

THE CITY OF COLORADO SPRINGS  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCE  
SUMMARY

The Historic Preservation Ordinance was adopted as part of the City's Zoning Code in 1988. It was developed to formalize the public commitment of preserving the distinctive historic character of Colorado Springs by calling for the development of policies and programs to support historic preservation.

The Ordinance created the Historic Preservation Board. The Board is composed of 7 members, appointed by City Council, that possess experience, interest and technical training in fields relevant to historic preservation. These fields may include architecture, history, archaeology, landscape architecture, general contracting and the building trades, urban planning, mortgage lending, real estate, urban design, fine arts, business, economics, engineering and law. The Board oversees the application of the Historic Preservation Ordinance and related activities.

The Ordinance also established the Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ). It is similar to other zoning classifications in that it is applied to properties by the Colorado Springs City Council. As an overlay zone, it does not affect the provisions of the base zone that addresses such features as land uses, lot coverage, building height and setbacks. The HPOZ applies to the building permit process for properties that are being considered for the overlay zone, or those that have been zoned.

The HPOZ works in two separate phases. The first is consideration of applying the overlay zone to properties. The property's owner or the Historic Preservation Board may initiate this. Properties may be considered on the basis of historic or architectural significance; commonly, both apply when overlay zoning is being considered.

The Ordinance mandates a detailed process for HPOZ consideration that includes notification to property owners and reviews by the Historic Preservation Board, the City Planning Commission and City Council. As with any zoning action, the zoning designation can be appealed. While consideration is pending, the HPOZ provision called interim control is in effect. Owners seeking certain types of permits from the Regional Building Department must seek approval of their work during the permit review process, which is the second phase of the HPOZ.

Review of proposed work is the second phase. Work that requires a permit from the Regional Building Department for changes to a building, moving a building, installing a sign or demolishing a building is to be reviewed by the Board. This does not include such items as painting, normal maintenance, landscaping or construction of fences less than 6 feet tall. Review meetings are scheduled twice a month to minimize delays. Written standards, adopted by City Council are used by the Board in their deliberations.

The reviews of permits are intended to help the owner make sure that changes are compatible with a historic property and pose no adverse effects to the resource or its area. For properties that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Board may deny the issuance of a permit if it finds that a proposed permit is incompatible. For all other properties, a permit may be delayed up to 90 days to enable examination of possible alternatives. Decisions of the Board may be appealed to City Council, and relief, based on hardship, may be sought by an owner and considered by the Board.

The Ordinance is intended to benefit the community through preservation of our distinct identity as represented by our historic buildings. It also is designed to increase awareness of our heritage, increase tourism and conserve our built environment.

For additional information, please contact Meg Riesterer, Planner II, at 385-5393.