

# **MacArthur Park Historic District**

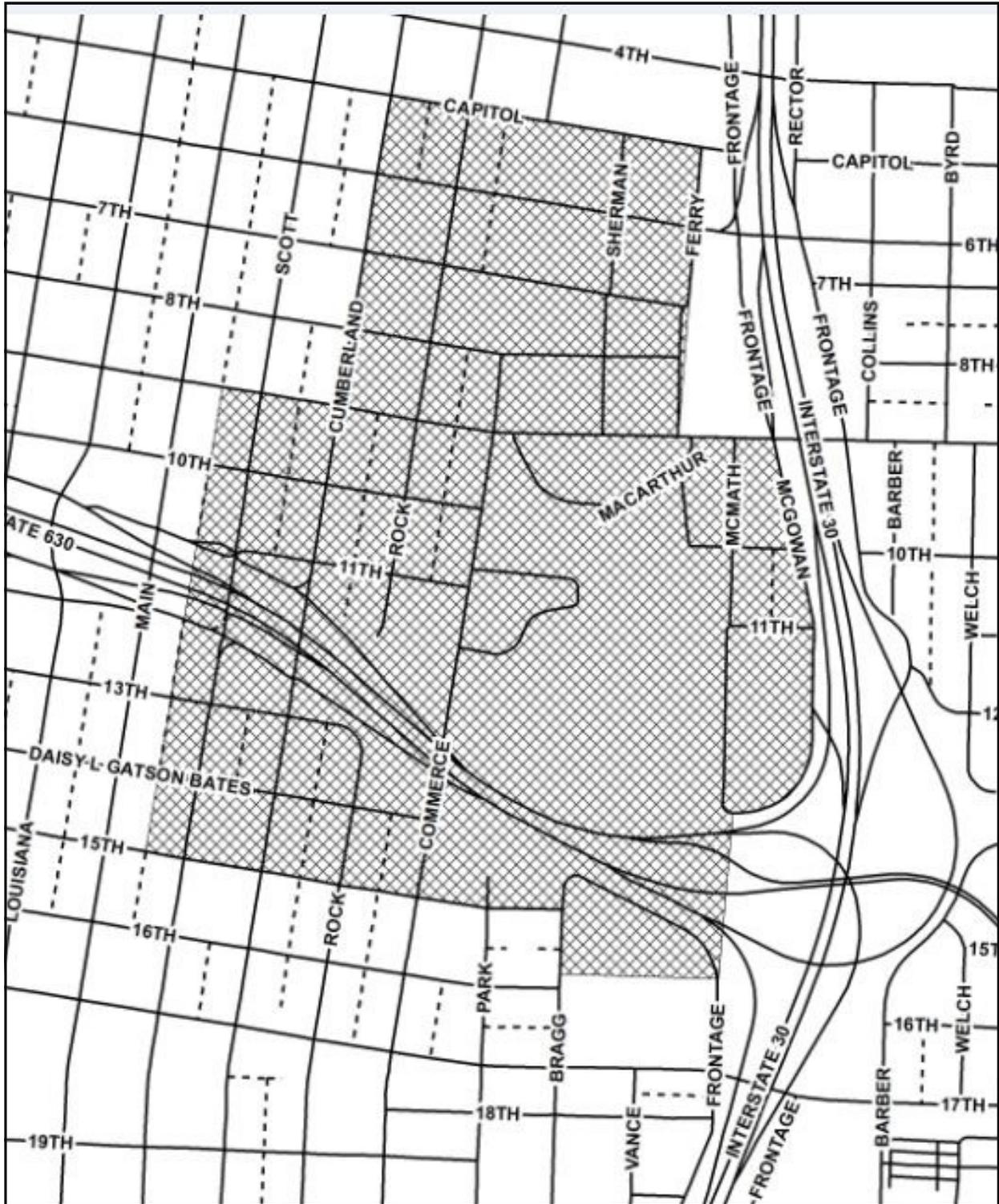
*Guidelines*

*for*

*Rehabilitation and New Construction*

**Little Rock Historic District Commission  
Little Rock, Arkansas**

July 2013



**Map of the MacArthur Park Local Ordinance Historic District  
Little Rock, Arkansas**

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### FOR INFORMATION OR ASSISTANCE:

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Preserving historic resources makes good economic sense. Vital and attractive inner-city neighborhoods define the unique character and heritage of a city and promote the overall quality of life by reusing established infrastructure. Throughout the country, historic neighborhoods are becoming important magnets for heritage tourism.

Little Rock's MacArthur Park Historic District is a local ordinance historic district that surrounds and encompasses a national historic landmark – the Old U.S. Arsenal constructed in 1840 as part of a United States military post. Before becoming a local ordinance historic district, the MacArthur Park Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. As of this writing, there are twelve other National Register Historic Districts in Little Rock. (See Appendix B.) A few blocks of the MacArthur Park Historic District are also located in the Governor's Mansion Area of the Capitol Zoning Districts and are regulated by the Capitol Zoning District Commission with respect to zoning restrictions and the issuance of certain permits. (See Appendix C for comparison of National Register Historic Districts, Local Ordinance Historic Districts, and National Landmarks.)

