



Historic Preservation Procedural and Design Guidelines

Introduction

Diversity, character and harmony best describe the spirit of the architectural heritage of the City of Evanston. Nestled among Evanston tree lined streets is a rich blend of architectural styles ranging from early vernacular frame buildings to the more formal classical and renaissance revival styles to the 20th century clean lines of the Prairie School. Among the many architects who have been responsible for shaping the visual character of Evanston, several deserve special mention.

Daniel Burnham not only designed a number of Evanston buildings, but was also one of the most influential architects and earliest city planners in the country. Thomas Tallmadge, one of the Prairie school architects, was responsible for the designs of several Evanston churches and residences and in addition was the chairman of Evanston's first Plan Commission. Among other notable architects who have practiced in Evanston are: S.A. Jennings, Walter Burley Griffin, Robert Spencer, George Maher, Myron Hunt and Dwight Perkins including many others.

In order to protect the fabric of our architectural heritage, the Preservation Commission reviews projects relating to landmarked buildings that may or may not be part of a historic district. The Commission also reviews projects relating to structures deemed to be contributing to historic districts, as well as proposed new construction within historic districts, the relocation of landmarked buildings, and proposed demolition of contributing structures within historic districts.

The City of Evanston provides the means to identify where historic districts or individual landmark buildings can be found in the City as well as specific information about every property within the City.

Evanston Design Guidelines: Framework for the Standards for Review

The City of Evanston has established four separate and distinct sets of Standards for Review of all projects that come before the Preservation Commission. These standards are based upon whether the project represents: alteration, construction (both new and additions), relocation, or demolition.

The Design Guidelines are intended to serve as a framework that allows for understanding the Standards for Review. They operate together informing each other in the design of a project. In all instances, the Standards for Review should be read and understood in conjunction with the Design Guidelines.

The historic district forms the visual starting point for construction, alteration, additions, relocation and demolition to individual buildings within the district.

1. The physical characteristics of a historic district are significant as a collective whole and must be seen and protected in their entirety. This is the primary overarching goal.

2. Additions and remodeling to contributing or non-contributing structures within the district as well as demolition and relocation of contributing or non-contributing structures should be examined within the context of the historic neighborhood before they are examined as separate structures.
3. New construction must respond to and protect the integrity of the overall district in much the same manner as an addition should respond to a historic building.
4. The relationship of all proposed construction, relocation, and demolition must respond to the characteristics of the site and streetscape of the district.
5. The relationship of all construction and alterations of a project must respond to the architectural character of the neighboring buildings.

Every existing building within a historic district or a landmark building outside of a historic district forms the visual starting point for additions or modifications to that structure.

1. Additions and modifications must respond to and protect the integrity of the existing landmark or contributing structure to the historic district.
2. Attention should be paid to the existing character of a building when being altered including the relationship of details, massing, scale, and window type and opening.

Purpose of Evanston Design Guidelines

The Design Guidelines are made up of principles that act in conjunction with Evanston's Preservation Standards to assist property owners in the City of Evanston in making appropriate and historically sensitive design decisions. These design choices primarily pertain to altering and remodeling existing buildings that occur in the Evanston designated historic districts, buildings that are landmarked regardless of location, and proposed new construction within in historic districts.

Additionally, these guidelines may also be used as a reference source for the rehabilitation of structures and new construction not located within designated historic districts.

Design guidelines and standards can assist all owners in maintaining and enhancing the appearance of their property and reinforcing the integrity of the historic district or the neighborhood as a "whole". They help maintain property values and improve the livability of older neighborhoods. The intent, in all instances, is to promote preservation, with an understanding that to keep historic districts vital, sensitive additions and new construction should be seen as part of the larger whole of the neighborhood.

It is understood that changes to buildings are often inevitable and that frequently additions have already been made to landmark buildings or buildings within historic districts that may not seem compatible with the neighborhood or to the building itself. The task of altering or adding on to these buildings becomes a difficult task of knitting together all of the pieces to make a cohesive whole. The Design Guidelines, in conjunction with the Preservation Standards, can offer insights to solve these complex design problems.

Basis for Evanston Design Guidelines & Evanston Preservation Standards

The U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historical Buildings serve as the basis for the Evanston Design Guidelines and Preservation Standards. They are used throughout the country by the majority of America's heritage or preservation commissions as a basis for local design review guidelines and for projects utilizing federal funds or seeking tax credits. These federal standards also form the framework for the more detailed City of Evanston Standards.

The National Park Service, an agency of the U. S. Department of the Interior, is responsible for historic preservation programs under the department's authority and for advising federal agencies on the preservation of historic properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The intent of the Standards is to assist in the long-term preservation of a property's significance and integrity through the preservation of historic materials and features.

