

1. INTRODUCTION



Courtesy Hammond Historic District Commission.

HAMMOND HISTORIC DISTRICT

Historic resources contribute to the sense place, identity, and cultural heritage of the community. They are an integral part of the quality of life and economic stability of vibrant communities. Hammond's twenty block historic district is evidence of this.

When Hammond's historic preservation ordinance was adopted in 1978, downtown Hammond, like many other cities across the country, was suffering from the effects of economic decline and suburban migration. Photographs from the 1981 standing structures survey of downtown reveal many vacant storefronts and boarded up windows.

Today, the same historic district buildings boast restaurants, coffee shops, clothing stores, professional offices, and many other businesses. This success has come through the hard work of many residents and business people with the support and guidance of the Historic District Commission, the Downtown Development District Authority (formed 1987), and the Main Street Program (since 1986). All of these people realized the inherent value of Hammond's historic building stock and by preserving it, secured the bright future that Hammond's downtown has today.

The 2015 revision of the historic district guidelines is intended to facilitate the continued preservation of Hammond's historic resources by offering clear graphics and wording. The expanded wording is meant only to elucidate the meaning of existing guidelines. The intent of the guidelines remains the same: ensuring the retention of Hammond's historic built environment for the benefit of its current residents and future generations.

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PURPOSE OF DESIGN GUIDELINES

The purpose and intent of these historic district design guidelines is to ensure that Hammond's historic fabric is preserved for the enduring benefit of the city and its residents.

This is the central historic preservation policy document for the City Hammond, Louisiana. The wording in this document provides the official current guidance on work to all historic district properties and overrides any previous versions of the design guidelines. It is the intent of these guidelines to encourage the continued use, enjoyment, and adaptation of Hammond's historic resources through appropriate work that respects and retains historic character and material. These guidelines are about the future of Hammond as much as they are about its past.

Replacement of a few columns, windows, or siding with synthetic modern equivalents of similar appearance may not seem like it would have a significant impact on a historic environment, but every loss of historic fabric adds up. Incremental and continuous replacement of historic features can ultimately result in the loss of the historic character and feeling of a whole neighborhood.

Often, we are not stirred to protect historic places until total loss is imminent or a disaster occurs, but it is always better to plan than to react. Properties within and facing the historic district have been collectively recognized as places of historic significance to the city and its residents. These design guidelines are a tool of proactive planning for the protection of those significant places.

USING THIS DOCUMENT AND UNDERSTANDING ITS PHILOSOPHY

This document is organized into separate sections regarding various building and site elements and materials. Thereby, property owners and commission members can quickly reference guidelines pertaining specifically to a given project. However, all of those guidelines may best be understood as falling under one very simple philosophy: historic fabric should be retained and preserved to the fullest extent possible. Below is the best order in which to approach work. Always maintain; then if needed repair; and if replacement has become absolutely necessary, it should be "in-kind", meaning that the materials, dimensions, and design match the original.