The purpose of this manual is to provide information about the requirements that must be met prior to undertaking construction, demolition, and certain other changes to property located within the MacArthur Park Historic District. (See map of the MacArthur Park Historic District on page 2.) This manual is designed to guide property owners with respect to whether Historic District Commission approval is required for a particular project, the procedural steps that must be followed to submit a proposal for review by the Commission, and the design standards that will be considered by the Commission in making its determination of appropriateness.

Historic district guidelines are based on design principles and preservation standards used by historic district commissions nationwide and on federal standards for rehabilitation of historic buildings. In addition to explaining the philosophy and value of historic preservation, these guidelines provide illustrations that note the architectural styles and landscape features that are the character-defining elements of the MacArthur Park Historic District. These are, therefore, the elements that should be retained and protected by the property owner. Solutions for rehabilitation and recommendations regarding new construction are provided by these guidelines to help preserve the historic character of the District and to allow change that is appropriate to the District's historic integrity.

### A. Legal Authority

Recognizing the scenic and economic value of retaining areas of historic and architectural significance, the Arkansas General Assembly enacted the Historic Districts Act of 1963 permitting cities to create local ordinance historic districts for the purpose of regulating the alteration, restoration, construction, moving, and demolition of structures within the district's boundaries. By adoption of Ordinance No. 14,042, the Little Rock Board of Directors created the MacArthur Park Historic District.

The Arkansas Historic Districts Act requires that cities establish an historic district commission prior to the creation of a local ordinance historic district. The commission must investigate and report on the historic significance of structures within a proposed district. The Act also gives the commission the responsibility of regulating the alteration, restoration, construction, moving and demolition of structures within an established district. This duty is carried out through a process of public notice, public discussion, commission review and the issuance or denial of a Certificate of Appropriateness. The commission's decision to grant or deny a Certificate of Appropriateness involves a determination of

whether the proposed change will be appropriate to the preservation of the district's historic significance.

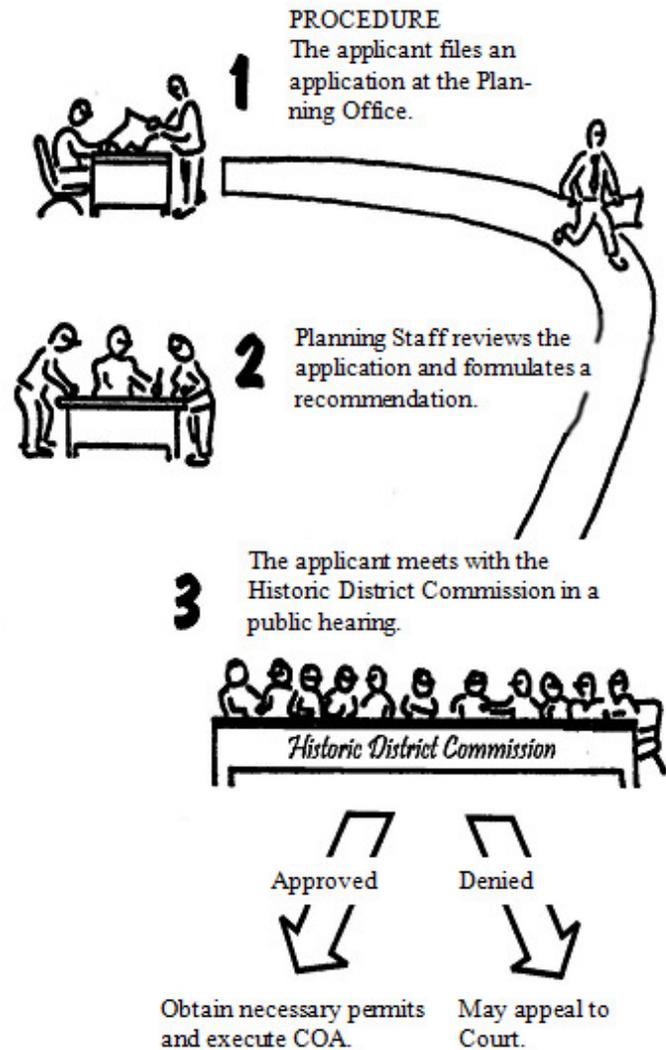
To help define the architectural qualities to be preserved within a district and to provide objective standards and methods for preserving those characteristics, the historic district commission adopts design guidelines. The Little Rock Historic District Commission's adoption of design guidelines is authorized by Ordinance 14,042. This ordinance provides important criteria for determining whether a proposed change is appropriate to the preservation of the District's historic significance. For example, the ordinance requires that in making its determinations of appropriateness, the Commission must consider the following:

- The purpose of the historic district ordinance.
- The architectural or historic value or significance of a building and its relationship to the surrounding area.
- The general compatibility of the proposed change.

