuse projects have been completed.

Challenges faced in adapting historic buildings to new uses include bringing the buildings into compliance with current code requirements, removing hazardous materials such as lead paint and asbestos, and installing the cutting edge technology required for telecommunications and computer networks. These barriers create the need for a proactive and innovative approach by developers and architects, in partnership with City officials who administer fire and life safety codes. The City adopted Chapter 34 of the International Building Code, which relates specifically to historic buildings and allows some leniency in the code requirements for historic buildings. Financial incentives at the local, state, and federal levels can be used to offset these often-costly rehabilitation projects. The Homes of Parker Commons is an adaptive reuse project where the Fort Worth High School building on Jennings Avenue and the Alexander Hogg School building on West Terrell Avenue have been rehabilitated and converted into apartments that provide much-needed housing near the Medical District in Fort Worth's Southside.

On occasion, historic buildings are removed instead of reused. The demolition of historic buildings happens throughout the country for many reasons, and what is built in replacement often becomes the target of intense scrutiny. Efforts to have sensitive and compatible infill development within historic neighborhoods are sometimes seen as overly obtrusive, but are often necessary in order to maintain the historic character of an area that will draw business, residents, and tourists. Locally, regulatory mechanisms are used to ensure quality infill within historic neighborhoods. Within designated historic districts, the Landmarks Commission has the authority to require new construction to adhere to the district's design guidelines. For individually designated properties, the Landmarks Commission relies upon the guidance of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

The designation of individual properties and districts is an on going effort. Most of Fort Worth's districts will need to be re-surveyed. As a part of on-going preservation education and stewardship, City staff will need to train volunteers to help with future survey updates.

Preservation programs routinely use Conservation Districts to facilitate the preservation of neighborhood character. The districts focus on the appropriate scale and mass of infill development relative to the neighborhood environment. Conservation Districts are not intended to prescribe design guidelines for specific architecture, nor are they used to protect individual buildings. However, this type of

Fort Worth Historic & Cultural Landmark Districts



Kenwood Court was designated as a Historic and Cultural Landmark District in 1991. The 15 houses within the district were constructed during the 1920-1940s. (Source: Planning and Development Department, 2009.)



The Garden of Eden District was designated by the City Council in 2005 and is the first African-American cultural district in Fort Worth. The district celebrates the history and culture of the Cheney family, members of which have lived on this land for more than 150 years. (Source: Planning and Development Department, 2009.)

district can successfully preserve the streetscape and physical character of a neighborhood. In Fort Worth, Conservation Districts are not widely used, but the promotion of this alternative to a historic district may foster interest from neighborhoods with greater opportunities for infill development. The Conservation District Overlay is in the process of being updated.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Citywide Historic Preservation Plan identifies goals and implementation strategies in five areas: historic resources survey, the preservation ordinance, economic incentives for historic preservation, historic preservation within City policies and decisions, and public education. Throughout 2005 and 2006, and more recently in 2009, initiatives were undertaken to address each area for implementation. Substantial action has been taken to address the following: designation of historic schools, changes to the preservation ordinance and economic incentives, passage of an internal City policy to address historic sites and structures, and the creation of printed materials for public awareness of the preservation program. However, further implementation is necessary to achieve some of the Preservation Plan's goals as listed below.

Maintain a historic resources survey that is comprehensive, current, accurate, cost-effective, and readily accessible to potential users.

- Partner with preservation organizations to conduct on-going training for neighborhood leaders and citizen volunteers to identify historic elements and document structures, sites, and streetscapes.
- Facilitate the creation of two historic and/or conservation districts in 2012.

Enforce the preservation ordinance in a manner that is effective and fair.

- Provide on-going training for relevant City staff and commissions who deal with the enforcement of the preservation ordinance and design guidelines.

POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

The Citywide Historic Preservation Plan and the Preservation Ordinance identify policies and strategies to enable the City to effectively administer a historic preservation program that will achieve the above goals and objectives.

Policies

- Protect, enhance and perpetuate landmarks and districts of historical, cultural, architectural, or archaeological importance to Fort Worth.
- Maintain a generally harmonious outward appearance of both historic and modern structures that are compatible and complementary in scale, form, color, proportion, texture, and material.
- Foster civic pride by recognizing accomplishments of the past.
- Educate the public on technical issues, the benefits of preservation, and the diversity of Fort Worth's history.

