

Naming Conventions for Historic Landmarks at the Time of Application or Designation

The official name of record for a City of Austin Historic Landmark should reflect the historic association(s) of significance for which landmark status is sought, or the name of the property during the period of significance. It is important to note that the original name of the building or the first owner's name may not reflect the association(s) of significance. The landmark name need not recognize every association of significance, but additional names with a documented association of significance dating to the period of significance for the landmark may be part of the title, usually up to three names. The current owner's name should only be part of the landmark's title if the association with the current owner is the reason the property is considered significant. If no other name is appropriate, the landmark may be named with a descriptive title of the building (for example, "the Pemberton Castle").

Re-naming Conventions for Designated Historic Landmarks

Occasionally, an association of significance may be identified after a City of Austin Historic Landmark is named and designated. Additional associations of significance within the original period of significance may be revealed through research, or new associations may develop over time. As a property must generally be 50 years old or older to be listed as a landmark, a new association for which a name change is proposed should have begun at least 50 years ago. A new association warranting a name change must also have a significant, documented link to the property.

Example: "The Main Street Church," was listed as a historic landmark in 1990 for significance in architecture and community value. Additional research conducted after the property was listed revealed that the church also served as a public school site for African Americans in the 1920s and 30s, during the period of significance. The church may be renamed the "Main Street Church and School," because the additional association is significant, the association is substantially linked to the property, and the association began at least 50 years ago.

Example: "The Smith House" was listed as a historic landmark in 1960 for significance in architecture and its association with its first owner, a leading Austin merchant. In 1962, the house was purchased by Anna Williams, a writer who earned national fame for the book she wrote in the late 1960s based on her experiences living in the house. The Smith House may be re-named "The Smith-Williams House," because the additional association with Anna Williams is significant, the association is substantially linked to the property, and the association began at least 50 years ago.

Exceptions to this convention may be made for associations of exceptional importance that began less than 50 years ago.