



Introduction

- Historic preservation is a tool to enhance neighborhood livability, quality of life, civic pride - it also has economic rewards.
- Good preservation results in higher property values, helps to stabilize neighborhoods, and creates a skilled labor force.
- Preservation is good sustainable practice – like recycling – it minimizes waste and environmental degradation by retaining existing buildings, materials and infrastructure.



Ashland’s History

- Sited on the Applegate Trail which carried pioneers from California to Oregon Territory.
- First settlers used Ashland Creek to power a saw mill and flour mill.
- Primarily a farming community in early years, until railroad development in 1880s which led to new industries & significant population growth.
- Growth was steady through the 1920s when Southern Pacific rerouted the railroad. That action and the Great Depression curtailed growth, thus the majority of Ashland’s historic buildings date to the 1880s to 1920s.

Historic Registers

- Ashland has four historic districts, which are regulated locally, and each is also listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Applicable regulations within a district depend on property zoning, use and status (*historic, contributing, individually listed, etc.*)
- The city maintains detailed information on the historic significance of properties in each district; this can be viewed at the city’s Planning Department.
- Individual properties are classified as resource by their historic integrity and contribution to the character of the district. Some property owners also pursue special assessment tax benefits by having their properties individually listed. Currently 24 properties use this tax benefit.

<i>Ashland’s Historic Districts</i>	<i>Total Properties</i>	<i>Number Contributing</i>
Downtown	100	73
Railroad Addition	371	256
Siskiyou-Hargadine	460	274
Skidmore Academy	484	300

Local Requirements

- Ashland is a certified local government (CLG) because it has adopted goals and regulations for historic preservation that meet state standards. Ashland’s comprehensive plan and municipal code establish goals and regulations for the preservation of resources in its historic districts.
- The Historic Commission is a nine-member, advisory body that meets monthly. A three-member subset of the Commission meets weekly by appointment on Thursday afternoons to review historic district building permits, and can also help to provide feedback on proposals.
- Expedited building permits for small residential rehabilitations and additions are available on Thursdays. A city planner and Building Department plans examiner are available from 8:30 to 11:30

Living with Historic Buildings

a.m. Permits are reviewed by the Historic Commission's Review Board in the afternoon and are typically ready to issue the next day.

- Generally speaking, exterior changes requiring building permits for contributing commercial properties or for individually listed residential properties require separate land use approval, with review by the full Historic and/or Planning Commissions prior to obtaining building permits.
- Land use approval entails review for compliance with the city's *Site Design & Use Standards Handbook* and *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*. These preservation standards ensure changes to historic properties are consistent with the spirit and character of the historic property and district while also meeting community, owner and resident needs.
- Demolition of buildings 45 or more years old is carefully regulated. Approval requires a demonstration that rehabilitation or re-use is not feasible or that the structure is unsound. Land use approval for a replacement structure must also be obtained prior to demolition.

Building Maintenance

- Historic houses need a maintenance plan.
- Roofs are highest priority. Keep excess moss and leaf debris removed, and gutters clean. Replace roofing material before it is so deteriorated that leaking occurs.
- Windows and doors are second priority. They should work properly, be as airtight as possible, and should only be replaced if they can't be repaired.
- Exterior paint is critical to extending the life of a building. A regular plan for repainting should be implemented. Small sections can be done every year to limit expense. Adequate cleaning is required before repainting.

Tips for Owners of Historic Houses

- Historic houses tend to function differently than new ones. They were designed to allow for natural light and fresh air, not to be hermetically sealed. It is important to use these features rather than trying to correct them, otherwise owners may be dissatisfied.
- Every historic building has eccentricities - windows are difficult to open; floors creak; cracks are signs of long life, not a flaw to be repaired. While most of these can be corrected, if they aren't causing problems with everyday life, it's best to let them contribute to a building's character.

Additional Reading

- Map of Ashland's historic districts, <http://www.ashland.or.us/Files/Local%20and%20National%20Historic%20Dist%20Overview.pdf>
- Ashland Site Design and Use Standards, http://www.ashland.or.us/Files/SiteDesign-UseStandards_2011.pdf
- Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Buildings, http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide/rehab/rehab_approach.htm
- National Park Service Preservation Brief No. 47: Maintaining the Exteriors of Small and Medium Size Historic Buildings, www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/briefs/brief47.pdf
- Oregon Historic Sites Database, statewide list of properties meeting minimal criteria, http://heritagedata.prd.state.or.us/historic/index.cfm?do=v.dsp_main

First in a series of educational briefs to encourage successful rehabilitation of Ashland's historic buildings. For additional briefs contact: