

IX. GOAL – INCREASE EFFECTIVENESS OF CITY AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Historic preservation in Little Rock is promoted and administered through the efforts of the city's Planning and Development Department, Historic District Commission, and Capitol Zoning District Commission. Organizations such as the Quapaw Quarter Association, Downtown Little Rock Partnership, and neighborhood associations all play an important role in advocacy for preservation and tourism promotion. Historic preservation benefits when these government, non-profit, and private entities coordinate their efforts and focus on strategies to make their work more efficient. The following actions are recommended to increase the effectiveness and profile of historic preservation agencies and organizations in the city.



Additional neighborhoods, such as Broadmoor, may choose to approve protective local ordinance districts in the future and increase the responsibilities of the HDC (15 Archwood Drive).

Action – Increase the Size and Role of the Historic District Commission and Its Operations

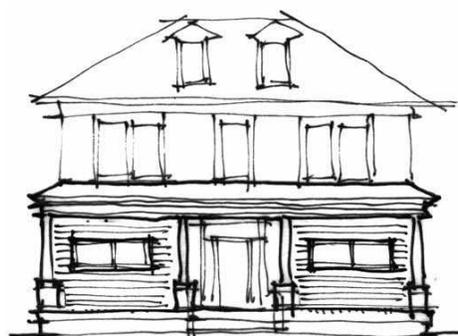
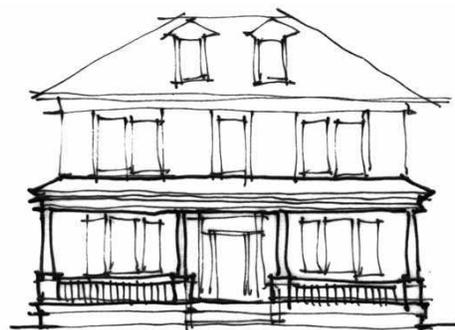
The Little Rock Historic District Commission undertakes a wide variety of activities on behalf of the community. The HDC members are appointed and serve based on their knowledge of historic preservation and commitment to the city. One of the most important actions of the HDC is the consideration of appropriate rehabilitation and new construction in the city's local ordinance district. The only existing local ordinance district is MacArthur Park, but it is anticipated that additional areas will be designated as historic or conservation districts in the years to come, requiring increased responsibilities for HDC review.

In order to increase the effectiveness of the HDC, it is recommended that the current five-member commission be expanded to seven or nine members. Most cities the size of Little Rock have at least seven members on their historic district commissions. This number helps to insure that a quorum will be available at most meetings and also increases the experience and perspective of the commission. The city's historic preservation ordinance should be revised within the next year to reflect this change.

The HDC conducts its review of properties using published and adopted design guidelines. The current guidelines were revised in 2006 and address rehabilitation and new construction in the only existing local ordinance historic district, MacArthur Park. Design guidelines are updated periodically to clarify the review process, address new materials, or to reflect a new approach to a design issue. In 2009, the HDC was conducting an internal review of its policies and revisions to the existing guidelines may be forthcoming. Overall, the current guidelines are consistent with those in use by many other communities across the country and no major revisions are recommended.

If additional areas are included as local ordinance districts, the existing MacArthur Park design guideline manual should be revised to serve as guidelines for these areas as well. Rather than create new design guideline manuals for each new overlay district, a more cost effective approach would be to create one set of guidelines to govern all of the city's residential districts. The residential guideline manual could then be used by the staff and HDC as additional local ordinance districts are approved. This approach is often used in cities such as Little Rock and provides for clear and consistent review and decision making.

Expanding the HDC to seven or nine members also provides the opportunity to streamline the nomination of properties to the National Register. As a Certified Local Government, Little Rock can nominate properties directly to the National Register office in Washington D.C. In order to do this, the HDC must have the proper expertise on the board such as architectural historians and historians who meet federal requirements. Expanding the HDC has the potential to add these individuals who could conduct the review of nominations prepared in the city.



The MacArthur Park Design Guideline Manual provides recommendations on design issues such as preserving original porches (top) and avoiding porch enclosures (bottom).