The ordinance also requires that the Commission encourage changes which reflect the original design of the structure, based on photographs, written description or other historical documentation and requires that the commission be guided by the following preferences:

- It is preferable to preserve by maintenance rather than to repair original features of the building.
- It is preferable to repair rather than to reconstruct if possible.
- It is preferable to restore by reconstruction of original features rather than to remove or remodel.

The MacArthur Park design guidelines are also based on the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, which created the National Register for Historic Places and established federal/state partnerships to encourage historic preservation. This federal Act provides standards that are used to determine the appropriateness of work treatments for every grant-in-aid and Preservation Tax Incentive project. These standards and their accompanying guidelines also emphasize repair instead of





DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT  
 723 West Markham Street  
 Little Rock, Arkansas 72201-1134  
 Phone: (501) 371-4790 Fax: (501) 399-3432

**CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS**

Property Owner: Ima Homeowner HDC13-xxx  
 Address of Property: 915 Historic Avenue  
 Project is to be completed as amended and as a COA (Chf) Historic District Commission in the July 9, 2012 hearing.

Staff Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date of COA \_\_\_\_\_  
The original is printed on pale blue paper.

replacement and recommend limited change to accommodate new usage, thereby helping to ensure preservation of the qualities for which buildings and districts were listed on the National Register.

**B. PROCEDURE**

**1. COA Requirement and Exemptions.**

Owners of property within the MacArthur Park Historic District who wish to alter, move, demolish, or construct a structure on their property are required by Arkansas law to obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness (“COA”) from the Little Rock Historic District Commission. The Arkansas Historic Districts Act provides:

No building or structure, including stone walls, fences, light fixtures, steps and paving or other appurtenant fixtures shall be erected, altered, restored, moved, or demolished within an historic district until after an

application for a certificate of appropriateness as to exterior architectural features has been submitted to and approved by the historic district commission.

Codified at Arkansas Code Section 14-172-208 (Michie Repl. 2004).

This COA requirement does not apply to:

- the interior of a structure;
- the use of a structure;
- the ordinary maintenance or repair of any structure, which does not involve a change in design, material or outer appearance; or
- changes to a structure which the building inspector or other agent of the city certifies as required for public safety reasons.
- Additions or changes that are not visible from a public or private street.

Please note that due to the potential impact on the historic integrity of a structure, ***masonry brickwork and repair is not included in the above exceptions to the COA requirement*** and, therefore, must receive prior approval by the Historic District Commission.

References to COA exemptions are found in Arkansas Code Sections 14-172-210 and 14-172-211 (Michie Repl. 2004), and in Little Rock Ordinance No. 14,042 Sections 4 and 6.

**2. Initial Inquiry.**

To determine whether a COA is required, please refer to Appendix H to these Guidelines. Appendix H lists various types of work, indicates whether a COA is required, and also indicates whether a building permit is required. This chart does not include all aspects of rehabilitation and construction work. If a proposed project is not referenced in Appendix H or if clarification of a particular item is needed, please contact the Historic District Commission staff (“Staff”) as noted in subsection 7 below.

### **3. Steps to Take if a COA is Not Required.**

*Step One - Application.* Submit to Staff a description of the routine maintenance, exterior painting of non-brick surfaces, landscape plantings, interior changes, or other work for which the owner believes a COA is not required.

*Step Two - Staff Approval.* If Staff agrees that a COA is not required, Staff will issue a Certificate of Compliance (“COC”). The COC will identify the scope of the proposed changes, any documentation needed and any additional city permits that are required prior to beginning work on the project. The COC must be presented to Planning and Development staff when applying for a building permit and must be displayed at the project site along with the building permit.

### **4. Steps to Take if a COA is Required.**

*Step One - Application.* If a COA is required, the property owner must obtain a COA application packet from the Department of Planning and Development at 723 West Markham Street, Little Rock, Arkansas 72201 or by calling (501) 371-4790. The owner must submit the completed application and any required documents, drawings and/or material samples to the Historic District Commission staff at the above address.

*Step Two - Notice.* As part of the application process, the applicant is required to send a Notice of Public Hearing to the owners of property located within 150 feet of the applicant’s property. This notice must be given on the legal form provided in the application packet and must be sent by certified mail. In addition, notice of the public hearing must be posted on the subject property. The requirements for preparing a list of neighboring property owners and for mailing and posting of the required notice are described in more detail in the application materials. See Appendix E.

*Step Three - Public Hearing.* At the time specified in the notice, the Historic District Commission will hold a public hearing on the application for a COA. The owner of the subject property or their authorized agent must be present at the public hearing in order to describe the project and answer questions. At the hearing, Staff will present their findings and recommendations based on a detailed analysis of the proposed project in relation to the Historic District Guidelines. Next, the applicant will present their proposal, after which public comment will be invited. Then, the Commissioners will ask questions **and discuss** issues related to whether the proposed project is appropriate to the preservation of the District’s historic significance.

