Historic Preservation Overview

What is Historic Preservation?

Boise has nine designated historic districts which serve as visible reminders of the historical, archeological, architectural, educational and cultural heritage of Boise City.

To help preserve that heritage, the Boise City Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) was established in 1979. The HPC consists of nine volunteer members who are appointed by the mayor, and represent fields such as landscape architecture, architecture, history, and law.

The Historic Preservation Commission is dedicated to promoting Boise’s educational, cultural and economic welfare through the preservation of the City’s historic properties. It is in everyone’s interest that Boise retain its historic properties, from the beautiful Capitol Building, designed by prominent architects Tourtellotte and Hummel, to the neighborhoods of small, humble structures that make up the North End. For Boise, our historic districts provide a sense of place and become gathering spaces for the community, such as Hyde Park, Old Boise and 8th Street.

Contributing and Non-Contributing

When Boise’s historic districts were established, each individual property within the district was reviewed to determine if it contributed to the architectural and historical characteristics of the district or if it was non-contributing. These decisions were made based on the property’s significance and integrity at the time of the survey, rather than the property’s condition or aesthetics. Both contributing and non-contributing structures are regulated to ensure changes are consistent with the goals for the district.

To find out whether a property was determined to be contributing or non-contributing, call 384-3830.

Historic Preservation Approvals

Most changes to a building exterior or lot within a Historic District require a “Certificate of Appropriateness.”

- **Staff Level** applications are reviewed by staff and do not require a public hearing.
- **Committee Level** applications require a public hearing before the Historic Preservation Commission.

Certificate of Appropriateness applications are available on our website at www.cityofboise.org/pds.

Design Guidelines for Residential Historic Districts

The Historic Preservation Commission created a booklet, Design Guidelines for Residential Historic Districts, to help the City and homeowners determine the historic appropriateness of changes within residential historic districts. The Design Guidelines provide comprehensive information for the homeowners, including a list of documents the Historic Preservation Commission uses to make decisions, descriptions of the districts, and guidance for creating sensitive designs for additions, new construction, accessory buildings, accessory dwellings and garages. In addition, the Design Guidelines list both appropriate and inappropriate practices to aid in designing projects.

Design Guidelines for Residential Historic Districts is available on PDS’s website at www.cityofboise.org/pds, under the Historic Preservation section.

Decision Matrix

The Historic Preservation Commission has produced documents listing the most common application requests and the level of review required. The documents are available online or at Planning & Development Services.

Additional Information

- Boise City Guidelines for Residential Historic Districts
- Secretary of the Interior’s Standards
- A Field guide to American Houses