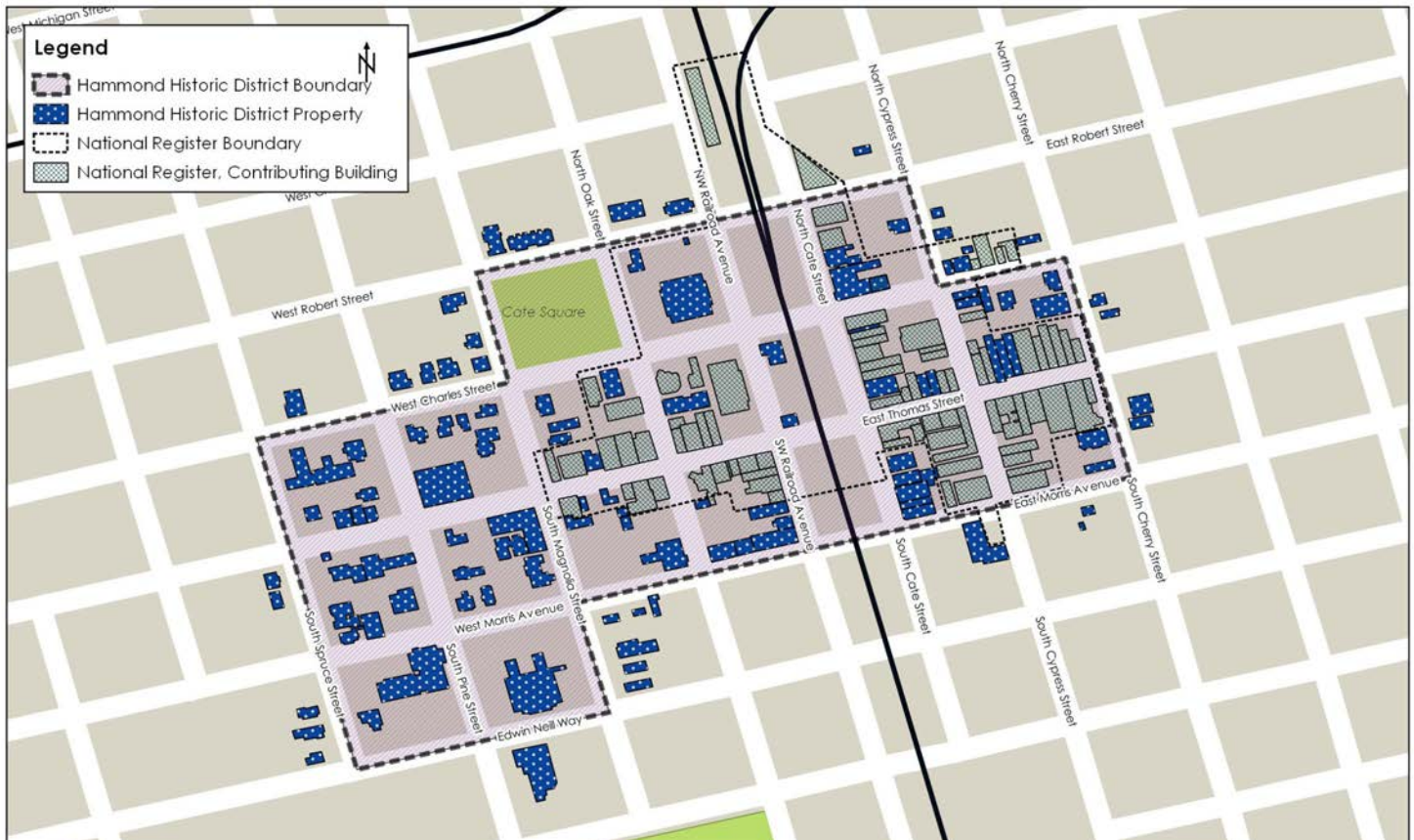
- 1. Maintain**
- 2. Repair**
- 3. Replace In-kind**

When planning work on a historic building, it is best to think "First, do no harm." A key consideration in any work on a historic building is the degree of its reversibility. Permanent alterations are always to be avoided. If the work will permanently remove historic material from the building, as in replacing all the windows, then it will clearly not be in compliance with these guidelines. If the work seeks to preserve and repair the existing building materials with routine maintenance using appropriate materials, then it will be in compliance. What those appropriate materials and methods are is often not well-understand and what this document aims to illuminate.

CONTRIBUTING AND NONCONTRIBUTING PROPERTIES

In addition to the Hammond Historic District established by city ordinance, Hammond also has a National Register of Historic Places listed historic district. These two different types of districts have different boundaries and different impacts on properties within. The following map shows the overlay of the two boundaries and identifies those properties which were designated as contributing to the National Register district.

Hammond, Louisiana - Municipal and National Register Historic Districts



As stated in the city ordinance:

The Hammond Historical District shall have for its purpose the promotion of the educational, cultural, economic, and general welfare of the public through the preservation and protection of all such buildings, sites, monuments, and structures of historic interest or importance through their protection, maintenance, and development as historic landmarks and their recognition as such in the history and traditions of the state and nation; to establish and improve property values; and to foster the economic development of the areas affected.

Simply put, all properties within the Hammond Historic District and directly facing it must comply with the historic district design guidelines outlined within this document. National Register designation places no additional or separate design guidelines on a property. National Register listing is primarily an honorary designation and has the added benefit of making the contributing income-producing properties eligible for potential Federal tax incentives. A building's designation as noncontributing does not exclude it from the application of the city's design guidelines. Each case must be evaluated on an individual basis to determine how any proposed work will impact the property as well as adjacent properties and the streetscape as a whole. As with contributing properties, retention of original building fabric is always encouraged. For the few properties that were considered noncontributing to the NR district because of alterations, restoration of the original features and materials would be welcomed and could make the property eligible to become a contributing property to the National Register Historic District. Property owners should contact the State Historic Preservation as early in the project planning process as possible to determine if Historic Preservation Tax Credits could be applicable. See next section.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

There are several programs which can make preservation projects more financially achievable for property owners.

The Downtown Development District (DDD) Façade Grant Program

The Façade Grant Program was established to encourage the renovation of the district's existing buildings as well as promote and encourage new business. The Façade Grant awards are not to exceed \$2,000 and must be matched dollar for dollar by the recipient.

Grants are awarded for tangible and permanent façade improvements, inclusive of the following:

- Restoration/Renovation of building front
- Awnings
- Painting
- Lighting
- Facades, which may include front, side, and/or rear, if highly visible from a thoroughfare, may be eligible for a grant.