*Step Four - Issuance or Denial of Certificate.* After the public hearing, the Commission may approve the application in its entirety, approve the application with specified conditions, defer the matter to a subsequent meeting in order to obtain additional information, or deny the application for specified reasons. Upon approval of an application, and after the applicant fulfills any preliminary conditions required by the Commission, Staff will issue the COA. The COA document will include an itemized description of the approved work and any additional requirements for completion of the work.

### **5. Appeals.**

Decisions by the Little Rock Historic District Commission may be appealed to the Pulaski County Circuit Court.

### **6. Compliance.**

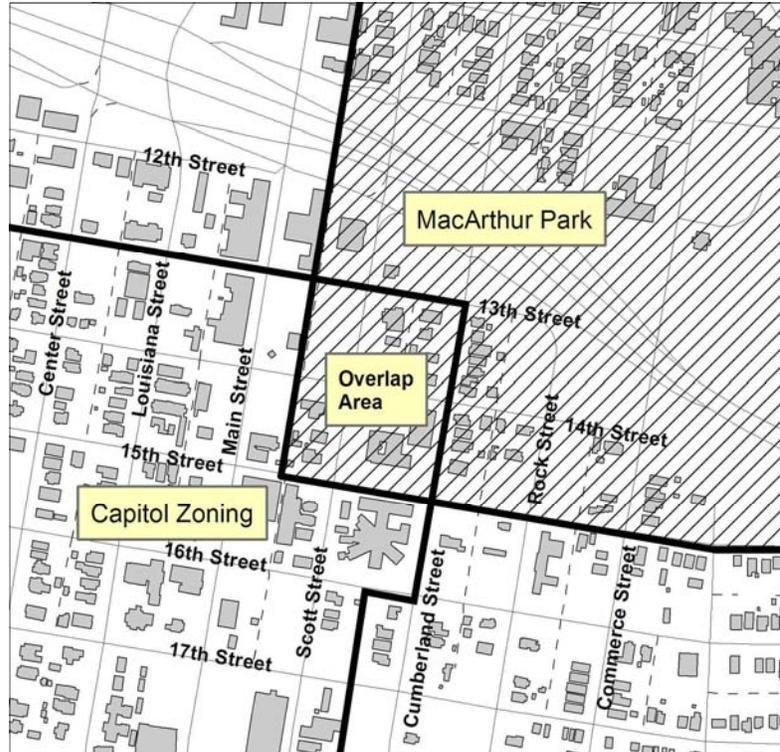
The approved COA must be presented to Planning and Development staff prior to obtaining a building permit for the project. Work that deviates from or exceeds the scope of the approved COA may be a violation of the Arkansas Historic Districts Act and could subject the property owner to legal action in

Pulaski County Circuit Court. Therefore, **if the project plans or specifications change after the COA is approved, Historic District Commission staff must be contacted BEFORE work deviates from the approved plans.**

### 7. Assistance.

The Little Rock Historic District Commission appreciates the efforts and cooperation of the MacArthur Park Historic District property owners and others in following these guidelines and helping to preserve our historic neighborhoods. These are special places in which to live and work – places with important architectural and landscape resources for Little Rock’s citizens and visitors.

The Commission’s staff is available for consultation to help property owners and their representatives plan and design projects or improvements that will comply with the Historic District’s design guidelines.



*The map above shows the area that is protected by both the Little Rock Historic District Commissions and the Capitol Zoning District Commission. The “Overlap Area” is bounded by 13th Street, Cumberland Street, 15th Street and the alley between Main and Scott Streets. Applicants in this area must verify requirements of both commissions.*

### FOR INFORMATION OR ASSISTANCE, CONTACT:

Little Rock Historic District Commission  
Department of Planning and Development  
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Little Rock, Arkansas 72201  
(501) 371-4790

<http://www.littlerock.org/citydepartments/planninganddevelopment/boardsandcommissions/historicdistrictcomm/>

## C. OVERVIEW OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND DESIGN GUIDELINES

The U.S. Secretary of the Interior's standards for historic preservation projects were initially developed in 1977 to assist the long-term preservation of the historic significance of properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places. These federal standards are used by the Secretary of the Interior to determine the appropriateness of a proposed rehabilitation project when the owner is seeking financial assistance from the Historic Preservation Fund grant-in-aid program. To qualify as a certified rehabilitation project, the work must be determined by the Secretary of the Interior to be consistent with the historic character of the structure(s) and, where applicable, with the district in which it is located. Revised in 1990, these federal standards have been adopted by many local ordinance historic districts and planning commissions throughout the United States. (See Appendix D, Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.)

