



Annual Internal Review

This report covers the time period of 7/1/2020 to 6/30/2021

Historic Landmark Commission

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.

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 evaluating historical significance for historic-age properties subject to applications for demolition and relocation permits, as well as building permits in National Register districts. These include the East Austin Historic Resources Survey (2016), the Old Austin Neighborhood Association / West Downtown survey (2020), and the North Central Austin survey (2021), among others. A survey of Cherrywood, Wilshire Wood, and Delwood is anticipated to be completed in fiscal year 2021-22.
2. The Commission recommended new citywide Historic Design Standards as an essential resource for property owners and professionals that increases equity in City processes. A working group of dedicated residents, professionals, and City staff drafted clear, accessible standards that balance high local development pressures with strong preservation principles. In addition to serving as a resource supporting the preservation of existing landmarks and districts, the standards also streamline Austin's historic district designation process. Previously, community applicants were required to create new design standards for proposed districts: a lengthy, often costly process that formed an inequitable barrier to completing the application, particularly for lower-income neighborhoods. The final Historic Design Standards were unanimously endorsed by the working group, as well as allied organizations and six City boards and commissions. Action by City Council—the final step in formal adoption—is pending the resolution of a lawsuit that has halted changes to the Land Development Code.

On a larger scale, the City's historic preservation program is guided by the Austin Historic Preservation Plan (1981) and Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan (2012). Recognizing that the city's remarkable growth and pressing new challenges require fresh guidance, the Commission created a Preservation Plan Working Group composed of 30 professionals and community members. It charged the group with creating a draft Equity-Based Historic Preservation Plan over the next 12 months (July 2021-June 2022), with intensive community engagement to follow in a second phase of the project. The effort is supported by a Certified Local Government grant from the Texas Historical Commission.

3. The Commission reviews applications for historic zoning as part of its regular business at monthly meetings. In 2020-21, it reviewed fifteen

applications for historic zoning, including one application to rezone a designated historic property and one application for historic district zoning of the Rogers Washington Holy Cross Historic District. Nine applications were initiated or supported by the property owner or owners, including the Commission-initiated Kenneth and Mildred Threadgill House at 4310 Rosedale Ave. The Commission recommended these applications for historic zoning. See 1.5 for the additional details on the remaining six cases, which did not receive historic zoning.

Notable historic zoning achievements by the Commission during the reporting year include the recommendation of the Threadgill House. The house is a 1930s stone-veneered cottage that embodies a vernacular style and material that are increasingly rare in Austin. The original part of the house is intact. The house was the longtime home of Kenneth and Mildred Threadgill, who lived here from the mid-1940s until the mid-1980s. Kenneth Threadgill is an icon in Austin music history as the proprietor of a service station and beer joint that offered live music and provided an opportunity for young singers, such as Janis Joplin, to perform.



Kenneth Threadgill with Janis Joplin (1970)



Kenneth and Mildred Threadgill House, 4310 Rosedale Avenue

4. The Commission's Architectural Review Committee is made up of three commissioners who bring expertise in architecture and architectural history. The Committee meets monthly (two weeks prior to the full Commission meeting) to provide feedback on historic review applications for locally designated properties. The Committee also reviews applications for building permits in National Register districts upon request and if time permits. The Committee reviews an average of nine applications each month. The setting is informal: the applicant presents the proposal to Committee members, who then work closely with the applicant to ensure a successful proposal at the full Commission. The Committee has been extremely effective in guiding applicants towards Commission approval of their applications in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Properties and historic district design standards.
5. As part of its regular monthly public meetings, the Commission reviews applications for the demolition or relocation of potentially historic properties. It may initiate a historic zoning case to gather more information about the history of a property before deciding whether to recommend the case for historic zoning to the Planning Commission or Zoning and Platting Commission and City Council. In 2020-21, the

Commission initiated a historic zoning case on nine applications for demolition or partial demolition of a potentially historic building, with the following results: the Commission ultimately did not recommend historic zoning to advance the case (2609 San Pedro St. and 2708 Scenic Dr.); the recommendation vote failed to reach the necessary supermajority at either the Commission or land use commission to advance to Council for consideration (2816 San Pedro St. and 416 W. 12th St.); applicants revised their plans to retain the building and construct a sensitively designed addition, and the Commission released the permits (2502 Park View Dr. and 1304 Bob Harrison); and the application advanced with owner consent (4509 Balcones Dr., 4310 Rosedale Ave., and 905 E. 2nd St.).

6. The Commission works closely with City staff to identify and process amendments to City Code sections dealing with historic preservation issues. The Commission amended their bylaws to change the name of the Architectural Review Committee (previously the Certificate of Appropriateness Review Committee) to better reflect the committee's role. The updated bylaws were approved by Council in July of 2020.
7. The Commission did not have occasion to recommend that the City acquire property to preserve a property in 2020-21.
8. The Commission made recommendations to staff regarding the historic preservation sections of the Land Development Code rewrites during the reporting year.
9. The Commission did not have occasion to recommend historic zoning for an object not specifically affixed to land in 2020-21.
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 2020-21.

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

In addition to continuing the regular work described above, the Commission has charged the Preservation Plan Working Group with drafting a new Equity-Based Historic Preservation Plan (see 1.2). Another ongoing effort is Council adoption of the Historic Design Standards (see 1.1).