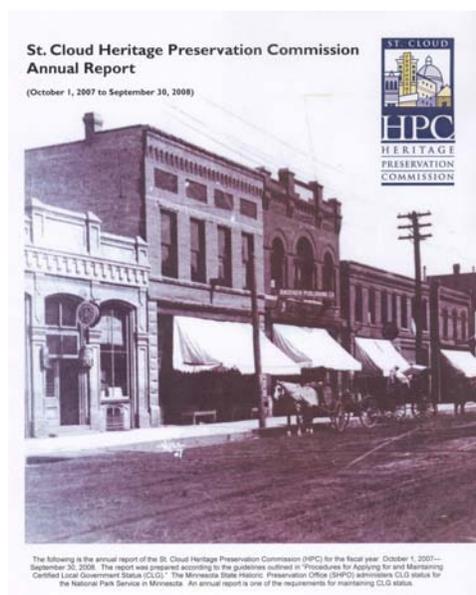
The work of the HDC can go unnoticed, and there should be more advocacy and information presented each year on the HDC's accomplishments. One approach would be the completion of an annual report that is above and beyond the information presented in the annual Urban Development Report. The HDC annual report should include the number of Certificates of Appropriateness approved and the dollar value of these improvements. This information should be sent to the local media and also publicized to the QQA, neighborhood groups and city officials.

Another way to increase visibility is to have HPC members attend ribbon cutting ceremonies when new businesses are opened in historic buildings, dedicate markers when new historic districts are approved, and to create a Power Point showing before and after photos of rehabilitation in the city for presentations to civic groups and elected officials. The amount of investment in downtown historic buildings should also be regularly updated and publicized.

Action – Increase Staff for the Historic District Commission

As additional local ordinance districts for historic areas are approved, there will be increased demands for review and oversight by the staff of the Historic District Commission. Currently, two part-time planners with the Planning and Development Department work with the HDC. This staff conducts preliminary reviews and approvals for COAs in the MacArthur Park Historic District, provides information to citizens on historic preservation, and provides guidance on survey and National Register nomination efforts.

It is anticipated that there will be neighborhoods in the future that will seek to come under some type of overlay to preserve and protect their historic resources. As these neighborhoods are added either as historic, conservation, or design overlay districts, there will be increased demands on the staff. The passage of the state historic tax credit will also result in more requests for National Register listing and increasing the city staff would help with nomination guidance and assistance. In order to be the most effective for the HDC, there should be consideration to at least one staff member within the next three to five years.



Annual reports can help highlight and promote the work of the HDC. This example is from the St. Cloud Heritage Commission in Minnesota.

Action – Improve the Knowledge and Expertise of the Review Boards Through Regular Training

Members of the Historic District Commission and Capitol Zoning Design Review Committee are expected to have certain levels of expertise in architecture and historic preservation. However, new members often need some level of training and orientation as to how these review bodies operate, what kinds of decisions they have typically made in the past and how they generally approach design review requests. Long-term members of these review bodies also need regular updates and training in order to keep up with new materials for rehabilitation, make their decisions as consistent as possible, and share knowledge among members in other communities.

The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program (AHPP) provides training for HDC members several times a year. HDC members should make it a priority to take advantage of these training sessions as often as possible. The AHPP annually sponsors the Arkansas Preservation Conference, in conjunction with the Historic Preservation Alliance of Arkansas. In recent years, the state office has also hosted a CAMP (Commission Assistance & Mentoring Program) the day before the state conference.

Additionally, AHPP sponsors 2-3 trainings per year on some advanced topics (e.g., recent past resources, demolition by neglect, etc.). These are typically geared toward staff, but commissioners are encouraged to attend as well. The City of Little Rock is encouraged to apply for grant funding to send their staff to these quarterly training meetings, and their commissioners to CAMP.

Over the past several years the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program has provided grants to members of the Little Rock HDC to travel to the National Commission Forum, hosted by the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions. This nation-wide organization supports the work of design review boards and commissions across the country through an on-line list-serve, newsletters, and the bi-annual Forum. The city and state should continue to apply for grants and send as many HDC and CZD members to the NAPC conference as possible.



The National Alliance of Preservation Commissions supports the work of review boards and commissions such as in Little Rock..