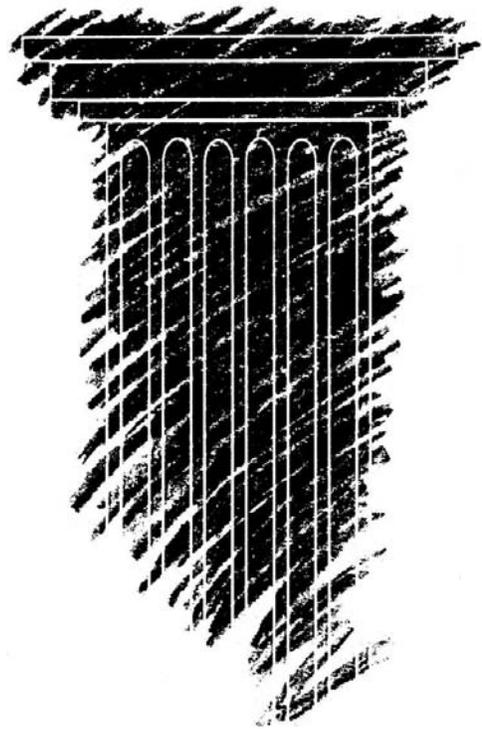
Communities and neighborhoods develop design review guidelines primarily for economic reasons. By adhering to accepted design and rehabilitation standards, an historic neighborhood can maintain its unique character and enhance its individual property values. Neighborhoods across the country, which have adopted design review guidelines, have generally experienced stabilization or increases in property and resale values. Therefore, by protecting the unique characteristics that define a neighborhood, adherence to design review guidelines also protects and encourages investment in historic areas.

With the principal goal of protecting the unique and valued qualities, or character-defining elements, of an historic district, emphasis must be placed on preservation of urban design, architectural character, and historic materials used in buildings and landscapes. Important words to remember are REPAIR, RETAIN, MAINTAIN, and PROTECT. It is preferable to:

- **REPAIR** original materials rather than to replace them;
- **RETAIN** original landscape features such as stone retaining walls;
- **MAINTAIN** original wood siding due to its integral part in displaying historic character; and
- **PROTECT** the original setting of the building to preserve its integrity.

The design guidelines included in this manual apply to the exteriors of residential and commercial structures within the MacArthur Park Historic District, including buildings, signs, walls, fences and other landscape features. Although interior space is not insignificant, only the part of the built environment that is easily visible to the public is subject to these guidelines. The primary facades of a building are the areas with the greatest amount of detail and decoration visible from the public right-of-way. These areas largely define the architectural character of a property and are emphasized by the Little Rock Historic District Commission for purposes of project review and determinations of appropriateness.

Little Rock Historic District Commission members use these guidelines as an objective standard upon which to make their decisions concerning the appropriateness of a project in relation to the significant



architectural and historic character of the District. Issues concerning appropriate use of the property are not addressed by the Historic District Commission but are referred to the Little Rock Planning Commission staff for proper guidance.

**Historic Preservation is inherently “green”—environmentally friendly.**



Historic postcard of Fire Station #2 at 1201 Commerce Street.



## II. HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN LITTLE ROCK

Across the nation, thousands of communities promote historic preservation because doing so contributes to neighborhood livability and quality of life, minimizes negative impacts on the environment, and yields economic rewards. Little Rock is a part of this movement.

Little Rock is an important southern riverfront city with a unique history. Because it is rich in historic resources and offers an outstanding quality of life, Little Rock continues to attract development that challenges the community to seek creative ways of protecting its character. Preserving historic resources is a part of an overall strategy of maintaining community identity and livability. As Little Rock continues to redevelop, one major goal is to maintain its ties to the past through the preservation of its architectural heritage. Heritage tourism should be an important part of the community's economic development strategy. The underlying objectives of heritage tourism are consistent with Little Rock's development goals: preserving and enjoying the historic resources of a southern riverfront city in a natural, cohesive, and consistent way. Preservation of the built environment provides a fundamental link to the past because historic architecture brings the past to life. Many of Little Rock's buildings and tree-lined streets tell the story of its historical development. Preserving these resources creates a sense of place for residents and provides visitors a view of the city's past.

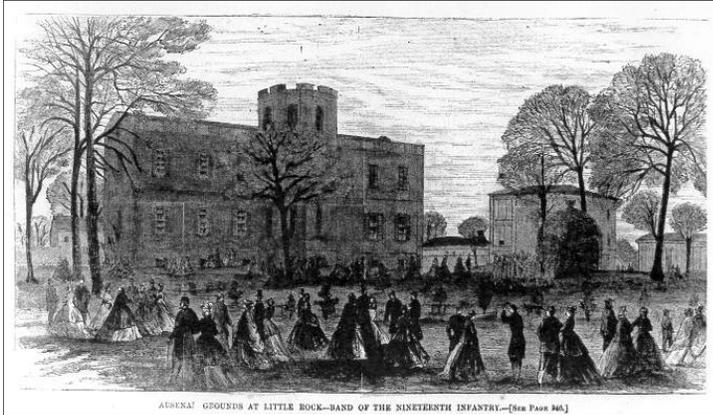
Little Rock has thirteen National Register Historic Districts (see Appendix B). These designations help define the extent of our historic resources and the possibilities for preservation. Three areas are protected by local ordinance: the MacArthur Park Historic District, regulated by the Little Rock Historic District Commission; and the areas around the Arkansas Capitol and the Governor's Mansion, regulated by the Capitol Zoning District Commission. (For descriptions of National Register and Local Ordinance Historic Districts, see Appendix C.)

