

Chapter 16.49

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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16.49.010 Purpose. It is found that the protection, enhancement, perpetuation and use of structures, districts, and neighborhoods of historical and architectural significance located within the city of Palo Alto are of cultural and aesthetic benefit to the community. It is further found that the economic, cultural and aesthetic standing of this city will be enhanced by respecting the heritage of the city. The purpose of this chapter is to:

(a) Designate, preserve, protect, enhance, and perpetuate those historic structures, districts, and neighborhoods which contribute to the cultural and aesthetic benefit of Palo Alto;

(b) Foster civic pride in the beauty and accomplishments of the past;

(c) Stabilize and improve the economic value of certain historic structures, districts, and neighborhoods;

(d) Develop and maintain appropriate settings for such structures;

(e) Enrich human life in its educational and cultural dimensions by serving aesthetic as well as material needs and fostering knowledge of the living heritage of the past;

(f) Enhance the visual and aesthetic character, diversity and interest of the city. (Ord. 3197 § 1 (part), 1980).

16.49.020 Definitions. "Designated building" means any landmark listed pursuant to Section 16.49.030 or any building within an historic district so listed. (Ord. 3197 § 1 (part), 1980).

16.49.030 Existing designated buildings. Buildings on the Historical Report and Inventory of 1979 in categories (1) and (2), and all buildings in the Professorville Historic District are designated landmarks. Additional buildings may be added to the designated landmarks list by the procedure described in Section 16.49.060. (Ord. 3197 § 1 (part), 1980).

16.49.040 Review of exterior alteration of designated landmarks. All applications for a building permit for exterior alteration to designated landmarks, new construction on a parcel where there is a designated landmark, or such application for construction within an historic district, shall be reviewed as follows:

16.49.040 BUILDING REGULATIONS

(1) Review Bodies. (a) All designated buildings except single-family and duplex residences shall be reviewed by the architectural review board subject to Chapter 16.48. The architectural review board shall refer applications to the historic resources board for recommendations on the historical and/or architectural significance of buildings.

(b) All single-family and duplex residences shall be reviewed by the historic resources board.

(c) The planning staff may review and approve minor exterior alterations pursuant to guidelines which the historic resources board may adopt. "Minor exterior alterations" are those alterations which the director of planning and community environment or his/her designee determines will not adversely affect the exterior architectural characteristics nor the historical or aesthetic value of the structure, its site, or its surroundings.

(2) Standards for Review. In evaluating applications, the review bodies shall consider the architectural style, design, arrangement, texture, materials and color, and any other pertinent factors. The prime concern should be the exterior appearance of the building site.

(a) On designated buildings not in an historical district, the proposed work should neither adversely affect the exterior architectural characteristics nor the historical or aesthetic value of the landmark and its site.

(b) In historic districts, the proposed work should neither adversely affect the exterior architectural characteristics nor the historical, architectural or aesthetic value of the building and its site; nor should the proposed work adversely affect its relationship, its terms of harmony and appropriateness, with its surroundings, including neighboring structures.

(3) Historic Resources Board. (a) The historic resources board shall be composed of five members appointed by the city council and serving without pay. Members shall have demonstrated interest in and knowledge of history, architecture, or historic preservation. One member shall be an owner/occupant of the Professorville Historic District or of a designated historic structure; at least two members shall be architects, landscape architects, building designers or other design professionals and at least two members shall possess academic education or practical experience in history or a related field. The Palo Alto Historical Association shall be given notice of vacancies on the board and shall be encouraged to have its members submit applications.

(b) Terms of Office. Members shall serve for terms of four years and until their respective successors are appointed. Terms shall be staggered so that two positions are refilled one year, and three two years later.

(c) Organization. The board shall hold meetings monthly or at the pleasure of the chairperson, and shall establish such rules as may be appropriate and necessary for the orderly conduct of its business. The board shall elect from its membership a chairperson and a vice chairperson who shall serve in such capacity for terms of one year each. The chairperson shall preside over meetings of the board, and in the absence or disability of the chairperson, the vice chairperson shall perform the duties of the chairperson.

Three members shall constitute a quorum and decisions of the board shall be determined by majority vote of those members present at any meeting. Action minutes shall be kept by the board.

(d) Duties. It is the duty of the historic resources board to: (i) Render advice and guidance to the property owner upon his application for alteration of any designated single-family or duplex building. Compliance of the property owner with these recommendations shall be voluntary, not mandatory;

(ii) Inform the architectural review board of the historical and/or architectural significance of designated commercial and multifamily structures being reviewed;

(iii) Recommend to the council the designation of additional buildings and districts as landmarks;

(iv) Research available information and add historical information as available to the inventory sheets of designated buildings, to be maintained in the planning department;

(v) Perform such other functions as may be delegated from time to time to the historic resources board by the city council.

(e) Time Limit. Recommendations of this historic resources board on alterations to a designated structure shall be rendered within thirty days of the date of referral by the architectural review board or the building official. Failure to provide a recommendation within the time limit shall cause a commercial application to be returned to the architectural review board and a single-family or duplex application to be forwarded to the building official for consideration of issuance of a building permit.

