

FAQ: Historic Preservation Commission

General

Why is the Village interested in historic preservation? In general, historic preservation offers many cultural, environmental, and economic benefits. Buildings and sites that are rich in history are often central to the identity of places, whether at the local, regional or national level. It should be noted that in the 2000s, a survey of Libertyville residents was completed as part of the Village's Comprehensive Plan updates, with 97.6% of respondents (the strongest response in this category) agreeing with "character of the community" as the strongest perception of Libertyville. This spurred the Village Board of Trustees to make historic preservation a focus in Libertyville.

Are there financial incentives for historic preservation? There are financial incentives, in the form of tax credits and freezes, which may be available to owners of Local Landmarks or properties on the National Register of Historic Places. More information on these financial incentives can be found on the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency website [here](#).

Does the Village have an Historic Preservation Ordinance? The Village Board of Trustees approved an Historic Preservation Ordinance in 2012. The ordinance spells out the duties and responsibilities of the Historic Preservation Commission and establishes guidelines for the creation of Local Landmarks and Historic Districts. A copy of the Historic Preservation Ordinance (12-O-15) can be found [here](#).

Does the Village have an Historic Preservation Commission (HPC)? The Village formed an Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) in 2014. There are 7 HPC commissioners. Details on the composition of the HPC and its duties can be found in [Section 4 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance](#).

What does the HPC do? The HPC is charged with a number of preservation-related tasks, including: identifying, preserving and protecting structures and sites having historic and cultural significance to the Village of Libertyville; fostering civic pride in those structures and sites that have historical and cultural significance; educating residents and property owners; supporting and preparing surveys and studies of Libertyville's historical and architectural resources. A complete Statement of Purpose for the HPC can be found in Section 2.1 of the [Historic Preservation Ordinance](#).

Where can I learn more about historic preservation in general? A number of resources exist for those interested in learning more about historic preservation. Some HPC favorites include the [Illinois Historic Preservation Agency \(IHPA\)](#) and the [National Trust for Historic Preservation](#). Those interested in local preservation may consider visiting the [Libertyville-Mundelein Historical Society](#) or the [Cook Memorial Library](#).

Surveys

What is a historic survey? A historic survey is an assessment of individual properties with the purpose of identifying historical and/or architectural significance. During a survey, background research is completed on each structure within a focus area by looking at a number of sources such as building permits, Sanborn maps, and historic articles and photos, in addition to many more. Additionally, each structure is viewed and photographed in-person so that the surveyor can confirm architectural style and note any alterations to the structure.

Why do we need an historic survey? Historic surveys help villages and cities determine which structures and areas have historic and architectural significance. This information can be used to make informed decisions regarding preservation planning and to identify those structures that may be worth saving.

Has the Village done an historic survey before? The Village completed its first historic survey in November 2016. The results of the survey can be found at www.historiclibertyville.com.

Who is doing the survey? The survey was completed by Lara Ramsey of [Ramsey Historic Consultants](#).

What are the boundaries of the completed survey? The survey area is roughly bounded by the Metra train tracks to the north, 1st Street to the east, Rte. 176 to the south, and Brainerd Avenue to the west. All commercial and residential structures within this area have been included in the survey.

What is the outcome of the historic survey? The purpose of the survey was to determine what structures have historic and/or architectural significance. The HPC may use the information from the survey to identify structures that have the potential to become Local Landmarks. The survey may also provide insight on the creation of a Historic District(s). Please keep in mind that the survey itself does not automatically create a Local Landmark or Historic District; it is purely informational.

Local Landmarks

What is a Local Landmark? A Local Landmark is a property or structure that has a high degree of historic, cultural, architectural or archaeological significance to the Village of Libertyville. Per Section 6.2 of the Village's [Historic Preservation Ordinance](#), certain criteria (such as a building's architecture, designer, or builder, in addition to many more) are used to determine if a property has local significance. Properties or structures can be approved as a Local Landmark by the HPC so long as they meet at least one of these criteria.

How does a building become a Local Landmark? The process for creating a Local Landmark begins with a [nomination application](#). Any person or group (including the HPC) may request local landmark designation for a commercial property; however, only the owner of a residential property may request local landmark designation for that site. Following the submittal of a nomination application, the HPC reviews and evaluates the application at a public hearing to determine if the structure or property meets one or more of the criteria for landmark designation (Section 6.2 of the [Historic Preservation Ordinance](#)). If the HPC determines that the structure or property does meet one of more of these criteria, they may choose to make a formal recommendation for approval. At this point, the application goes to the Village Board for adoption of an ordinance that formally grants local landmark status. A full description of the local landmark designation procedure can be found in [Section 7 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance](#).

What are the benefits for Locally Landmarked structures? A Local Landmark in Libertyville receives community wide recognition and protection under the Historic Preservation Ordinance. At a Village Board meeting, the owner(s) will be presented with a plaque of recognition and certificate signed by the Mayor. Financial incentives are available in the form of tax credits and freezes. Owner-occupied residential buildings may qualify for the 20% Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit, Historic Preservation Easement Tax Benefit, or the Property Tax Assessment Freeze. More information on the available financial incentives can be found [here](#).

Where can I find the application for Local Landmark designation? The application for local landmark designation can be found [here](#).

