

Local Historic Designation in the City of Sarasota

The City of Sarasota maintains a program for historic designation of structures and sites within the City limits.

In general, properties considered for historic designation should be more than 50 years old, although City staff has encouraged the designation of architecturally significant structures associated with the Sarasota School of Architecture that are younger than 50 years old. Buildings, sites and structures are considered eligible for local historic designation in the City of Sarasota if it can be demonstrated that they meet specific criteria in the Zoning Code [see Sec. IV-806]. The ability of the resource to convey its historical significance is one-way integrity may be measured.

Historic Designation applications must be submitted by the property owner. The City's Zoning Code does allow the City's Historic Preservation Board to propose designation of properties, but prohibits Historic Preservation Board action when the property owner returns a formal statement of objection to the designation.

Benefits & Advantages of Local Historic Designation

Historically Designated buildings are eligible for a Sarasota County Ad Valorem Tax Exemption on the assessed value of any improvements.

There is no fee to make application for historic designation. The City of Sarasota underwrites the cost of the plaque and its installation that will mark the building, structure or site as historically designated. The City and the County hold an annual event to recognize all property owners who have received historic designation in the past year.

Locally designated historic properties (designated by local ordinance) may not be required to meet mandatory building Code standards including the FEMA 50% rule and modern hurricane requirements. The Florida Building Code contains the specific language regarding the possible exemptions from state building code standards. Locally designated historic properties are also eligible for relief from zoning regulations through the variance process. Zoning Code standards for items such as lot width, setbacks, and other typical zoning requirements may be waived provided the variance is not injurious to the neighborhood or public welfare.

Responsibilities Associated with Local Historic Designation

After a structure or site has been historically designated, applications for building permits which affect the exterior of the structure or the site will be referred by the Building Department to the Planning Department and/or the Historic Preservation Board for the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness [COA]. Please refer to the Zoning Code for a complete description of this

process. The purpose of the COA process is to ensure responsible stewardship and preservation of the integrity of structures on the local historic register.

Research Report for Local Historic Designation

Properties that are nominated for local historic designation in the City of Sarasota require a thorough research report documenting the history of the site, the structures and important facts about the structure.

The historical section of the designation report should include an explanation of the general historical context of the neighborhood and City during the period of significance and a specific description of the history of the structure during the same period of time, including information on the occupants, owners and any significant events. If one of the criteria submitted for historic designation concerns the history of the structure, justification of this criterion shall also be addressed in the report. Copies of newspaper articles, obituaries, and historic photographs can help to document the history of a structure.

The architectural section of the report should include a statement of the structure's architectural style and justification for this determination. Also, an architectural description of the structure is required beginning with a summary paragraph that creates a rough "sketch" of the building and its site, followed by a more detailed description.

In the detailed description portion, please provide a complete description of the building in a logical sequence. For instance, start from the ground up or describe each building elevation separately. Indicate the presence of specific features, such as porches, windows, doors and chimneys, by type, location, number, material, and condition. Include a description of important exterior decorative elements such as door surrounds, or architectural details, and significant interior features such as stairways, flooring and beams.

In the summary paragraph describe the general characteristics of the structure including its overall shape and arrangement of interior spaces, the number of stories, the construction materials, roof shape and structural system.

Staff at Sarasota County Historical Resources can assist with the research necessary to create the designation research report. You can also search for information through the Sarasota County Public Library System.

In addition, consultants with cultural resource management firms are available to assist with preparation of the local historic designation forms. For a list of cultural resource management consultants in Florida, try the [American Cultural Resources Association](#).

The state of Florida maintains a list of historically significant structures called the [Florida Master Site File](#). It contains some information about the age of structures in the City of Sarasota. City Planning Staff also has access to Florida Master Site File Records.

For more information about the City's Historic Preservation Program or this web site, please contact Clifford Smith, Senior Planner at (941) 263-6585.