



Historic Landmarks

What is a local historic landmark?

A local historic landmark is an individual building, structure, site, area, or object that is recognized by official designation. The property must be “deemed and found by the Historic Development Commission” to be of historical, prehistorical, architectural, archaeological, and/or cultural significance, and to possess integrity of design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling and/or association [City Code Section 10-1053(a)]. There are more than 140 individual properties designated as historic landmarks in Raleigh.

What are the benefits of designating a property as a historic landmark?

Honor - Landmark designation is an honor that is bestowed on only a few of the city's significant historic properties each year.

Reduced Property Taxes - The owner of a privately owned landmark is eligible for an annual 50% property tax deferral, as long as the special character of the historic property is maintained.

Design and Technical Assistance – The *Design Guidelines for Raleigh Historic Districts* aid the landmark owner in planning desired exterior changes in such a way that a landmark's historic value is preserved. Department of City Planning staff can provide technical preservation assistance to owners of landmarks upon request.

What guidance exists for locally designated properties?

Once the property has been designated, Raleigh City Code provides for a process that ensures that proposed external changes are within the spirit and character of the historic property. This is achieved through a “Certificate of Appropriateness” application from the Raleigh Historic Development Commission. A Certificate of Appropriateness, or “COA,” is issued to show that the proposed project or changes has been reviewed according to the design guidelines and found to be appropriate. The process for design review is outlined in Section 10-2052 of the Raleigh City Code.

How is local designation different from listing in the National Register of Historic Places?

Local designation should not be confused with listing in the National Register of Historic Places, a federal program administered by the state. Although some properties may carry both types of designation, the National Register and local designation are totally separate and independent programs with different requirements and benefits. (For more information see <http://www.hpo.dcr.state.nc.us/compare.htm>.)

How are landmarks designated?

Raleigh City Council designates historic landmarks upon recommendation of the Raleigh Historic Development Commission. Procedures and guidelines for landmark designation are established in the Raleigh City Code Section 10-1053.

Eligibility – Raleigh's survey of historic architecture is used as a guide to evaluate a property's eligibility for landmark designation. In addition, the Raleigh Historic Development Commission maintains a "Designation Priorities List," which includes properties potentially eligible for landmark designation. Other properties may be eligible; however, it is suggested that the applicant discuss the property's eligibility with staff before proceeding with designation. Landmark designation is usually initiated by the property owner or the Raleigh Historic Development Commission.

Application and Designation Report – A Raleigh Historic Landmark Designation Application is completed and submitted to the Raleigh Historic Development Commission. The report is usually prepared by the property owner, or a consultant hired by the property owner or the commission. The report will include: current data about the property and site; a complete description of the property proposed for designation; pertinent historical information; and photographs. The landmark designation application specifies all the information required for designation reports. There are professional standards for designation applications and frequently architectural historians or qualified preservation consultants will prepare an application on behalf of the interested party.

Raleigh Historic Development Commission Review – Once staff determines that the report is complete, it is submitted to the Research Committee of the Raleigh Historic Development Commission for review. The Research Committee makes a recommendation to the full Raleigh Historic Development Commission. The City Council is asked to schedule a joint public hearing and forward the application to the State Historic Preservation Office for non-binding review & comment on the report. The state has 30 days to respond.

Public Hearing – Following these reviews, staff will organize a joint public hearing of the Raleigh Historic Development Commission and City Council. Comments from the property owner, the State Historic Preservation Office, and other interested parties will be heard at the public hearing. The commission will make a final recommendation to the City Council, which will then vote on adopting the designation ordinance.

Notification – Upon approval, written notice of the designation is mailed to the property owner. A certified copy of the ordinance is also mailed to the owner after it is filed with the Wake County Register of Deeds Office.

How do landmarks get the tax deferral?

Landmarks are eligible for the property tax deferral beginning in the year following designation. For example, a property which is designated as a historic landmark in 2012 is eligible for the tax deferral in 2013. (The deadlines are established by the N.C. General Statutes.) The tax deferral is claimed by submitting an Application For Historic Property Deferment and a copy of the landmark ordinance to the Wake County Tax Assessor during the January tax listing period.

Please note that it takes several months for the completion of the landmark designation process. In order to ensure an adequate amount of processing time, the Raleigh Historic Development Commission suggests that property owners who wish to meet the December 31 deadline submit a completed designation application form and report no later than August 1.

Is there any penalty if a property receiving the tax deferral loses its landmark status?

Yes. If a designated historic landmark loses its landmark status due to demolition or alterations that affect the special character of the property, the owner will be responsible for up to three years back taxes, plus statutory interest.