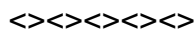




Historic Preservation In Webster Groves

Historic preservation is the process of identifying, protecting, and enhancing places and structures of historical, architectural, and cultural significance. Webster Groves is a community of many historic homes and buildings with a wide variety of architectural styles. The responsibility of safeguarding these historic properties for future generations to enjoy is shared by the City of Webster Groves, the Webster Groves Historical Society, and the community as a whole.

In order to assist the community in maintaining these desirable structures, the City of Webster Groves has established the **Architectural Review Board (ARB)** and the **Historic Preservation Commission (HPC)**.



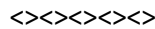
The *Architectural Review Board's* purpose is to ensure and preserve the architectural quality and uniqueness of Webster Groves. Through the building permit process, the ARB reviews and approves plans associated with new construction projects, and additions or alterations to existing structures. The primary scope of their review addresses the aesthetic appropriateness of the exterior changes to these structures. The ARB is additionally tasked with reviews of public signage, retaining walls, and

fencing requests, among other things. Their duties apply to all buildings within the city. Routine changes that are smaller in scope are often delegated to city staff for review. Historic buildings may have additional levels of scrutiny if there are preservation guidelines that apply to them.



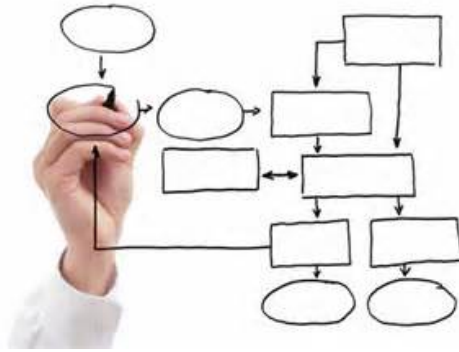
LEaP

(Leadership Education and Preservation)



The *Historic Preservation Commission* protects, enhances, and promotes historic districts, structures, and land in Webster Groves. The HPC conducts an ongoing survey to identify properties in Webster Groves that have special cultural, historic, archeological, community, or architectural value. This information and research is maintained as an inventory. The HPC continually strives to recommend historically significant properties as landmarks, or areas as historic districts. Records and information of all approved local landmarks and historic districts are maintained at City Hall. The HPC is also tasked with being an educational resource on historic preservation issues for the community as a whole.

In addition to the ARB's review, the HPC occasionally is tasked with providing a preliminary level of review for changes to historic buildings. A Certificate of Appropriateness is an essential formal approval from the HPC for a property owner to take certain actions associated with historic buildings. For example, an owner must obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness in order to demolish or relocate any part of a historic landmark or a building within a historic district. Additionally, a Certificate of Appropriateness is required from the HPC when an owner seeks to subdivide, split or make boundary adjustments of the underlying property. This is part of the permitting process when making these changes.



The Process for Designating a Historic Landmark or Historic District

A nomination or recommendation that a building be designated as a historic landmark, or that an area be designated as a historic district, can originate from the HPC, the City Council, from the owner of record, or residents within a proposed district. After a property is nominated, the owners are notified of the proposed designation. The HPC then works with owners to answer questions and provide information related to the history of their home. It is a collaborative process. In the case of historic districts, the collective members of the district adopt a charter; develop guidelines for preservation and a map showing the boundaries of the district. [Note: These guidelines are important because they are used going forward by the ARB when reviewing proposed changes to buildings in that district. Sometimes city designated historic landmarks are located within historic districts. In these instances, any changes to the landmark must also meet that district's guidelines. If a property has additional state or federal historic designations, changes must also meet those respective guidelines.]

Eventually, a public hearing is conducted by the HPC and a ruling is made as to whether the building under consideration meets the criteria for a historic designation. The HPC utilizes a list of 13 criteria that are set out in the HPC ordinance of the Webster Groves Code Section 52.190 to make this determination. The criteria include as an example: the history of the building; identification with a important owner, builder or architect; the craftsmanship or architectural details of the structure; the style and whether it relates to a certain period; and its suitability for preservation or restoration. For a historic district, the HPC also takes into consideration whether the overall setting and harmony as a collection of buildings, structures, and objects forms a unit worthy of protection and recognition. The HPC has 15 days from the public hearing to make a decision and then notify the residents. If the HPC decides the building or area meets one or more of the criteria set forth in section 52.190, it recommends the property become a designated landmark or historic district to the City Council for review and decision. The City Council conducts its own public hearing and makes the ultimate decision on the landmark or historic district.

While not governing bodies, there are additional resources worth noting:

- **The Webster Groves Historical Society** maintains many historic documents and encourages interest in the community through a series of self-guided walking tours and the presentation of **Century Home** recognition plaques to homes that are 100 years old or older. Both the Historical Society and the Historic Preservation Commission have information that can assist homeowners in determining the age and history of one's home. (<http://historicwebster.org/>)
- As a platform to recognize notable renovation or preservation projects, the biennial **Awards of Excellence** program is sponsored by the City of Webster Groves, select boards and commissions, and the Webster Groves Historical Society. These awards identify projects in the City that exemplify excellent design and acknowledge the owners, designers, and builders for their achievements and contribution to the community in the areas of architecture, historic preservation, landscape architecture, and craftsmanship.

The City and the various organizations mentioned above take great pride in the historic nature of the community and recognize its importance in maintaining a high quality of life in Webster Groves. Currently there are 48 local designated landmark properties and 5 designated historic districts in Webster Groves.