

## **Local Historic District (definition, benefits, procedures)**

A Local Historic District is a structure, site, individual building or group of buildings that has been recognized for its historic importance based on the application of at least one of several criteria as described in Section 151.13 of the Fort Wayne (Indiana) Historic Preservation and Protection Ordinance. These criteria also are stated in *Preservation Guidelines for Historic Districts* of the City of Fort Wayne and are as follows:

1. Has significant character, interest or value associated with the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the city, state or nation; or is associated with a significant period of time.
2. Is the site of an historic event having a significant effect upon society.
3. Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.
4. Is representative of the environment of an era of history as characterized by a distinctive architectural style.
5. Possesses distinguishing characteristics of an architectural or engineering type.
6. Is the work of a designer whose individual work had significant influence on the development of the community.
7. Is the work of a designer whose works are considered to be of great prominence.
8. Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship representing a significant innovation.
9. Contains any architectural style, detail or other element in danger of becoming extinct.
10. Possesses a unique location or physical characteristics that represent an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood or the city.

[List of West Central Neighborhood Association Local Historic District properties](#)

### **Benefits of Local Historic Districts**

The major benefit to local historic district designation is that **property owners are assured that their investment in their property will be not be harmed by inappropriate alterations or construction on adjacent properties.** Once a property has received local historic district designation, elements of the property that are subject to public view become protected from inappropriate changes by a design review process.

Property owners are required to apply for, and obtain, a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) before a building permit can be issued, or exterior work begun, on any exterior changes. **This review process adds protection and stability to both individual properties and historic districts.** The process and its benefits are similar to deed restrictions that are placed on lots in modern housing developments. In both cases, the goal is to guide development in order to protect individual investment and the common good.

Two common misperceptions of those who are unfamiliar with local historic district designation are that it will restrict their right to alter properties they own and that it will decrease the value of their property.

- [Fort Wayne's historic preservation guidelines](#) allow a great amount of flexibility in planning common building improvement projects. Over 90 percent of the applications for COAs are approved by the [Fort Wayne Historic Preservation Review Board](#) (HPRB), the majority of which obtain quick approval by HPRB staff. While a property owner may be required to get approval of proposed changes by reviewing plans with the HPRB and its staff, many owners find the process helpful because free advice is available from objective professionals.
- Property values are *not* adversely affected by local historic district designation. Property values tend to rise with local historic district designation, equaling if not outpacing similar, undesignated areas. Values in local historic districts often exceed the rate of value increase for the city as a whole, thereby offering a secure location for investment.