

**Town of Black Mountain
Historic Preservation Commission
Preservation FAQ**

What is the Historic Preservation Commission?

The Historic Preservation Commission is a five-member commission appointed by the Board of Aldermen under the authority of Chapter 160A, Article 19, Part 3C of the North Carolina General Statutes. It is charged with inventorying the historical, pre-historical, architectural and culturally significant properties within the town and developing a preservation plan for them. It recommends the designation of local historic landmarks and local historic districts. It then reviews proposals for alterations, demolition or new construction within districts or landmarks. The commission works through the Planning and Development Services Department, 828 419-9300, Ext 373 or Ext 370.

What is a local historic landmark designation?

Landmark designation is an honor. It signifies recognition that the property is important to the heritage and character of the community and that its protection enriches all the community's residents. Historic landmark designation applies to individual buildings, structures, sites or objects and interiors. The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) recommends designation, and the local governing board establishes the landmark by adopting or amending an ordinance. When designated, the owner will receive a 50% local property tax deferral. Another outcome is design regulations to protect the significance of the landmark property; changes must be reviewed and approved by the HPC.

What is a local historic district designation?

Historic district designation is an overlay district that applies to a group of contiguous properties that are historically, visually, and/or culturally related either by plan or by physical development. It is a defined geographical area with properties distinguishable by type, age, style, or density. A district may include diverse types of historic properties, but together form a unified identity. The HPC recommends designation, and the local governing board establishes the historic district by adopting or amending a zoning or other ordinance. A consequence is design regulations to protect the significance of the community; exterior changes must be approved by the HPC. Black Mountain currently has one local historic district: the Downtown Historic District. In addition, Black Mountain has designated a larger area surrounding the Downtown Historic District as a Downtown Conservation District. Exterior changes within the Conservation District are reviewed by the HPC, but compliance with recommendations is voluntary.

What is the difference between local designation and National Register Listing?

Designation by a local governing board has no direct connection with listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register is the nation's official list of buildings, structures, objects, sites, and districts worthy of preservation for their significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, or culture. It is a federal program administered by the National Park Service in partnership with state and local governments. A historic property or district may qualify for both designations, but these are separate processes with different consequences. The Downtown Black Mountain Historic District is listed on the National Register although the boundaries are slightly different from the local district boundaries. Other nearby National Register Listings include the Black Mountain College Historic District at Camp Rockmont, the Blue Ridge Assembly Historic District, In the Oaks Estate, and the Guastavino Estate at Christmount.

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What is a Certificate of Appropriateness?

A Certificate of Appropriateness is issued by the HPC and enables a property owner to make changes, including alteration, restoration, construction, reconstruction, relocation, or demolition, to a property that is listed as a designated local historic landmark or in a designated local historic district.

How does my property acquire local landmark status?

An owner who requests their property be designated a local landmark should submit a preliminary application and come before the HPC to discuss their request. The HPC will assist the applicant in the investigation of the historical, pre-historical, architectural, or cultural significance of each property proposed for designation. The HPC submits a report of this investigation to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for review and comment. The city attorney drafts an ordinance designating the landmark. After public hearings, the HPC then recommends to the Board of Aldermen to adopt the proposed landmark designation ordinance. The Board of Aldermen may adopt, deny or amend the ordinance as it deems necessary.

Would my property qualify for a local landmark designation?

The property should meet the Criteria for Significance: association to past events/persons significant to our history; embodies distinct character through type, period or method of construction; possesses high artistic value; yielded or is likely to yield important pre/historical information. The property must have aspects of integrity through design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling, and association.

How can my property be listed on the National Register of Historic Places?

The HPC Staff have applications and information to help you through the process, however, the HPC and local governing board do not determine potential listings. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) reviews, determines and forwards the nomination to the Keeper of the National Register. Final authority to list properties in the Register resides with the National Park Service. Nominations are prepared by hired consultants or by the property owners according to federal and state guidelines. A packet with nomination instructions and samples is available from the SHPO.

What funds are available for rehabilitation of historic properties?

Only certified historic structures (listed in the National Register) will qualify for the credits. There is a 20% state tax credit for rehabilitations of income-producing historic properties. To receive the state tax credit, the property must also qualify for the 20% federal investment tax credit. In effect, the combined federal-state credits reduce the cost of a certified rehabilitation of an income-producing structure by 40%. There is also a new state tax credit of 30% for qualifying rehabilitations for non-income-producing historic structures, including owner-occupied personal residences.

Why should I buy a historic property?

People purchase historic properties for many reasons. Some like the idea of owning a "piece of history." Others believe the quality of construction in older structures is superior to that found in

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modern structures. Large rooms, high ceilings, rich materials and intricate details may be the attraction. Other people like the urban neighborhoods or rural areas in which historic properties are often found. The established landscapes and mature plants and trees surrounding a historic property may be the attraction. For some, it is the ability to purchase a property in need of repair at a relatively low price, in anticipation of increasing its value through restoration and rehabilitation. For any reason, you are investing in and preserving the history of the community for future generations to enjoy and learn.

Resources:

See Town of Black Mountain Website. www.townofblackmountain.org