### A. HISTORY OF LITTLE ROCK AND THE MACARTHUR PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT

The Arkansas River was a major factor determining the founding and development of Little Rock. By the early seventeenth century, Quapaw Indians from the Ohio River Valley had migrated to the "point of rocks," finding high ground, fertile soil, abundant water, good hunting and fishing, and easily accessible stone and timber. White trappers and settlers found these same qualities desirable. By treaty in 1818, the Quapaws ceded claims to land in Territorial Arkansas, west of a line from the 'little rock' to the Saline River, making the land available for settlement. The remaining Quapaw area, east of the Line, was ceded to the United States in 1824. (A monument to the Quapaw Line may be found at the southeast corner of Ninth and Commerce.) By 1819, fourteen people were permanent residents. They probably lived in log cabins,



1871 aerial map of Little Rock Note Arsenal Building (15) on map.



An illustration from *Harpers Bazaar*

the larger ones having two rooms separated by a “dog trot” open porch. Bricks became available as building materials in 1826.

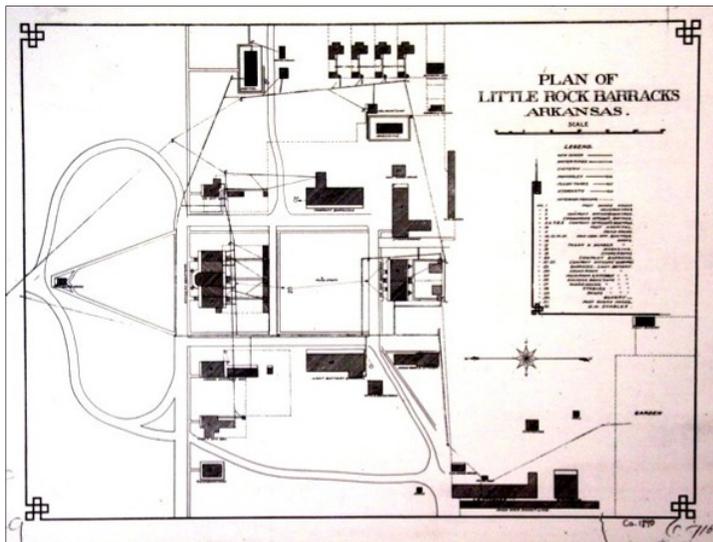
In 1821, the town was designated the Arkansas territorial capital and was incorporated ten years later. The frontier village of Little Rock became the capital of the State of Arkansas in 1836. Buildings located on the grounds of the Historic Arkansas Museum (200 E. Third) date from the territorial period. Arkansas’s first capitol building, now called the Old State House, was being constructed

when Arkansas achieved statehood.

Early settlement in Little Rock took place along the Arkansas River, giving the town an east-west orientation. By 1840, Little Rock had grown to 1,531 residents and was expanding south from the river into the area included within the boundaries of the current MacArthur Park Historic District. In 1836, the federal government bought 36 acres of land for a United States military post, showing a commitment to protect the frontier community. The first building of the U. S. Arsenal at Little Rock (503 E. Ninth), red brick Federal style, was ready to store munitions by 1840, with other structures following. (This sole remaining building of the Arsenal is now called either the Arsenal Building or the Tower Building.) The buildings served the Confederacy for several years during the Civil War.

Several Greek Revival homes (“mansions” at the time) were constructed in the area in the 1840’s and still remain. The Absalom Fowler House (503 E. Sixth) was built by a successful lawyer and land speculator. The Pike-Fletcher-Terry House (411 E. Seventh), constructed in 1840, has housed two of Arkansas’s most distinguished persons: Albert Pike, lawyer, poet and Masonic philosopher; and later, John Gould Fletcher, the only Arkansan who has won a Pulitzer Prize for literature. This house also has

links with African-American history. Slaves probably constructed it. In the late 1950’s, Adolphine Fletcher Terry and the Women’s Emergency Committee met in the house to develop ways to counter the integration crisis at Central High School. Curran Hall (615 E. Capitol Avenue) and Trapnall Hall (423 E. Capitol Avenue) were both built about 1843. Four smaller Greek Revival homes were built before the war. Each of these was an urban farmstead, with the house accompanied by a variety of outbuildings and landscape features, both ornamental and utilitarian. The MacArthur Park Historic District has one of the largest concentrations of pre-Civil War



Barracks Plan of Little Rock Arsenal, ca. 1890

buildings remaining in the state. Also created in 1843 was Mount Holly Cemetery (1200 Broadway), which has an impressive variety of monuments at the gravesites of many notable Arkansans.

