



## **Annual Internal Review**

**This report covers the time period of 7/1/2015 to 6/30/2016**

# **Historic Landmark Commission**

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**The Board/Commission mission statement (per the City Code) is:**

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

1. The Commission references several surveys in their evaluation of historical significance for properties subject to applications for demolition permits, relocation permits, and building permits within National Register and locally-designated historic districts. The surveys used by the Commission include the East Austin Survey (1980), 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 fiscal year, the City has engaged a private consultant to prepare a survey of all historic-age buildings in East Austin; the boundaries of the survey are from I-35 to Pleasant Valley Road, and Lady Bird Lake to Manor Road. The survey will be completed by the end of 2016 and will provide another invaluable planning tool for identifying potential individual historic landmarks and potential historic districts in East Austin.

2. The City's Preservation Plan dates from 1981, and will be expanded by the City's Imagine Austin plan, which will incorporate historic preservation elements into the comprehensive plan for the city. City staff has been active in the CodeNext process for revising the City's Land Development Code, and the Commission will participate in the proposed Code changes relating to historic preservation.

3. Each month, the Commission reviews applications for historic zoning as part of its regular business at public meetings. In 2015-16, the Commission reviewed 18 applications for historic zoning. Ten (10) of those applications were brought to the Commission by the property owner; nine (9) were recommended for historic zoning and one (1) was not recommended for historic zoning. The Commission initiated a historic zoning case on two (2) properties brought to the Commission's attention by citizens; neither was eventually recommended for historic zoning by the Commission. The remainder of the cases (6) were initiated by the Commission in response to applications for demolition; none of these were ultimately recommended for historic zoning.



The home of two of the most prominent members of Austin's African-American community, Dr. Charles Yerwood and his wife, Ada Simond, was recommended by the Historic Landmark Commission for historic zoning. The house was designated as a historic landmark by the City Council in October, 2015.



The J.R. and Betty Rainey House at 3941 Balcones Drive is a ca. 1957 mid-century Modern masterpiece designed by master architect B.D. Riley. The Commission recommended this house for historic zoning upon the owner's application. The house was designated as a historic landmark by the City Council in February, 2016.

4. The Commission's Certificate of Appropriateness Review Committee, is made up of 3 Commission members, representing a wide range of knowledge in terms of architecture and architectural history. 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 6 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 2015-6, the Commission initiated a historic zoning case on 6 applications for demolition of a potentially historic structure. None of these cases were ultimately recommended for historic zoning by the Commission.

6. The Commission works closely with City staff to identify and process amendments to City Code sections dealing with historic preservation issues.

7. The Commission did not have occasion to recommend that the City acquire property to preserve a property in 2015-16.

8. The Commission recommended historic zoning for 9 properties in 2015-6.

9. The Commission did not have occasion to recommend historic zoning for an object not specifically affixed to land in 2015-6.

10. The Commission did not have occasion to perform other duties as prescribed by Code or ordinance, other than the activities described above.

**2. Determine if the board's actions throughout 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 2015-6.

**3. List the board's goals and objectives for the new calendar year.**

*(Make sure the goals and objectives fall within the mission statement of the board/commission.)*

In addition to continuing the regular work described above, the Commission intends to evaluate the city's historic district sign ordinance, and improve the effectiveness of historic preservation efforts in Austin, especially in the creation of locally-designated historic districts. The Commission is holding a work session on June 9, 2016 to discuss

other issues regarding the historic preservation program, policies, and processes, and to consider whether to make assignments to the Operations Committee for further investigation and report.