Although routine maintenance does not qualify for reimbursement, a significant visual improvement to the façade of the building may be approved at the discretion of the DDD board.

Please note: Signage does not apply.

OVERVIEW OF RESTRICTIONS

- Property for which Façade Grants are being applied, must be commercial and within the DDD.
- Projects within the Hammond Historical District must submit a signed approval and acknowledgement of the Hammond Historical District Commission.
- All DDD ad valorem tax assessments must be current.
- Projects must be completed ninety (90) days prior to the filing of the Façade Grant Application, or ninety (90) days after the awarding of the Façade Grants. (Unless otherwise approved.)
- Members of the DDD board will not be eligible to receive grants.

Please contact the DDD office – 985-277-5680 or 985-974-2065 for an application and complete guidelines.

Tax Credits

Tax credits are available for qualified restoration projects on designated historic properties. The state of Louisiana allows for a 25% tax credit on all qualified projects of \$10,000.00 or more on either residential or commercial buildings. A federal tax credit of 20% can be taken on substantial qualified restoration projects on income-producing properties.

<http://crt.la.gov/cultural-development/historic-preservation/tax-incentives/index>

Tax Abatement Program

Under normal circumstances, if an owner improves, renovates or adds on to a building, the assessed value goes up and so do the property taxes. Under Louisiana Restoration Tax Abatement Program, the assessed value and the property assessment can be frozen at the pre-improvement level for five years, resulting in substantial tax savings. In many parishes, the RTA can be renewed for an additional five years. In addition, this program can be used in combination with the federal historic preservation tax credit program, resulting in even more substantial savings. It should be noted that the tax relief provided by the Restoration Tax Abatement Program is not automatic; rather it must be granted by the local taxing authority, generally the municipality and the Louisiana Board of Commerce and Industry.

What Properties Qualify: The tax abatement program is available for buildings individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places or buildings that are considered historic components of Register districts. It is also available for existing buildings in downtown or economic development districts. It should be noted that, unlike the federal historic preservation tax credit program, the state tax abatement program can be used both for commercial structures and owner-occupied private homes. Improvement projects proposed for historic buildings (i.e., listed individually on the National Register or historic components of Register districts) must be approved by the Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation.

<http://www.opportunitylouisiana.com/page/restoration-tax-abatement>

Applying for a Certificate of Appropriateness

As stated in the Unified Development Code# 14-5364 Article 8.1.11. - Submission of plans for exterior changes to commission: Before the commencement of any work in the erection of any new building or in the alteration or addition to, or painting or repainting or demolishing of any existing building, any portion of which is to front on any public street or alley in the Hammond Historical District, application by the owner for a permit therefore shall be made to the commission, accompanied by the full plans and specifications thereof so far as they relate to the proposed appearance, color, texture or materials, and architectural design of the exterior, including the front, sides, rear and roof of such building, alteration, addition and any outbuilding, party wall, courtyard, fence or other dependency thereof.

Note: If any details of a project change after a Certificate of Appropriateness is granted, the applicant must notify the Historic District Commission of the proposed changes and receive approval before proceeding.

Some projects do not require appearance before the Historic District Commission. After inquiry with the Administrative Officer of the Historic District Commission, certain minor works and repairs may receive a letter affirming “no need to apply” The process for presenting work plans to the Historic District Commission and receiving a Certificate of Appropriateness is represented on the facing page. Application examples and an application checklist are included in the appendixes of this document.

IMPORTANT: This process only assures compliance with Article 8: Historic Preservation. Further permitting may be required. All work must meet all applicable codes and applicants are advised to check with all relevant city departments.

Enforcement

Per Article 8: Historic Preservation of the Unified Development Code #14-5364, Article 8.1.8 - Commission enforcement powers; criminal penalty; continuing violations: (a) The historic district commission shall have the power to institute suit in any court of competent jurisdiction to prevent any unlawful action in violation of the provisions of Chapter 16 of Title 25 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes, as amended from time to time, or of any of the rules and regulations adopted by the commission in conformity with it.

(b) Any owner, agent, lessee, or other person acting for or in conjunction with him, who shall violate the ordinance or law or rules, regulations, or decision of the historic district commission, shall for each offense be fined not less than fifty dollars (\$50.00) nor more than one hundred dollars (\$100.00), or suffer imprisonment for not more than thirty (30) days, or both fine and imprisonment. Any owner, agent, lessee, or other person acting for or in conjunction with him, who shall demolish a structure or edifice without having been issued a certificate of appropriateness shall be fined a single fine of not less than one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00).

(c) For violations other than demolition without a certificate of appropriateness, each day that a violation continues shall constitute a separate offense.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FLOW CHART

Certificate of Appropriateness Flow Chart