Fort Worth Historic & Cultural Landmark Districts



The City Council initiated two historic district designations in 2006: Historic Morningside, an early John C. Ryan neighborhood nearly identical in patterns to Ryan Place, and Historic Carver Heights, a mid-century modern ranch style neighborhood developed in the 1950s as the first auto-oriented 'suburb' in Fort Worth for black professionals. (Sources: *Planning and Development Department, and Bunche-Ellington Club, 2009.*)

Strategies

- Facilitate the designation of significant districts, sites, and structures with an overlay for Demolition Delay, Historic and Cultural Landmark, or Highly Significant Endangered.
- Educate the public about the importance of designating historic resources.
- In cooperation with Fort Worth's preservation organizations, develop and participate in and educational programming, such as technical workshops and seminars.
- Conduct on-going training for neighborhood leaders and citizen volunteers to identify historic elements and document structures, sites, and streetscapes.
- Enhance the City's existing preservation incentives and develop new ones.
- Explore the creation of a façade rehabilitation loan program to be administered by the City or another entity.
- Establish a local revolving loan or grant fund for historic properties.

PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

Historic preservation programs and projects rely heavily on volunteers from the community. Much of the work accomplished by these programs results in the identification of historic resources, new designations, increased protection of existing resources and better documentation of the historic structures within the City of Fort Worth.

Incentives Program

The City of Fort Worth offers a program of economic incentives for properties designated as Highly Significant Endangered (HSE) and Historic and Cultural Landmarks (HC). The incentives offer relief to a property owner against the City's ad valorem taxes. Proposed rehabilitation projects are reviewed and approved by the Landmarks Commission. The City Council also approves the application for the historic site tax exemption.

In 2005, the City Council adopted revised incentives for properties designated as HSE. Under the revisions, when a HSE property is stabilized, the property owner is afforded a 100 percent abatement on the City portion of the property taxes on the improvements for ten years and a 50 percent tax freeze on the land for up to five years. Once a substantial rehabilitation of the property has been completed, the incentive is increased to allow the abatement on the improvements to continue for ten years with a five-year bonus available for timely completion of the project and a tax freeze on 100 percent of the increase in the value of the land for the same period of time. This incentive is transferable and remains with the land upon sale.

Properties designated as HC, either individually or as part of a district, are eligible for a ten-year City tax freeze at the pre-renovation assessed value of the land and improvements with the completion of a substantial rehabilitation project. This is defined as an investment in the property equal to or greater than 30 percent of the assessed value of the improvements. In cases where the 30 percent value equals less than \$3,000, the property owner will be required to spend a minimum of \$3,000.

Fort Worth Historic & Cultural Landmark Districts



In 2007, Hillcrest, top, was designated after a petition of the residents. Historic Stop Six Sunrise Edition, middle, and Terrell Heights, bottom, were also designated, increasing the number of local historic districts to eleven. (Source: *Planning and Development Department, 2011.*)

Designation Advisory Committee

The Designation Advisory Committee consists of nine citizen volunteers with an interest or professional expertise in historic preservation appointed by the Chair of the Landmarks Commission. The purpose of this committee is to identify and nominate eligible properties to the local inventory of historic designations. In 2006, the committee worked in cooperation with Fort Worth South, Inc. to identify and document historic structures within the Medical District Tax Increment Financing District for Demolition Delay designations. The project resulted in the survey of nearly 100 historic structures for Demolition Delay designation in 2007. In 2008, the committee continued to review properties for designation, with six properties and one district approved. In 2009, the designation of the American Airlines Terminal at Meacham Airport was approved by the City Council. The final designations on certain structures at the Fort Worth Zoo, the consideration of designation for approximately 63 properties in TIF #4 (Medical District), and historic parks are being considered.

Focus Group on Preservation Incentives

In response to the Citywide Historic Preservation Plan's recommendation that the economic incentives for historic preservation be strengthened, the City Council's Central City Revitalization and Economic Development Committee appointed a focus group charged with the review of current incentives and the recommendation of appropriate changes. The focus group consists of representatives of historic preservation and development interests in Fort Worth. The focus group made six major recommendations to strengthen economic incentives including the pursuit of changes to the state sales tax on labor and the state receivership statute; changes to the HSE economic incentive; additional staffing to review and monitor central city and historic preservation projects; revisions to Code Compliance policies; and the prioritization of historic neighborhoods within the capital improvements program. During the 2007 state legislative session, members of the group testified before legislative committees regarding proposed House and Senate bills related to receivership and the sales tax. Due to 2007 changes in state law involving receivership of property, non-profits may receive certain neglected properties and improve them. These incentives have strengthened historic preservation as a planning tool for the betterment of Fort Worth.

Historic Fort Worth Schools



In 2003, the City and Fort Worth ISD identified 42 historic schools for designation, including the historic Hubbard Heights Elementary and Polytechnic High Schools. (Source: Planning and Development Department, 2009.)

Examples of National Register Buildings in Downtown



Bob R. Simpson Building



Sinclair Building

(Source: Planning and Development Department, 2009.)