



PRESERVATION STANDARDS
FOR
HISTORIC LANDMARKS
IN SOUTH BEND AND
ST. JOSEPH COUNTY

INTRODUCTION

Preservation Standards for historic landmarks are used by the Historic Preservation Commission whenever exterior changes are proposed for officially designated structures. Review is required when proposed plans for building and development indicate the architectural character of the landmark will be changed, i.e., review is required for any project that affects the exterior of the building, site, outbuildings, grounds and landscaping. These standards are an extension of the present Ordinance #5567-73 and #54A-973 already adopted to implement a comprehensive program of historic preservation.

The present historic preservation ordinances empower the Commission to issue or deny a Certificate of Appropriateness prior to the construction, reconstruction, alteration, demolition, or moving of any landmark. The ordinance also gives the Commission the power to establish reasonable and just standards for the preservation of historic landmarks, including architectural treatment, site development and maintenance provisions, providing that the standards are in keeping with the intent of the ordinance and that the standards apply only to the exterior features of the historic landmark. These standards guide the commission in their review of Certificates of Appropriateness.

The two major conditions under which change will occur are maintenance or improvement and the demolition of an existing landmark.

The Historic Preservation Commission has established two levels of preservation standards—Group A and Group B. Group A standards are the more comprehensive of the two and require that the original character of the building be maintained or restored. **Group B (your Standards)** require that the building be maintained as is and, if possible, returned to the original. One of these levels will be selected at the time of designation. Both require a Certificate of Appropriateness before the construction, reconstruction, alteration, demolition, or moving of any landmark structure or site.

The property owner is responsible for furnishing the Commission with a complete description of the proposed changes. This information may be plans, elevations, specifications, photographs, or other means to accurately describe the project. When an application is being reviewed, it will be the responsibility of the applicant to demonstrate that the new work is compatible.

DEFINITIONS

Shall—Defined as an expression of something that is mandatory or must be done.

Should—Defined as an expression of obligation, something that ought to be done but that is open to compromise.

Required—Defined as work which shall be done in a restoration or rehabilitation project in order to restore or maintain the original or existing character of the structure or site.

Recommended—Defined as work which should be done to help restore or maintain the original or existing character of the structure or site.

Prohibited—Defined as work which shall not be permitted in a restoration or rehabilitation project because it may have a negative impact on the original or existing character of the structure or site.

GROUP B STANDARDS

The Commission has the authority to determine the architectural merits and the extent of any proposed treatment, renovation, or addition to a historic landmark. The commission will require drawings, plans, specifications, and/or samples where appropriate.

A. Maintenance

The maintenance of any historical structure or site shall in no way involve any direct physical change except for the general cleaning and upkeep of the landmark. The Commission shall encourage the proper maintenance of all structure or sites.

B. Treatment

Treatment shall be defined as any change of surface materials that will not alter the style or original form. Such improvements include re-roofing, glazing, or landscaping lawns and may involve a change that can potentially enhance or detract from the character of the landmark. A treatment change of any surface whether on the landmark or in its environment may require a Certificate of Appropriateness if it significantly alters the appearance of the landmark. Although these kinds of changes may not require a Building Permit, a Certificate of Appropriateness may be necessary. The commission should review the proposed treatment for character and style consistency with the original surfaces.

C. Renovation and Additions

Renovation is the modification of a structure, which does not alter the general massing while an addition, is a change in mass. A modification, which involves the removal of a part of the landmark, should be considered under demolition (see demolition).

Additions to landmarks should not detract from the original form and unity of the landmark and should not cover singular examples of architectural detail. Additions to landmarks should be added in a manner that does not disrupt the visible unity of overall appearance of the site. The proportions, materials and ratios of the existing structures should be carried through in the additions. Care should be taken not to change or alter the following:

1. Structure—Necessary structural improvements, where safety demands should be accomplished in such a way as to cause minimal visual change to the original style and construction.

2. Material—Additions and improvements involving any new material in the landmark should be of the same material as the original. It should be the same size and texture. An alternative material may be allowed if it duplicates the original.

- a. wood—all wood trim should conform with existing trim in shape and size.

b. siding materials—the Commission discourages the covering or alteration of original materials with additional siding. Structures already sided with incompatible materials should be returned to a siding similar to the original when renovation is considered.

D. Demolition

Historic landmarks shall not be demolished. When a landmark poses a threat to the public safety, and demolition is the only alternative, documentation by way of photographs, measured drawings, or other descriptive methods should be made of both the exterior and interior of the landmark. The person or agency responsible for demolition of the landmark shall be responsible for this documentation.

E. Moving

The moving of landmarks is discouraged, however, moving is preferred to demolition. When moving is necessary, the owner of the landmark must apply to the Commission for a Certificate of Appropriateness.

F. Signs

No neon or flashing signs will be permitted unless they are original to the structure. Billboards and super-graphics will also be disallowed. Only one appropriate identifying sign will be permitted per business.

G. Building Site and Landscaping

(These standards apply to both A and B)

1. Required

Major landscaping items, trees, fencing, walkways, private yard lights, signs (house numbers) and benches which reflect the property's history and development shall be retained. Dominant land contours shall be retained. Structures such as: gazebos, patio decks, fixed barbecue pits, swimming pools, tennis courts, green houses, new walls, fountains, fixed garden furniture, trellises, and other similar structures shall be compatible to the historic character of the site and neighborhood and inconspicuous when viewed from a public way.

2. Recommended

New site work should be based upon actual knowledge of the past appearance of the property found in photographs, drawings, and newspapers. Plant materials and trees in close proximity to the building that are causing deterioration to the buildings historic fabric should be removed. However, trees and plant materials that must be removed

should be immediately replaced by suitable flora. Front yard areas should not be fenced except in cases where historic documentation would indicate such fencing appropriate. Fencing should be in character with the buildings style, materials, and scale.

3. Prohibited

No changes may be made to the appearance of the site by removing major landscaping items, trees, fencing, walkways, outbuildings, and other elements before evaluating their importance to the property's history and development. Front yard areas shall not be transformed into parking lots nor paved nor blacktopped. The installation of unsightly devices such as TV reception dishes and solar collectors shall not be permitted in areas where they can be viewed from public thoroughfares.

To apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness, or if there are any questions regarding these Standards or about work you wish to do on your Landmark building, please contact:

Historic Preservation Commission
of South Bend and St. Joseph County

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