

WHAT IS SO SPECIAL ABOUT LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICTS?

1. What are Oregon City's Historic Districts?



Oregon City has two local historic districts: the McLoughlin Conservation District and the Canemah National Register District. While one of these districts is on the National Register, both are regulated on the local level. Also regulated are approximately 60 Landmarks located outside of either district.

McLoughlin Conservation District

Many of Oregon City's historic and architecturally significant buildings are above the bluff in the McLoughlin neighborhood. The original Oregon City plat includes the neighborhood area up to Van Buren Street, and it is within this area that early residential development took place, beginning in the 1850s. As the Downtown area changed from a residential to commercial district, home building increased above the bluff. All of the churches that originally stood in the Downtown eventually relocated to the McLoughlin area as well.

Canemah National Register District:

Canemah is an important example of a relatively intact riverboat town with architectural resources dating from the 1860s. Having evolved from a community for the elite of the riverboat industry to a workers' community, Canemah retains essentially the same sense of place it had in the latter half of the 19th century. Situated above the Falls of the Willamette, it was an important portage town and the major shipbuilding center on the upper Willamette River.

2. What is so special about local Historic Districts?

Local historic districts are created to protect historic areas or groups of historic structures against loss of historic fabric and features and to prevent insensitive changes. The properties within a historic district are a source of community pride. The National Trust for Historic Preservation has found that local historic districts provide the following benefits to their communities:

- ❑ local districts protect the investment of owners and residents of historic properties;
- ❑ local districts encourage better quality design;
- ❑ local districts help the environment by contributing to the revitalization of neighborhoods and conserving the resources they contain;
- ❑ historic districts provide a tangible link to the past, a way to bring meaning to history and people's lives;
- ❑ a local district can result in a positive economic impact from tourism;
- ❑ local districts enhance business recruitment potential;
- ❑ local districts provide social and psychological benefits.



3. What effect will being in a historic district have on my property?

Historic district designation encourages maintenance of properties because the investment is better protected over a long period of time. Owners will know that the aspects that make a particular neighborhood attractive will be retained.

Many believe that this means property values should stabilize or improve.

4. Who administers Oregon City Preservation Ordinance and how difficult is the review process?

Oregon City's Historic Preservation Ordinance is administered by the Oregon City Planning Department. Minor revisions, including signs and awnings, require only Department staff review. More significant alterations are reviewed by the Historic Review Board, a volunteer board appointed by the City Commission. A workable solution to the applicant's needs can usually be found and approved. The Planning Department staff and the Historic Review Board work with the applicant to find a good solution that meets the applicant's needs and the Ordinance standards.

5. Will I be forced to restore my building?



No, you will not be forced to improve your building. However, new alterations require review by either staff or the Historic Review Board.

6. Will being in a historic district raise my taxes?

No. Re-assessment occurs periodically on a city-wide basis. Inclusion of a building in a historic district will not trigger re-assessment nor cause it to be singled out for additional taxes.

7. Does the ordinance restrict what I can do with the interior of my property?

No. Oregon City's Historic Preservation Ordinance does not allow review of any interior alterations. It only applies to changes in the exterior appearance of the building.

8. Does the ordinance control what color I may paint my house?

No. You may paint previously painted surfaces any color you wish. However, if you wish, the City Planning Department staff will offer assistance in the selection of historically appropriate paint colors.

9. Will this restrict how I can use my building?

No. Oregon City's Historic Preservation Ordinance does not review or restrict use. Your underlying zoning designation controls the uses allowed on your property.



10. Does my building have to look exactly the same after I've made the changes I need?

Your building does not have to look exactly the same after you have made alterations, as long as the changes have been approved. If your building will look exactly the same after you have done your work, the project does not require review. The work would be considered maintenance. If there will be a visible building alteration involving one of the reviewable activities (see #13 below) it should receive approval before proceeding.

11. Won't it be more expensive for me to repair or remodel my property in accordance with the ordinance?

Not necessarily. There are many different materials and methods that may be used for most preservation projects. The Standards in the Oregon City's Historic Preservation Ordinance include language that allows flexibility in approach, such as "wherever possible" and "when feasible". Repair is preferable over replacement and is often less expensive.

12. My property is not very old, why is it considered historic?

A property may be considered historic if it is at least 50 years old and retains its distinguishing architectural character and design intent. A historic building need not be a pristine example of its architectural style, but should retain a significant portion of its character-defining elements. Character-defining elements include the overall shape of the building, its materials, craftsmanship, decorative details, interior spaces and features, as well as the various aspects of its site and environment. In addition, some "noncontributing" properties that are not considered historic are included in historic districts because they are mixed in with properties that are historic.

13. What types of changes will be reviewed by the Historic Review Board? What needs review and what can I do without review?

You do not need review for ordinary maintenance or restoration work or interior alterations unless they affect the exterior appearance of the building. If you are a designated Historic structure, you must receive approval before proceeding with any of the following activities:



Any exterior alteration or construction requiring a building permit from the City of Oregon City, including, but not limited to the following:

- i. Removal or replacement of architectural detailing including, but not limited to, porch spindles and columns, railing, window moldings and cornices,
 - ii. Moving of structures or objects on the same site or to another site;
 - iii. Construction of rooftop additions or decks;
 - iv. Alteration or construction of accessory structures such as garages or sheds over 200 square feet;
 - v. Porch replacement or new construction of porches;
 - vi. Installation exterior access stairs;
 - vii. Window or door replacement requiring enlargement of openings;
 - viii. Installation of antennas and satellite receiving dishes;
 - ix. Installation of solar collectors.
- b. Any exterior alteration that does not require a building permit but that involves any one of the following activities:
- i. Installation or replacement of siding;
 - ii. Window and door replacement whether or not it requires enlargement of openings;
 - iii. Masonry work, including without limitation tuckpointing, sandblasting, chemical cleaning;
 - iv. Site feature, other than vegetation, including without limitation fencing, walls, paving and grading;
 - v. Exterior lighting where proposed in conjunction with commercial and institutional signage or awnings, where placed on street-fronting façades of designated structures;
 - vi. Exterior including mechanical, plumbing, and electrical, where placed on street-fronting facades.
- c. Installation or alteration of any exterior sign.
- d. Any demolition or relocation of a landmark or structure within a district.

