

RACINE HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCE

CITY OF RACINE
HERITAGE PRESERVATION PLAN

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

- The Landmarks Preservation Commission is a seven member body appointed by the mayor and subject to confirmation by the common council. Each member serves a three year term.
- The body is charged with the following duties:
 - Develop appropriate criteria and standards for identifying and evaluating neighborhoods, areas, places, structures and improvements that might be classified as landmarks or landmark sites.
 - Conduct studies and surveys of neighborhoods, areas, places, structures and improvements to determine those that are appropriate as landmarks or landmark sites.
 - Promote public education, interest, and support for preservation of landmarks and landmark sites.
 - Cooperate with and advise the common council, plan commission and other agencies and departments of government with regard to matters with respect to landmarks and landmark sites.
 - Cooperate with and enlist assistance from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the state historical society, the county historical society and other agencies, groups or individuals active in the field of historic and cultural preservation.
 - Develop and recommend ordinances, legislation and programs and otherwise provide information for the purpose of historic preservation to the common council and other governmental bodies.
 - Work on a voluntary basis with the owners of landmarks or landmark sites advising them on the benefits, problems and techniques of preservation and encouraging their participation in preservation activities.

HISTORIC PROPERTIES

- The criteria for the designation of properties to be landmarks, landmark sites, and contributing properties shall be that which:
 - Exemplifies or reflects the cultural, archaeological, political, economic, social or religious history.
 - Is identified with personages, events or periods of history.
 - Embodies distinguishing characteristics of architecture, an architect or architectural materials, craftsmanship or works of nature.
 - In its inherent historical nature provides the citizenry with educational or aesthetic enrichment.
 - Contributes to the character or understanding of a district and is one property, or a multiple of properties or structures, that helps form the basis of a district.
- Procedure for designation includes:
 - Application and payment
 - Review by Landmarks Preservation Commission
 - Public Hearing and public notice (10) days prior to the hearing.
 - Recommendation to plan commission
 - Provide notice of recommendation to property owners and those in attendance at the hearing
 - Petition of common council for rezoning of the subject area or parcel as "H" historic properties district.
 - Designation recorded in the county register of deeds office.

PROPERTY MAINTENANCE

- No owner or occupant of a landmark or landmark site shall fail to keep such property in good repair.
- Permits and a finding of appropriateness by the department of city development or commission are not required for maintenance and repair of existing features or ordinary maintenance that does not change the structural portions of the building or irreversibly change the exterior appearance.

DESIGN REVIEW

- Currently Racine only has a high level of design review for Local Landmarks (designated after 2005), and properties located in a design or corridor district (Downtown, Uptown, West Racine, Douglas Avenue).
- Within a designated H-Historic Properties district designated after 2005, no owner or owner's agent shall receive a building permit to commence an activity resulting in a minor or major change to the exterior appearance of a designated landmark, landmark site, contributing property, or a vacant or cleared lot or parcel without first obtaining a finding of appropriateness and applicable building permits.

Building permits required include:

- Porches and exterior stairs.
 - Exterior doors.
 - Front yard fencing.
 - Siding.
 - Windows.
 - Roofs and chimneys.
 - Decks, fire escapes, exit platforms, and other exterior structural elements.
 - Building additions and exterior alterations.
 - New construction on vacant or cleared lot or parcel.
 - Accessory structures.
- Additionally, H-Historic Properties are subject to general guidelines based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, as well as guiding principles outlined in the ordinance covering:
 - Historic and future use.
 - Historic character.
 - False sense of historical development.
 - Historic alterations.
 - Preservation of distinctive features.
 - Repairing deteriorated historic features.
 - Chemical or physical treatments and cleaning.
 - Archaeological resources.
 - New additions and exterior alterations.
 - New additions and adjacent new construction.
 - New construction on vacant, cleared lots.

RAZING OF PROPERTIES

- Properties must petition for rescission of historic designation in order to apply for a razing permit. The owner must show economic hardship, and work with the commission to locate a buyer for the property willing to abide by its designation. If, at the end of a 6 month period, no buyer can be found, the commission shall recommend rescission of the properties historic designation.
- Applications for razing permits shall not be accepted for properties currently under consideration by the Landmarks Preservation Commission, Plan Commission, or Common Council.