(4) Appeals Process. Any interested party may appeal to the city council the decision by the architectural review board not to approve an application for an exterior building permit for a designated building or a building in a designated historic district.

The appeal must be filed with the city clerk not later than ten days following the decision not to grant a permit. The city council shall schedule a public hearing and shall render its decision to approve, disapprove, or modify the decision of the architectural review board.

(f) Manner of Appointment. In filling vacancies on the historic resources board, the following procedures shall be followed by the city council:

(1) Following notification of vacancy or pending vacancy on the historic resource board, the city clerk shall advertise the same in a newspaper of general circulation in the city, including the council agenda digest, four times within two weeks.

(2) Written nominations and applications shall be submitted to the city clerk within such two-week period to be forwarded to the city council for its consideration. Notwithstanding the foregoing, if the nomination or application of an incumbent board member is not submitted to the city clerk within the period specified above, said period shall be extended for an

additional five days during which the city clerk shall accept written nominations and applications of nonincumbents.

(3) The city council shall review all nominations and applications and conduct such interviews as it deems necessary prior to selections.

(4) Final selection and appointment shall be made by the city council at a regular city council meeting after the period for submittal of nominations and applications has expired. (Ord. 3523 § 1, 1984; Ord. 3333 § 6, 1982; Ord. 3243 §§ 1 (part), and 2, 1980; Ord. 3197 § 1 (part), 1980).

16.49.050 Criteria for designation. The following criteria shall be used as criteria for designating additional buildings in Palo Alto:

(1) The structure is identified with the lives of historic people or with important events in the city, the state, or the nation;

(2) The proposed landmark is particularly representative of an architectural style or way of life important to the city, the state, or the nation;

(3) The proposed landmark is an example of a type of building which was once common but is now rare;

(4) The proposed landmark is connected with a business or use which was once common but is now rare;

(5) The architect or building was important;

(6) The proposed landmark contains elements demonstrating outstanding attention to architectural design, detail, materials or craftsmanship;

(7) The proposed historic district is a collection of buildings in a geographically definable area possessing a significant concentration or continuity of buildings unified by past events, or aesthetically by plan or physical development. The district should have integrity of design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association;

(8) The collective value of the historic district taken together may be greater than the value of each individual building. (Ord. 3197 § 1 (part), 1980).

16.49.060 Procedure for designation. Any individual or group may propose designation of a landmark building or district. Such proposals shall be reviewed, as appropriate, by the architectural review board or the historic resources board, which body will make its recommendation to the council. Designation of a landmark building or district must be approved by the city council. The procedure for such designation is as follows:

(1) Any proposal for designation shall be filed with the planning division and shall include the following data:

(a) The address and assessor's parcel number of the site or boundaries of the proposed district;

(b) A description detailing the building or district's special aesthetic, cultural, architectural, or engineering interest or value of an historic nature;

(i) A description of the historical value of the building or district,

(ii) A description of the current condition of the building or district,

and

(iii) What restoration, if any, would be necessary to return the building or district to its original appearance;

(c) Sketches, drawings, photographs or other descriptive material;

(d) Other supporting information.

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(2) Each proposal shall be considered by the historic resources board at a public hearing within sixty days of the receipt of the proposal. In any case where an application for a planning or building permit affecting the exterior of a building is pending concurrently with a proposal for designation, the recommendation of the historic resources board shall be made within twenty days of receipt of the proposal.

(3) Notice of the time, place and purpose of the hearing shall be given at least ten days prior to the date of the hearing by publication at least once in a newspaper of general circulation, or by mail to the applicant, to the owner or owners of the property, and to the owners of property within two hundred fifty feet of the site.

(4) The historic resources board shall recommend to the city council approval, disapproval or modification of an application for designation.

(5) The city council may approve, disapprove, or modify a recommendation for designation and, in any case where an application for a planning or building permit is pending concurrently with the proposal for designation, such decision shall be made within thirty days of the recommendation, if any, of the historic resources board. If the council approves designation, the review process of this chapter shall apply to the designated structures.

(6) After approval of the designation of a building or district, the city clerk shall send to the owners of the property so designated, by mail, a letter outlining the basis for such designation and the regulations which result from such designation. Notice of this designation shall also be filed in the building department and planning department files. (Ord. 3243 § 1 (part), 1980; Ord. 3197 § 1 (part), 1980).

16.49.070 Demolition of designated buildings. Any person desiring to demolish a designated building shall first file an application for a demolition permit in accordance with the procedures prescribed under this code. At the time of application, the applicant shall submit one clear photograph of the front of the building and shall submit such other information as may be required by the building official in accordance with his requirements for the permit. A copy of this application and photograph shall be included in the next city council packet. No action may be taken by the building official on any application for demolition of a designated building for sixty days following receipt of a completed application. Any application for demolition of a designated building should be referred to the architectural review board or historic resources board for review and recommendation to the building official within the sixty-day moratorium period. Any interested party may request the council to extend the moratorium. This sixty-day period may be extended by the council for a period up to six months. (Ord. 3243 § 1 (part), 1980; Ord. 3197 § 1 (part), 1980).