Remember Summer Camp?
You had fun, made friends, and learned things you never thought possible while the counselors did all the work! NAPC's Commission Assistance and Mentoring Program (CAMP) works just the same way. It's an intensive, high-energy program customized to meet your training needs.

Contact the NAPC at 706 842-4731 for more details about hosting a CAMP... we'll be glad to come pitch our tent at your CAMP site.

Nationally recognized CAMP counselors from local preservation programs across the country provide the highest quality training in an atmosphere of camaraderie and celebration.

CAMP Details
ONE DAY CAMP
One Day CAMP features three nationally recognized experts and focuses on preservation commission fundamentals that every commission member should understand. The customized curriculum includes Legal Issues, Standards and Guidelines, and two additional topics from the CAMP Menu.
Costs: \$2,500 + speaker expenses + \$55/participant

DAY AND A HALF CAMP
The customized Day and a Half CAMP curriculum includes preservation commission fundamentals and builds upon them to explore more topics in greater detail. Four nationally recognized experts explore Legal Issues, Standards and Guidelines, and four additional topics from the CAMP Menu.
Costs: \$3,500 + speaker expenses + \$55/participant

Downloads:
CAMP brochure
Past CAMPsites list

The NAPC's CAMP provides extensive training for historic district commission members and their staff.

Action – Expand the Role of the Quapaw Quarter Association

The Quapaw Quarter Association (QQA) is Little Rock's primary non-profit organization promoting historic preservation efforts and advocacy. The QQA provides educational materials and walking tour information, a bi-annual homes tour, and annual awards for historic preservation efforts. The QQA is located in Curran Hall and partners in the operation of the building as the city's Visitor's Center.

Like many non-profit organizations, the QQA relies on a variety of fundraising activities and membership support for its operations. It also has a small endowment which provides for some of its operating costs. Overall, the QQA has a limited budget and it currently has one paid staff member and a volunteer board of directors. The QQA highlights preservation activities primarily through its annual homes tour, awards programs and general advocacy. Much of the attention of the QQA has been focused on the preservation and rehabilitation of the MacArthur Park and Governor's Mansion Historic Districts.



The QQA is encouraged to broaden its outreach to historic districts, such as Central High Neighborhood, and offer programs on appropriate rehabilitation.

The board and staff are currently examining ways to broaden the scope and mission of the QQA to provide additional assistance to neighborhoods and commercial areas throughout the city. With the passage of the state rehabilitation tax credit, there will be more interest in National Register listing as well as the need for education on proper rehabilitation methods to meet the criteria of the tax credit program. There is also the need to counter the loss of historic housing stock through abandonment and demolition.

The QQA should consider expanding its advocacy efforts by establishing a Revolving Fund and providing workshops and hands-on training for home rehabilitation. A Revolving Fund would enable the QQA to purchase an endangered property, stabilize it, and sell it with preservation covenants. Money from the sale of properties then goes back into the fund to purchase and save other properties. The city and the QQA should examine sources to provide seed money to initiate and operate the Revolving Fund, as well as staff to work with property owners on rehabilitation workshops and training. As part of this new direction, the QQA should seek board members with experience in real estate and development.

Action – Improve Enforcement Provisions in the Historic Districts

Little Rock is unusual in that it has two historic districts with two separate review boards for each district. The Capitol Zoning District Commission was created in 1975 by the Arkansas Legislature to protect neighborhoods around the Governor’s Mansion and the State Capitol. Both the Mansion and the Capitol Areas require design review for construction projects, as well as review for proposed land uses. The Little Rock Historic District Commission was created in 1981 and conducts design review in the local ordinance historic districts which currently consists of MacArthur Park.

In the Capitol Zoning District (CZD) property owners are required to get a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) or a Design Review Permit (DR) prior to getting a Building Permit from the City of Little Rock. Property owners are also required to get a Certificate of Compliance (CC) prior to getting a Business Permit from the City. Most applications can be approved on a staff level with only those proposals involving new construction, variances, conditional uses, or land uses not allowed by right having to be reviewed and permitted by the CZD Commission itself. Property owners who conduct work without a permit or deviate from the provisions of their permit are in violation of the CZD requirements. In those cases, the CZD may request the City of Little Rock Code Office to issue a Stop Work Order until the violation is resolved; the CZD may list the property in violation and not issue any additional permits on said property or any other property in the district owned by the owner of the property in violation until said violation is resolved; and/or the CZD may file a lawsuit against the property owner if all efforts to resolve the violation go unheeded. This process is potentially expensive and time consuming and can result not only in work detrimental to historic buildings as well as deterioration and neglect, but an injurious reputation to the State Agency (CZD) as well.

