



## **Annual Internal Review**

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**This report covers the time period of 1/1/2012 to 12/31/2012.**

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## **HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION**

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Pursuant to Section 2-1-147(B) of the Code of the City of Austin, the Historic Landmark Commission:

1. Shall prepare and periodically revise an inventory of the structures and areas that may be eligible for designation as historic landmarks.
2. Shall prepare, review, and propose amendments to the Historic Landmark Preservation Plan.
3. Shall review requests to establish or remove a historic designation and make recommendations on the requests to the Land Use Commission, as determined in accordance with Section 25-1-46 of the Code of the City of Austin.
4. Shall provide information and counseling to owners of structures that are designated as historic structures.
5. May initiate zoning or rezoning of property to establish or remove a historic designation.
6. May recommend amendments to the Code of the City of Austin relating to historic preservation.
7. May recommend that the City acquire property if the Commission finds that acquisition by the City is the only means by which to preserve the property.
8. May advise the Council on matters relating to historic preservation.
9. For an object that is not permanently affixed to land, may recommend that Council confer special historic designation, and
10. Shall perform other duties as prescribed by the Code of the City of Austin or other ordinance.

### **I. Describe the Commission's actions supporting their mission during the previous calendar year. Address all elements of the Commission's mission statement as provided in the relevant sections of the City Code.**

1. The Commission currently uses several surveys prepared for the City in evaluating the historical significance of buildings and structures subject to Commission review, such as applications for demolition permits, relocation permits, National Register Historic District building permits, National Register Historic District sign permits, Certificates of Appropriateness for designated city historic landmarks and for properties within locally-designated historic districts, and applications for historic zoning of both individual buildings and locally-designated historic districts. These surveys include the East Austin Survey (1978), the Comprehensive Cultural Resources Survey (1984), the Clarksville Survey, the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Street East Austin Survey, the Chestnut Neighborhood Survey, and others. Other sources of information for the Commission include lists of contributing (and non-contributing) properties within the City's 15 National Register Historic Districts and 3 locally-designated historic districts.

Over the past 2 years, the Commission has been working with the University of Texas, utilizing a Preserve America grant from the National Park Service to prepare a "wiki" platform for existing City surveys, and to incorporate new surveys as they are completed. The wiki approach to survey work is to allow a platform for the general public to add information about particular buildings, structures, districts, or neighborhoods that will result in a much fuller understanding of historic context, and provide

information that traditional documentary surveys may not include, such as historic photographs and personal knowledge of historic occupants. This is an on-going project, and the Commission has had several presentations by University of Texas personnel on the progress of the project, as well as opportunities to provide feedback to the project staff.

2. The City's Preservation Plan dates from 1981, and has been supplanted by the City's new Comprehensive Plan – "Imagine Austin." The Commission created a Preservation Plan Committee, which met regularly during 2012, and provided input and suggestions to both the staff of Imagine Austin and the Downtown Austin Plan regarding historic preservation issues. A request for CIP funding for FY 2015, 2016 and 2017 of \$1.38 million has been developed to carry out a city-wide survey and preservation plan as called out in the Downtown Austin Plan. Additionally, the Commission completed a survey of city-owned resources utilizing a Certified Local Government grant from the Texas Historical Commission.

3. Each month, the Commission reviews applications for historic zoning as part of its regular business at public meetings. In 2012, the Commission reviewed 12 historic zoning cases. Of those 12 historic zoning cases, 4 were brought by the owners of the property, and 8 were brought by the Commission, responding to applications for demolition or relocation of potentially historic structures. The Commission recommended historic zoning on 4 applications in 2012 – 2 of the applications were made by the property owner, and 2 were initiated by the Commission in response to an application for demolition of the building.



The Cabaniss-Tate-Chunn House, 612 West Monroe Street

The Commission recommended this owner-initiated nomination for historic zoning to the Planning Commission and City Council, which granted historic zoning for this property.

4. The Commission has established the Certificates of Appropriateness Review Committee, a committee made up of 3 Commission members, including an architect, an architectural historian, and in 2012, a green building expert. The Committee meets monthly (two weeks prior to the full Commission meeting), and provides a preliminary review of applications for Certificates of Appropriateness for designated historic landmarks and for properties within locally-designated historic districts. The Committee reviews an average of 4 applications each month in an informal setting where the applicant presents the proposal to the Committee members, who then work closely with the applicant to ensure a

successful proposal at the full Commission. The Committee has been extremely helpful and effective in guiding applicants towards approval of their applications for a Certificate of Appropriateness in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation as well as the design standards established for locally-designated historic districts.

5. As part of its regular monthly public meetings, the Commission reviews application for the demolition or relocation of potentially historic properties, and may initiate a historic zoning case to gather more information about the history of a property before deciding to recommend the case for historic zoning to the Planning Commission and the City Council. In 2012, the Commission initiated a historic zoning case on 8 applications for demolition of potentially historic structures, and recommended historic zoning for 2 of those applications.

6. The Commission works closely with City staff to identify and process amendments to City Code sections dealing with historic preservation issues. In 2012, the Commission voted to draft a resolution relating to amending the area of the city in which developers could propose the relocation of houses in the Rainey Street National Register Historic District, to gain greater FAR and density bonus points that are already allowed by Code. That code revision is still in progress.

7. The Commission did not have occasion to recommend that the City acquire property to preserve a property in 2012.

8. The Commission recommended historic zoning for 4 properties in 2012.

9. The Commission did not have occasion to recommend historic zoning for an object not specifically affixed to land in 2012.

10. The Commission was awarded a Certified Local Government grant of \$7,600 from the Texas Historical Commission to reroof a historic building located in the Oakwood Cemetery Annex. The project is a partnership with the Parks & Recreation Department and Save Austin Cemeteries, both of whom are provide cash and in-kind match for the grant.

## **II. Determine if the Commission's actions through the year comply with the mission statement.**

Every action of the Historic Landmark Commission has complied with the mission statement and applicable City Code sections relating to the Commission and historic preservation in 2012.

## **III. List the Commission's goals and objective for the new calendar year.**

In addition to continuing the regular work described above, the Commission intends to evaluate the city's historic district sign ordinance, continue working with the University of Texas to develop the "wiki" platform for historic structure surveys, and improve the effectiveness of historic preservation efforts in Austin, especially the creation of locally-designated historic districts.

Approved for submittal by the Historic Landmark Commission at their regular public meeting on March 25, 2013.