My property is a Local Landmark. Can I make changes to it? A structure or property with Local Landmark status can be altered under certain conditions. Prior to making any exterior changes, the HPC must first determine if the alterations proposed are consistent with the historic nature of the structure or site. If the HPC agrees that the proposed changes will not diminish the historic or architectural significance, they can issue a “Certificate of Appropriateness”. Please see the FAQ section on Certificates of Appropriateness for the more information.

Can a Local Landmark be torn down? As with proposed alterations, a Certificate of Appropriateness is required to tear down a Local Landmark. In considering an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition, the HPC is to consider the standards for review of demolition as outlined in [Section 12.2 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance](#).

Does the Village have any Local Landmarks? Yes! In 2016, the Village approved the Ansel B. Cook Home, David Adler Estate, and Proctor Building as Local Landmarks. The application materials for these properties can be found [here](#).

Historic Districts

What is an Historic District? An Historic District may contain within definable geographic boundaries one or more landmarks and may have within its boundaries other properties or structures that, while not of such historic and/or architectural significance to be designated as landmarks, nevertheless contribute to the overall visual characteristics of the landmark or landmarks located within the historic district.

What criteria does the Village use in determining the designation of Historic Districts? Nominations for designating a Historic District shall be made to the Historic Preservation Commission through an application provided by the Planning Division.

The criteria in determining the designation of a Historic District includes:

- The Historic District containing one or more landmarks within its definable geographic boundaries that, while not such historic significance to be designated as landmarks, nevertheless contribute to the overall visual characteristics of the landmark or landmarks located in such district;
- A significant number of structures meeting any of the Landmark Designation Criteria standards;
- Establishing a sense of time and place unique to the Village of Libertyville; and/or
- Exemplifying or reflecting the cultural, social, economic, political or architectural history of the nation, the state or the Village.

How does an Historic District get created? The process for creating an Historic District starts with a nomination application. Any person or group (including the HPC) may present to the Commission a petition requesting a defined geographic area to be designated as a Historic District. Application forms are supplied by the Planning Division, who will provide the completed forms to the Commission. Following the submittal of the application, the Commission shall conduct a survey to identify potential historic districts within the Village. Based on the outcomes of the survey, the Commission may nominate

an area for designation as an Historic District, and may recommend additions or deletions from any existing Historic District. Nominations may also be made by any property owner in Libertyville, so long as the petition is signed by at least fifty-one percent (51%) of the properties within the proposed district. If the Commission determines the nominated Historic District meets the necessary criteria, the Commission shall schedule a public hearing. Within thirty (30) days after the conclusion of the public hearing, the Commission shall make a recommendation regarding the proposed Historic District designation. The Director of Community Development shall forward a copy of the Commission's recommendation, including findings and reasoning, to the Village Board. After the Commission makes a recommendation, the Village Board will approve or disapprove the nomination. Approval by the Village Board will require the Adoption of an Ordinance.

My property is located in an historic district. Can I make changes to it? Yes! Any type of changes to the exterior of a property in the Historic District will require an application for Certificate of Appropriateness. Then, the Historic Preservation Commission will determine if the alterations are consistent with the historic nature of the structure, site and district. Please note, alterations to the exterior of a property will be heard through the Historic Preservation Commission and NOT the Appearance Review Commission.

Can a property in a Historic District be torn down? Yes, any type of changes to the building will require an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition. Then, the Commission shall consider whether the property, structure or object is of such historic, cultural, architectural or archeological significance that its demolition would be detrimental to the public interest and contrary to the general welfare of the public of the people of the Village. Please note, alterations to the exterior of a property (such as demolition) will be heard through the Historic Preservation Commission and NOT the Appearance Review Commission.

Certificate of Appropriateness

What is a Certificate of Appropriateness? A Certificate of Appropriateness is a certificate issued by the HPC indicating review and authorization of plans for alterations, construction, demolition or relocation of a landmark, or property, structure, site or object within a Historic District.

What activities require a Certificate of Appropriateness? A Certificate of Appropriateness is required if your house or building is a Local Landmark or within an Historic District and you want to make the following changes: any demolition that requires a permit from the Village; any replacement structure constructed in conjunction with approval of demolition; any alteration or addition to a structure that is visible from any public right-of-way, publicly owned land or adjacent private property; or any request for a variance from Libertyville's Zoning Ordinance.

What is the process for obtaining a Certificate of Appropriateness? An Application for Certificate of Appropriateness is available through the Planning Division. The Commission shall schedule a public meeting for consideration of the application within forty-five (45) days after receipt of the application. At the public meeting, the applicant or their authorized representative shall present testimony in regard to the application. If the Commissioners vote to approve the application, the Certificate of Appropriateness shall be issued to the applicant within ten (10) business days following the Commission.

Is a Building Permit still required for proposed alterations? Upon receipt of a Certificate of Appropriateness, the applicant will also need to complete the necessary permit applications through the Community Development Department.

What happens if my application for a Certificate of Appropriateness is denied? If the Commissioners vote to disapprove the application, the Commission shall make reasonable efforts to confer with the applicant, offer technical guidance, and attempt to resolve differences. The applicant may resubmit an amended application for consideration by the Commission.