



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

CITY LANDMARK INFORMATION



DEFINITION:

A historic **Landmark** is a structure, site, cultural landscape or feature having historic, architectural, archeological, cultural, or aesthetic significance and designated by City Council as a Landmark under the provisions of the Santa Barbara Municipal Code Chapter 30.157. *A City Landmark is the highest distinction given to a historic resource in the City of Santa Barbara.*

ELIGIBILITY:

In considering a proposal to designate a structure as a **City Landmark**, the Historic Landmarks Commission site or feature must be at least 50 years of age, meet one or more of the criteria outlined below, and retain historic integrity. The Historic Landmarks Commission must find that the structure, site or feature retains enough historic integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association that it conveys its historic significance in accordance with the most recent National Register of Historic Places Bulletin How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation. The Historic Landmarks Commission must find that the structure, site or feature meets one or more of the following Significance Criteria:

1. It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution in our past;
2. It is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
3. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, architectural style or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic or historic value, or represents a significant and distinguishable collection whose individual components may lack distinction;
4. It yields, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history; or
5. Its unique location or singular physical characteristic represents an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood.

PROCEDURE:

1. A proposal for designation of a **landmark** may begin with action initiated by the Historic Landmarks Commission itself, or with a nomination application to the Commission by the property's owner or by an interested person.
2. If the Commission decides to proceed, it may adopt a resolution of intention to consider recommending the resource for designation. The proposal may be referred to the Commission's designations subcommittee for comment.
3. The Commission's staff then prepares the proposal for presentation at a public hearing. At least ten (10) days before the hearing, notice is put in the newspaper and is sent to the applicant, to the property owner, and to owners of abutting properties.
4. The public hearing is held by the Historic Landmarks Commission, and oral or written comments are received at the meeting. The public hearing may be continued to subsequent meetings if there is no objection. Reasons for a continuance may include the need for more information, or the desire to consult with other persons, among other things.
5. If the Commission decides to recommend designation of a **landmark**, it adopts a resolution to recommend the designation to the City Council.
6. The Commission's written report and resolution are sent to the City Council, and the Council considers them at a public hearing. If the Council decides to designate a **landmark**, it adopts a resolution within ninety (90) days after receipt of the recommendation.
7. The designation becomes effective with adoption of the City Council resolution, and the designation is then recorded with the County Recorder.

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Only exterior alterations must be reviewed by the HLC and determined to not cause a substantial adverse change in the historical significance of the resource in order to be approved. Additions or alterations are also likely to be approved if they are compatible with the neighborhood, with the existing structure and if essential features that make the structure historically significant are retained.

The Historic Landmarks Commission does not review any interior changes.

Historic resources are integral components of the City's heritage because they are historically or architecturally significant. The Landmark designation status protects our City's streetscapes and building fabric. Landmarks are the most significant buildings. The HLC designates a resource a Structure of Merit. The determining factors of a Structure of Merit designation rather than a City Landmark designation are: the amount of eligibility criteria met, the level of integrity of the historic resource and, the quality or number of resources of this type remaining in the City. Once designated a Structure of Merit, all exterior alterations are under the jurisdiction of the HLC.

Before a project is approved, the Historic Landmarks Commission must determine that one or more of the following findings are applicable to the proposed alteration, relocation, or demolition:

- A. The exterior alterations are being made to restore the historic resource to its original appearance or in order to substantially aid its preservation or enhancement as a historic resource; and
2. The exterior alterations are consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.
- B. A **landmark** may be relocated, under certain conditions, with the written approval of the above named bodies.
- C. A **landmark** may only be demolished, subject to the written approval of the Historic Landmarks Commission, if it is damaged by earthquake, fire, or act of God to such an extent that it cannot reasonably be repaired and restored.

D. **Landmarks** shall be maintained in good repair by the owner or other person in legal control of it.

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Title to **landmark** property does not change as a result of designation. There are no restrictions on sale of **landmarks**. Designation as a **landmark** does not establish a requirement that the site, area or structure be open to the public.

In many cases, research performed during the City's Survey of Architectural and Historic Resources has provided information about the background of individual buildings available at the City Planning Department

The office of the City Planning Division, Community Development Department, has a collection of publications on the preservation of historic properties. Interested persons are welcome to contact the office to see these publications, or to obtain further information on the designation process. A list of designated **landmarks** is available on the City's Historic Preservation Web Page at www.santabarbaraca.gov.

Benefits and Incentives

Preservation BENEFITS

Historic preservation is not just about regulations that prevent inappropriate changes to historic resources. Residential homeowners also find that property values stabilize or increase when historic preservation standards are used in rehabilitating their homes. This occurs in part because of the investments made to rehabilitate the homes, as well as the added prestige of owning a designated structure. Nationwide studies also show that preservation projects contribute more to the local economy than do new building programs because each dollar spent on a preservation project has a higher percentage devoted to labor and to the purchase of local materials. By contrast, new construction typically has a higher percentage of each dollar spent devoted to materials that are produced outside the local economy and to special construction skills that may be imported. National and California State studies have proven that local designation provides the following benefits:

- Increases neighborhood stability
- Increases property values
- Preserves the physical history of the area
- Promotes an appreciation of the physical environment
- Fosters community pride and self-image by creating a unique sense of place and local integrity
- Increases the awareness and appreciation of local history
- Attracts potential customers to city businesses
- Increases city tourism

STATE AND FEDERAL TAX CREDIT INCENTIVE

Economic incentives are available to historic preservation projects at the local, state, and federal levels. The State of California and the Federal Government offers rehabilitation tax credits to designated and qualified projects and properties.

MILLS ACT PROPERTY TAX INCENTIVE

The Historical Property Contract Program (Mills Act) provides property tax abatement to properties designated as Structures of Merit or City Landmarks. Under the program, property owners receive a significant reduction in local property taxes in exchange for their promise to actively participate in restoring, rehabilitating, repairing, and preserving their properties. Participants enter into a perpetual 10-year contract with the City. For details, please refer to the web site:

<http://www.santabarbaraca.gov/services/community/historic/preservation/mills.asp>

CALIFORNIA STATE HISTORICAL BUILDING CODE

One of California's most valuable tools for the preservation of historic resources is the California State Historical Building Code (CHBC), which is defined in Sections 18950 to 18961 of Division 13, Part 2.7 of Health and Safety Code (H&SC), a part of California Law. The CHBC is intended to save California's architectural heritage by recognizing the unique construction issues inherent in maintaining and adaptively reusing historic resources. The CHBC provides alternative building regulations for permitting repairs, alterations, and additions necessary for the preservation, rehabilitation, relocation, related construction, change of use, or continued use of a "qualified historical building or structure." The CHBC's standards and regulations are intended to facilitate the rehabilitation or change of occupancy so as to preserve their original or restored elements and features, encourage energy conservation and a cost effective approach to preservation, and provide for reasonable safety from fire, seismic forces, or other hazards for occupants and users of such historic resources, structures, and properties, and to provide reasonable availability and usability by the physically disabled.

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

"The greenest building is one that is already built." Preserving an historic structure is sound environmental conservation policy because "reusing" saves energy and reduces the need for producing new construction materials. Many historic resources are inherently "green" in the following ways:

- Energy is not consumed to demolish a building and dispose of the resulting debris.
- Energy is not used to create new building materials, transport them, and assemble them on site.
- The embodied energy which was used to create the original building and its components is preserved.
- By reusing older historic resources, pressure is reduced to harvest new lumber and other materials that may have negative impacts on the environment.