The growth of Little Rock before 1860 was hampered by three economic drawbacks: lack of an efficient transportation network; a primitive city financial system; and the surrounding wilderness, which did little to foster retail business and export trade.

Although people traveled through Little Rock on the river, the Southwest Trail, and the east-west military road, fewer than 4,000 people actually lived in the capital city by 1860. The antebellum houses of MacArthur Park reflect these economic conditions; almost all were homes of lawyers and people who could thrive on the political life of the town.



*Arsenal after conversion to living quarters, c.1900*

Little Rock grew dramatically in the wake of the Civil War. Black freedmen and many Union soldiers decided to make Little Rock home. German immigrants constituted a sizeable portion of the new residents, building many homes and founding two churches, First Lutheran (314 E. Eighth) and Saint Edward's Catholic (815 Sherman). Easy credit, northern capital, and the arrival of the Memphis and Little Rock Railroad in 1869 created a building boom. The 1873 Baring Cross Bridge helped transform the city from a small river port into an urban land-based distribution center.

The grand Italianate homes of MacArthur Park were the first of many brick houses built from 1870-1890. The brick Lincoln House (310 E. Seventh), built in 1877 for wholesale druggist Charles Lincoln, perfectly retains its decorative exterior ornament, making it a local showplace. The Garland-Mitchell House (1404 Scott), built in 1873, an excellent wood example of Italianate style, was the home of two governors of Arkansas, Augustus Garland and Charles Brough. A simpler cottage, the Cook House (605 East Sixth), was inhabited by the town's first full-time undertaker, reflecting the growing needs of Little Rock as it evolved into a city. At least nineteen fine examples of Italianate architecture remain in the districts, recalling the post-war boom.

An economic upsurge brought even greater growth and prosperity in the 1880's and 1890's. The city became the hub of a rail network connecting the entire state. The Arkansas frontier had been pushed back by the rapid expansion of agricultural, timber, and mining industries. Rural areas began to see Little Rock as their wholesale and distribution center. While never really suited as a major cotton center, Little Rock did become the nation's fourth largest inland cotton market between 1880 and 1900. The retail and wholesale business formed the backbone of the city's economy. The state's legal, political, and financial focus in Little Rock was equally important. Modern developments included a municipal water company, telephone and electrical service, and streetcars (first mule-drawn, later electrical.)

By the early 1880's, the entire area of the MacArthur Park Historic District was covered with a formal grid of streets, along which were clustered closely-packed Victorian homes. One of the remaining houses, dating from this time, is the unique Villa Marre' (1321 Scott), built in 1881 in the Second Empire style with a mansard roof, by Angelo Marre', an active member of one of Little Rock's most promising professions—saloon keeping. The Butler House (609 Rock) is a small Victorian cottage built



*An early mule-drawn streetcar*

diminished. Urban farmsteads were subdivided to accommodate other homes. Public schools and churches were built to provide services. Kramer Elementary School (715 Sherman), built in 1895 with elements of Romanesque Revival and Queen Anne, was followed in 1900 by Little Rock High School (1401 Scott), which became East Side Junior High School with classical details. Churches include St. Edward's Catholic Church at 815 Sherman (designed by noted Arkansas architect Charles Thompson in 1905), First Presbyterian Church (800 Scott) built in 1922, and First Lutheran Church (314 E. 8th) built in 1888.

Little Rock annexed the land north of the Arkansas River, which had become an important railroad hub known as Argenta, as the town's eighth ward. In 1890, the United States government traded the Little Rock Arsenal for land on top of Big Rock, on the north side of the river, naming it Fort Logan Roots for a Northerner who stayed in Arkansas and prospered after the war. (In 1904, the north-shore community asserted itself and became North Little Rock.) As the former Arsenal land became the town's first public City Park, all of the military buildings were removed except for the Arsenal (or Tower) Building. Used as the city's first public library and a school, it also became home to the Æsthetic Club, one of the oldest women's organizations west of the Mississippi River; the Club helped save the building from demolition. In 1942 the Arsenal Building housed the Museum of Natural History and Antiquities, later named the Arkansas Museum of Science and History. Because General Douglas MacArthur was born at



*Women's City Club, 4th and Scott, showing variety of horse drawn transportation, ca. 1912*

by printer Robert Butler in 1888. A year later, a magnificent Queen Anne mansion with a Japanese "moongate" porch, was built by cotton planter and gin owner Frederick Hanger (1010 Scott). Small rental houses with modest Victorian detail, accommodating different classes, were interspersed throughout the neighborhood.

The MacArthur Park area experienced its maximum period of development as a residential district around 1900. As grocery stores and other retail outlets flourished, the need for home gardens, livestock, and attendant outbuildings

at the Arsenal, the park's name was changed in 1942 to honor him: MacArthur Park. Designated a National Historic Landmark, the Arsenal Building now houses the MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History.

