DC Historic Preservation 101

Goals of Historic Preservation

✔️ Identify
  • Survey and Document Potential Historic Resources

✔️ Protect
  • Nominate and Designate Historic Landmarks and Historic Districts
  • Review Alterations, Additions, New Construction, Demolitions, and Subdivisions to Ensure Compatible Treatments

✔️ Promote
  • Encourage Reuse and Stewardship of Historic Properties
  • Support and Enforce Standards, Guidelines, and Regulations
  • Boost Financial Incentives
  • Educate the Public about Historic Properties

DC QUICK FACTS

• 800+ Listings in the DC Inventory of Historic Sites
• Over 27,000 Contributing Buildings in 70 Historic Districts
• 600+ Listings in the National Register of Historic Places
• 75 National Historic Landmarks

Find out more at: historicsites.dcpreservation.org

Data from DC Office of Planning/Historic Preservation Office

WHAT MAKES A SITE SIGNIFICANT?

• Events
• History
• Individuals
• Architecture and Urbanism
• Artistry
• Work of a Master Architect
• Archaeology

Additionally, a site must retain physical integrity.
Benefits of Historic Preservation

- Allow for Community Involvement in Managing Change
- Maintains Community Character and "Sense of Place"
- Helps Ensure Compatibility and Minimize the Loss of History, both Tangible and Intangible
- Promotes Restoration and Rehabilitation (Adaptive Reuse)
- Provides Incentives, including Tax Credits, Easements, and Waivers from Certain Building Codes

PERMITS AND DESIGN REVIEW

- Permits are not required for "routine" work, such as painting, installing storm windows, and adding portable window AC units.
- When a permit is required, a project impacting a historic landmark or a building/structure in a historic district must be reviewed and approved by the Historic Preservation Office (HPO). HPO staff review "minor work," including in-kind repairs to stone and brick masonry, roof replacements, alterations determined to be "unobtrusive," and smaller additions.
- "Major work" must be reviewed and approved by the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) at a public hearing. This includes new construction, larger additions, and significant changes to a historic property.
- HPO staff work with applicants/architects, advising them on the most appropriate and compatible design options.

HISTORIC HOMEOWNER GRANT PROGRAM

Up to $25,000 is available to property owners in 15 Historic Districts ($35,000 in Anacostia).

Funds can be used for exterior restoration, with restoration of original materials preferred over replacement.

Contact HPO at historic.preservation@dc.gov for more information.

Connect with DCPL! @dcpresleague