



## University Heights Historical Society

### Fact Sheet--Historic Designation

#### What is Historic Designation?

In the City of San Diego, historic resources are sites, buildings, features, or events that are of citywide significance and have anthropological, cultural, military, political, architectural, economic, scientific, or technical, religious, experimental, or other value. Historic designation within the city of San Diego is established by a vote of the City of San Diego Historical Resources Board, based upon review of a Historical Resource Research Report that documents the property's historic significance.

#### What Makes a House or Building Historically Significant?

Properties may be historically designated at the national, state, or local level. The City of San Diego Historical Resources Board [Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria](#) identify the criteria under which a resource may be historically designated. According to the Guidelines, any improvement, building, structure, sign, interior element and fixture, site, place, district, area, or object may be designated a historical resource by the City of San Diego Historical Resources Board (HRB) if it meets one or more of the following designation criteria:

- A. Exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's, a community's, or a neighborhood's historical, archaeological, cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, landscaping, or architectural development.
- B. Is identified with persons or events significant in local, state, or national history.
- C. Embodies distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction or is a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship.
- D. Is representative of the notable work of a master builder, designer, architect, engineer, landscape architect, interior designer, artist, or craftsman.
- E. Is listed or has been determined eligible by the National Park Service for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or is listed or has been determined eligible by the California State Office of Historic Preservation for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources.
- F. Is a finite group of resources related to one another in a clearly distinguishable way or is a geographically definable area or neighborhood containing improvements which have a special character, historical interest or aesthetic value or which represent one or more architectural periods or styles in the history and development of the City.

#### What are the Benefits of Historic Designation in the City of San Diego?

- Eligibility for a 20% to 70% property tax reduction through the [Mills Act](#). Please note that properties must be historically designated before applying for the Mills Act.
- Potential increase in property values, as documented by many [studies](#).
- City of San Diego [development incentives](#) for the preservation of designated historic resources
- Ability to donate a facade easement to the City or other historic preservation agency, as a charitable donation.



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### **What is the Process for Historic Designation by the City of San Diego?**

Following is a very brief overview of the steps involved in researching your property, preparing a report, and submitting a nomination the City of San Diego for historic designation. The University Heights Historical Society offers a step by step [Guide to Researching and Historically Designating Your Property](#) presented by Doug Mengers, Senior Archaeologist/Historian with PanGIS. Inc., or you may wish to hire a [consultant](#) to complete all or part of the process:

- Research your property, identify the historic context, determine the applicable [designation criteria](#), evaluate integrity, and check special considerations
- Prepare the Historical Resource Research Report in compliance with the City's [Historical Resource Research Report Guidelines and Requirements](#)
- Nominate your property for designation on the City's Register of Historic Resources according to the City's [Historic Resource Designation Nomination Process](#)

For more information, contact the City's Historical Resources staff at (619) 235-5224, via [email](#), or [book a virtual or in-person appointment](#).

### **Frequently Asked Questions about Historic Designation by the City of San Diego**

If my home is historically designated, can I still make changes to the exterior of my house?

Yes. A building permit is currently required by the City of San Diego for any major alterations to the exterior of your home, such as building an addition or second story, stuccoing over wood siding, removing original porches, or removing wood windows and replacing them with aluminum or vinyl ones.

Historically designated properties are subject to additional project review by the City during the building permit process to ensure that the plans are compatible (but not identical) with the style or character of your home and meet the U. S. Secretary of the Interior Standards.

What are the U. S. Secretary of the Interior Standards?

[U. S. Secretary of the Interior Standards](#) (or Standards) are locally administered, flexible, common-sense guidelines that suggest options for [rehabilitation](#) of historic buildings. The guidelines do not prohibit changes, but they do assure that any proposed changes or additions are compatible with the historic character of the building.

The Standards require additions to be distinguishable as clearly new so that the proposed change is not confused with the original historic structure. Under the guidelines, this distinction can be subtle or distinct. Once a property is historically designated, any additions, modifications, new construction, relocations and demolitions would be subject to the Standards.

Would I have to get a permit to paint my house or to change the paint color?

No.

Would I be allowed to change the interior of my house?

Yes, unless the owner specifically requested historic designation of interior features.

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