



## THE HISTORICAL COMMISSION REVIEW PROCESS

### OVERVIEW

The City of Los Altos is a community that celebrates its history. This rich past has been incorporated into the fabric of the City and provides a link to the community's heritage and history. The remaining sites and structures of architectural and/or historic significance enhance the community's unique character and contribute to a sense of place.

The Historical Commission is a seven-member advisory body that is made up of local volunteers appointed by the Los Altos City Council. The Commission's primary tasks are to maintain the City's Historic Resources Inventory (HRI), review projects related to Historic Resources, Historic Landmarks and Historic Districts, and work with property owners and citizens on preservation, maintenance and other development activities related to the City's historic resources

The HRI is the City's official inventory of the historic resources, as adopted and amended from time to time by resolution of the Historical Commission and/or the City Council. A property or structure must be designated as a Historic Landmark, a Historic Resource or located within a Historic District in order to be listed in the HRI. The HRI has been developed in accordance with State and Federal guidelines for evaluating historic resources and includes Primary Records (aka historic property evaluations) for 103 designed Historic Landmarks, Historic Resources and Heritage Trees. The HRI and the Primary Records are available by request for review at City Hall.

The Historical Commission understands that obtaining planning approval requires a significant investment of time and money for any property. In order to provide guidance and direction at the beginning of the design review process, the Commission can provide preliminary plan review to historic property owners. This preliminary plan review may not replace the need for the Commission to review the "final" plans, but can provide early guidance that can help speed up the overall review process.

### REVIEW PROCESS

The Commission typically meets at City Hall on the fourth Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. The meetings are open to the public. To prepare for Historical Commission review, please review the following steps:

- 1) Contact the Historical Commission Staff Liaison Sean Gallegos at 650-947-2641 or at [sgallegos@losaltosca.gov](mailto:sgallegos@losaltosca.gov) to confirm the time, date and place of the next available Historical Commission meeting. It generally takes between four and seven weeks to place an item on the agenda.
- 2) Prepare notes and sketches that will help the Commission understand the scope of the project. If you are already working with an architect, providing draft plans would be helpful

but is not a requirement. Complete plans are required, however, for a formal consideration and recommendation.

- 3) To file an application for Historical Commission review, the following materials are required:
  - A completed application form (obtain from Planning Staff or City website);
  - Twelve (12) copies of the notes/sketches/specifications/plans. Site photos should also be submitted, including a photo from the street;
  - Material board (*if necessary*) on 8.5-inch by 11-inch card stock showing, roofing material, siding, applied materials (e.g., stone, brick), trim etc.; and
  - Depending on the nature of the project, public notification in the form of a posted notice on the property and/or mailed notices to adjacent property owners may be required. Staff can provide more details on specific requirements.
  - No application fee is required for Historical Commission review.
- 4) An application must be submitted to the Planning Division no later than the first week of the month in order to be placed on that month's Historical Commission agenda.
- 5) Make sure you attend the meeting. You are welcome to bring your architect, contractor, or anyone else to help explain the project. At the meeting, the Commission will work with you to provide clear direction and recommendations as necessary.

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

- To view the City's Historical Preservation Ordinance, visit the City of Los Altos website at [www.losaltosca.gov](http://www.losaltosca.gov) and look under "Municipal Code." The Historical Preservation Ordinance is located in "Title 12, Building and Construction," Chapter 12.44.
- To learn additional information about the Historical Commission, visit the City of Los Altos website at [www.losaltosca.gov](http://www.losaltosca.gov). Under the "Services" header on the home page, click on "Commissions and Committees" to find the Historical Commission's webpage.
- The Los Altos History Museum – [www.losaltoshistory.org](http://www.losaltoshistory.org)
- The Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings [www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/tax/rehabstandards.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/tax/rehabstandards.htm)
- California State Parks, The Office of Historic Preservation – <http://ohp.parks.ca.gov>
- Historic Buildings of the Santa Clara Valley – [www.geocities.com/SoHo/Veranda/4103](http://www.geocities.com/SoHo/Veranda/4103)
- The California Historical Society – [www.calhist.org](http://www.calhist.org)

The Los Altos Historical Commission looks forward to working with you to help maintain and preserve the historic integrity of your property while satisfying your needs to make changes that allow it to continue its useful life and bring you pleasure.