Elsewhere in the Park, #2 Fire Station (1201 Commerce) was built in 1917 to protect the expanding urban area, introducing the Craftsman style to the area. The H. H. Foster Bandshell housed musical entertainments. Across McAlmont Street east of

MacArthur Park, the University of Arkansas, aided by Public Works Administration funds, constructed the College of Medicine in 1935 (now 1201 McMath). The design of the building, buff brick with limestone trim, reflected the popular “WPA Moderne” style. Later it became home to the U of A Graduate Institute of Technology; in 1992, it was extensively remodeled for the University of Arkansas at Little Rock School of Law. Just southwest of the Arsenal Building, in 1937, the Works Progress Administration funds constructed the Museum of Fine Arts (501 E. Ninth); the impressive Art Moderne façade is now an interior wall of the expanded Arkansas Arts Center. Extensive improvements have been made to the landscape to make it more desirable as a city park, including the Knapp Memorial cenotaph and drinking fountain. Also historic artifacts have been included, such as columns from a demolished building used for a gazebo. MacArthur Park serves as the nucleus of the historic district bearing its name.



*Pulaski Heights Line, 1947*

While the function of the Arsenal changed from securing the frontier to providing the city with arts, science, and leisure activities, Little Rock was rapidly expanding to the south and west. The city began to emerge as a modern municipality after 1900, with the development of paved streets and railroad viaducts, water and sewer lines, and adequate fire protection, street lights, and garbage collection. A new state capitol building was begun in 1900, finally completed in 1914. Neighborhood developments to the south and west of the original town have been designated as National Register Historic Districts. The Governor’s Mansion Historic District includes impressive houses and churches built between the 1870’s and the 1920’s in the “south end.” The westward development of Little Rock after 1900 may be seen in Hillcrest, Central High, Capitol View/Stiff Station, and Railroad Call Districts. Small apartment buildings and homes were built in the 1920’s and 1930’s. Architectural styles include Folk Victorian, American Foursquare, Colonial Revival, Craftsman and bungalows, Spanish and Tudor Revival, Art Deco and Art Moderne.

Throughout the evolution of architectural styles and divisions of large lots, the streetscape in the MacArthur Park area remained intact. The paved streets had curbs, planting strips, and sidewalks, with trees arching overhead. Yards were defined by iron fences and walls of stone or brick. Set back from the street, houses had front porches, side and back yards, with garages in the rear accessed by alleys. Landscaping included heirloom roses, crepe myrtles, camellias, a variety of evergreens, and hardy perennials. The human scale invites personal involvement. Despite the intrusions of several high-rise apartment buildings and of Interstate 630, the aesthetic ideals and social patterns of Nineteenth Century Little Rock come vividly to life in the MacArthur Park Historic District.

## **B. HISTORIC PRESERVATION MOVING INTO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY**

As the area encompassed by the MacArthur Park Historic District approached the end of the Twentieth Century, many changes took place. Families realized that the large Victorian houses had spacious rooms, unique details, and were quite affordable. Some houses, which had been divided into

apartments, were returned to single-family residences and restored to their earlier elegance. Others were converted into offices but retain their residential appearance from the street. Kramer and East Side Schools were converted into loft apartments. Neighborhood stores and even a fire station became residences.

The McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System, opened in 1971, has not only stabilized the river and the surrounding area for economic development, but it has also encouraged scenic development of parks and recreational areas along the banks.

In 1961 the “Technical Advisory Committee on Significant Structures” was formed to assist the city in developing urban renewal projects. The committee identified the structures to be preserved instead of demolished. The Quapaw Quarter is a name devised in the early 1960’s by the committee in an attempt to identify the oldest portion of Little Rock and to acknowledge the earliest settlers of the area. The Quapaw Quarter Association was created in 1968 to advocate the merits of the downtown historic areas and to aid people interested in restoring historic properties. The popular Q.Q.A. Spring Tour acquainted many Arkansans, as well as other visitors, with the beauty and livability of the historic areas. Little Rock nominated districts to the National Register of Historic Places (MacArthur Park, Governor’s Mansion, Marshall Square, Hillcrest, South Main Street Apartments, Central High, Railroad Call, East Markham Street, South Scott Street, Capitol View/Stift Station, Philander Smith, Tuf-Nut and Boyle Park) and, in 1981, the City established a Historic District Commission, with authority over Local Ordinance Historic Districts. When pressures of urban life in the capital city necessitated changes (I-630, the Main Post Office, the River Cities Travel Center), historic preservationists helped to soften the intrusions.

The history embodied in MacArthur Park Historic District’s structures, the rich variety and distinctiveness of its architecture, the lush green open spaces, the tree-lined streets, the human scale and the visual continuity combine to make the historic district truly remarkable and worthy of preservation-- a good place in which to live and work and a place in which history can be experienced firsthand.

***Historic preservation is the management of change, by engaging the past, in conversation with the present, over a concern for the future.***

Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation