

The following list of questions and answers is intended to give you a basic understanding of the Independence Historic Preservation Program and what it means to be a owner/resident of property that is located within the Truman Heritage District.

WHAT IS HISTORIC PRESERVATION?

Generally speaking, historic preservation is the act of saving historic buildings, structures, sites and objects from destruction or deterioration, as well as, providing for their continued use by means of restoration, rehabilitation or adaptive reuse.

WHAT MAKES A PROPERTY HISTORIC?

Generally, to be considered Historic, a building or site must be at least 50 years old; be intact in terms of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association, and be associated with:

- events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of our history;
- lives of persons significant in our past;
- distinctive characteristics of a type, period, style or method of construction, or the work of a master; or
- have yielded, or be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

WHY DOES INDEPENDENCE HAVE A HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM?

The purpose of our historic preservation program is to preserve, conserve, and maintain the aesthetic and historical resources of the city and to improve the quality of the city's environment through preservation, conservation and maintenance of neighborhoods that constitute or reflect distinctive features or the architectural, cultural, political, economic, or social history of Independence.

Independence has had a preservation program since 1973. Through this program the City has designated the Truman Heritage District which includes most of the Truman National Historic Landmark District, and the Truman Home National Historic Site. There are currently 21 other individual properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Additionally, with the 1997 revisions to the Independence Historic Preservation Ordinance, individually owned properties can now be designated as Local Historic Landmarks.

Informational Guide (cont.)

WHY DOES INDEPENDENCE HAVE A HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM? (CONT.)

Independence is one of 19 Certified Local Governments in Missouri, which are responsible for assisting the State Historic Preservation Office in meeting preservation requirements at the local level.

WHAT IS THE HERITAGE COMMISSION?

The Heritage Commission is created by Article 30, Chapter 1 of the City Code to carry out the responsibilities of the preservation ordinance. The Commission is made up of 11 members: 9 that are appointed and approved by City Council, the Director of the Harry S Truman Library (or a designated representatives), and the Superintendent of the Harry S Truman National Historic Site (or a designated representatives). Appointed members must meet certain requirements to be eligible to serve on the Heritage Commission: 3 must meet Federal criteria as preservation professionals; 1 must be an owner/resident of a designated historic property; and all must have a demonstrated knowledge of, or previous participation in, the field of local history and preservation.

WHAT IS LOCAL DESIGNATION

Under Article 30, properties that are determined to be architecturally and historically significant may be designated by ordinance of the City Council as Historic Landmarks, for individual properties; Historic Districts, for qualified areas containing one or more significant properties; or Conservation Districts, for areas adjacent to Historic Districts that possess significance as part of the heritage of the City, but does not necessarily qualify for designation as a Historic District.

WHAT DOES LOCAL DESIGNATION MEAN FOR OWNERS OF DESIGNATED PROPERTIES?

Owners of designated properties are required to have approval from the Heritage Commission prior to beginning projects that will affect the exterior appearance of the property. In exchange, owners of designated properties can expect to benefit from stabilized property values, and tend to see values increase more than undesignated areas.

WHAT ARE THE OTHER BENEFITS OF LOCAL DESIGNATION?

Properties that are designated as Landmarks, as part of a Conservation District, or as part of a Historic District are given priority for City preservation and rehabilitation incentive programs. Locally designated Landmarks and Historic Districts are also pre-qualified for State and Federal incentive programs that are offered to properties eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Additionally, because designated properties often serve as attractions that work to enhance our City's tourist base, special incentives will likely be initiated from time-to-time for the benefit of these properties.

Informational Guide (cont.)

HOW ARE PROPERTIES NOMINATED FOR LOCAL DESIGNATION?

Nominations for designation are made to the Heritage Commission on approved forms, and may be submitted by a member of the Heritage Commission, the owner of the property, the City Council, or any other person or organization. In order to proceed with designation, the nominating party must have the consent of the property owner(s) for individual buildings, and the consent of the owners of 51% of the square footage for a district. The Heritage Commission shall hold a public hearing within 60 days of receipt of a completed nomination. Proper public notice of the hearing shall be given, the property posted, and the owners provided written notice of the consideration for designation. The Commission shall adopt a resolution recommending approval or denial of the designation, which will be forwarded to the Planning Commission along with the written report.

The Planning Commission shall act on the recommendation of the Heritage Commission within 30 days by holding a public hearing and adopting by resolution an approval or denial of the recommendation of the Heritage Commission. The Planning Commission will also prepare a proposed amendment to the Zoning District Map to provide the appropriate overlay designation (HL for Landmarks, HD for Historic District, and HC for Conservation District) This overlay does not effect existing zoning classifications. The resolution and proposed amendment to the Zoning District Map shall be forwarded to the City Council. The City Council shall act within 60 days of receipt of the recommendation from the Heritage and Planning Commissions, hold a public hearing, and approve or disapprove the proposed designation ordinance and overlay amendment to the Zoning District Map.

HOW DOES A LOCAL DESIGNATION PROTECT HISTORIC PROPERTIES AND NEIGHBORHOODS?

Because designated properties are reviewed to ensure appropriateness of repairs and additions, they tend to hold or increase in property value. Properties in designated Historic Districts become desirable neighborhoods and often see dramatic stabilization of value, even in areas of deterioration. Properties listed for sell in designated districts tend to move more quickly than similar properties in undesignated districts.

HOW LONG DOES THE DESIGNATION PROCESS TAKE?

During the designation process, the Heritage Commission, the Planning Commission, and the City Council are each required to hold a separate public hearing to provide for adequate public input on the proposed designation. Because of the public hearing requirements, and the research that is normally required to prepare a nomination form, the average designation process will take a minimum of 6 months for individual Landmarks, and 12-18 months for Districts.