The Secretary of Interior's Standards, originally published in 1977 and revised in 1990, pertain to historic buildings regardless of material, construction type, size, or use/occupancy. They encompass the exterior and the interior, related landscape features, and the building's site and environment as well as attached, adjacent, or related new construction. The Standards are to be applied to specific rehabilitation projects in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility.

The Evanston Preservation Standards are a part of the City of Evanston Preservation Ordinance. That is contained in Chapter 8 Historic Preservation of the Evanston City Code. The Standards may be found in Section 2-8-9 Standards for Review of Applications for Certificates of Appropriateness within that chapter.

When reviewing a project, the Preservation Commission may consider only the Evanston Preservation Standards for Review for that specific type of project. In addition, however, the Commission may also consider the Secretary of Interior's Standards.

Procedure: Preservation Review and Certificates of Appropriateness

Preservation review in Evanston recognizes change as an important indicator of a healthy, vibrant community but also aims to ensure that proposed exterior changes to landmark structures or properties in the historic districts will not have adverse impacts on landmarks or the district as a whole. The Historic Preservation Ordinance of the City Code establishes the preservation review process to assist in shaping change that maintains and enhances the uniqueness of a historic district's assets and the integrity of a landmark, whether located within or outside of such a district.

Any alteration where there is change in the exterior design, materials, or general appearance, addition or new construction, demolition or relocation of any landmark structure or of a property, structure, or site or object within a historic district receives a review by the Preservation Commission. A Certificate of Appropriateness is issued indicating review and authorization of the plans for the proposed project by the Commission.

Certificates of Appropriateness are required for exterior projects that can be seen from the public way (city street, alley, or public sidewalk). The Preservation Commission has no purview over interior projects except where the work may affect the exterior of the building.

There are three types of preservation review: Major Work Projects, Minor Work Projects, and Routine Maintenance:

1. Major Work Projects are reviewed by the Preservation Commission. In general, major work projects involve a change in the appearance of a structure or site and are more substantial in nature than routine maintenance or minor work projects. Note: New windows, replacement windows and storm windows may be considered major work projects.
2. Minor Work Projects are reviewed by Preservation Staff when not affecting designated landmarks, significant or contributing structure. Staff can refer minor work projects to the Preservation Commission for review if, in staff's judgment, the change involves alterations, additions, or removals that are substantial, do not meet the guidelines, or are of a precedent-setting nature. Note: New windows, replacement windows and storm windows may be considered minor work projects.
3. Routine Maintenance includes repair or replacement where there is no change in the design, materials, or general appearance of the structure or grounds and when a building permit is not required. A Certificate of Appropriateness is not necessary for routine maintenance.

Building permits are not issued unless a Certificate of Appropriateness is approved by the Commission in a formal review, or by Preservation Staff through administrative review.

If a proposed project involves applications for a planned development, major zoning variances, and special uses that affect the exterior of designated landmarks structures and structures in historic districts visible from the public way, the Preservation Commission reviews and makes recommendations to the Zoning Board of Appeals, Plan Commission and/or City Council.

Procedure: Application for Certificate of Appropriateness

The process for seeking and obtaining a Certificate of Appropriateness is as follows:

1. The applicant is encouraged to request pre-application discussion of the specifics of the project with Preservation Staff.
2. The applicant submits a completed Certificate of Appropriateness application for major, minor or windows projects including any plans, drawings, photographs or other supporting exhibits and materials to Preservation staff.
3. Preservation Staff may provide administrative review and issue a Certificate of Appropriateness without any further Commission review. If disapproved, the applicant may apply to the Commission for review of the application.
4. If Preservation Staff refer the project to the Commission or if Commission review is required, the application for the Certificate of Appropriateness will be reviewed at a scheduled public hearing and public notice given and paid for by the applicant. The Preservation Commission holds regular monthly meetings on the second Tuesday of every month. Meetings begin at 7:00 pm at City Hall.
 - a. If the Commission votes to approve the application, the Certificate of Appropriateness is prepared and issued. The applicant may begin work once any other necessary City permits, if any are required, are obtained. The Certificate of

Appropriateness is valid for 180 days from the date of issuance

- b. If the Commission votes to disapprove an application, the applicant will be notified and provided with recommendations concerning what changes, if any, in the plans and specifications for the proposed project would protect the distinct character of the landmark or district and would cause the Commission to consider approval. The Commission will also make reasonable efforts to confer with the applicant, offer technical advice, and attempt to resolve differences.
- c. In instances of denial, the applicant may appeal the Commission's decision to City Council within the codified time constraints.