

Demolition Review

Historic districts are comprised of many individual structures that essentially “tell the story” of a community’s development. All of these “stories” are interwoven into the “community story.” In addition to primary buildings (those structures important enough to qualify to be individually listed on the National Register), districts include properties that can be individually listed on the National Register in addition to lesser important properties that fill in various aspects of the larger story.

Historic districts include many structures that “contribute” to the overall context of the district, but individually, not all of these structures may qualify for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The fabric of historic districts can be delicately held together by the context of the development. If enough change occurs in the historic district, the context can be lost and the historic district is no longer viable. Historic districts can be delisted if too many alterations occur and the context and historic integrity are destroyed.

Inclusion in a historic district provides many benefits to property owners including tax abatements and income tax credits, and the historic sign program. The loss of a historic district designation can negatively affect the owners of contributing buildings that may not be a primary building. Contributing building owners would no longer be eligible for tax credits, grants or historic signs if the historic district designation is lost. If the historic district designation is lost, only the “primary” properties would still be eligible for listing on the National Register and the various benefits.

Therefore, recognizing the importance of maintaining the historic districts, the city has adopted a demolition review process for historic buildings and districts. Demolition of structures located within a historic district and identified as contributing to the district, or properties individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places requires public hearings before the Historic Preservation Commission and the City Commission. Demolition review is not required for properties identified as “non-contributing” to the historic district.