To counter this problem, the Commission should seek legislation that would allow it to have enforcement fines and penalties in keeping with those of Little Rock’s HDC. This change is recommended since it would create a uniform approach to enforcement within both the Capitol Zoning District and local ordinance districts.



Strong enforcement measures help prevent demolition by neglect and ensuring that rehabilitation is completed in accordance with a COA.

Action – Conduct a Base Survey of Downtown to Identify Preservation Opportunities

The city’s Planning and Development Office and the Downtown Little Rock Partnership should either independently or jointly conduct an analysis of downtown to provide base data on historic buildings. This base data should include information on each National Register-listed or –eligible property including current status, developable square footage, available parking and potential for sale or lease by the owner. While some of this information is currently available, the purpose of this base survey would be to coordinate the data to market historic buildings, individually or collectively, along particular blocks. The added financial incentive of the state rehabilitation tax credit will be an extra stimulus for investment in historic buildings in the years to come, and having base survey data would assist in their marketing and promotion.



Vacant space in downtown historic buildings offers potential for loft apartments and condominiums (320-322 S. Main Street).



A downtown survey would identify properties listed on the National Register, their condition and available space for rehabilitation (Federal Reserve Bank, 123 W. Third Street).

Action – Revise Planning Policies to Support Historic Preservation Goals

As part of this project, the city’s overall planning policies regarding land use and street widths, as well as subdivision zoning and parking regulations, were all reviewed to assess their overall impacts to historic preservation efforts. The following recommendations resulted from this review.

Future Land Use Plan

The majority of Little Rock’s historic resources are older houses found within historic neighborhoods. This plan’s treatment of such area is, for the most part, not a threat to historic resources. The only exception might be Low Density Residential (LDR) areas, which suggest a range of housing types and densities between 6 and 10 units per acre. As applied to historic neighborhoods such as MacArthur Park, this designation would not be harmful if density is kept closer to 6 units per acre and attached housing is designed to be compatible with existing historic buildings. Thus, a statement added to the City’s current Future Land Use Plan to clarify the need to be compatible with historic contexts might suffice.

Recommendation: Revise the Future Land Use Plan’s section on Low Density Residential areas to note that, as applied to historic neighborhoods, the density and design character must be compatible with that of the neighborhood. Consider applying similar language to all residential areas addressed by the plan in case similar issues exist for other residential land use categories.

More problematic is the Mixed Urban Use (MXU) designation, which defers to the City’s existing Urban Use (UU) zoning district as a guide. Because this classification suggests building heights substantially taller than most existing historic commercial buildings (as high as 100 feet), it can apply development pressure on such properties that make this designation a serious threat.



Because Queen Anne houses such as this one in MacArthur Park can accommodate more than one dwelling unit while retaining their historic integrity, the City’s Future Land Use Plan designation of Low Density Residential is compatible with this historic neighborhood.



Without special overlay zoning protections, low-rise historic buildings such as this one in Downtown Little Rock on Clinton Avenue are threatened by demolition when the City’s land use plan suggests buildings as tall as 100 feet.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the language for this category be revised to not reference an existing zoning classification (UU) and instead address it more generally, noting the need to consider the preservation of historic buildings. Also, because other commercial and mixed use categories within the plan fail to describe the recommended scale or density/intensity of development, descriptions should be provided.

Master Street Plan

This plan includes design standards for the city's six different street categories. In many instances, expanding these streets within historic areas to the recommended minimum paved cartway width and ROW width would negatively impact adjacent historic buildings. Furthermore, this plan needs to include maximum widths, rather than only minimum widths.



This segment of South Main Street is between 16th and 17th Streets. Designated in the City's street plan as a minor arterial, this designation is an example of one that is appropriate for its adjacent historic buildings. The required minimum paved cartway is 59 feet, while the existing width appears to be approximately 60 feet (four 11' driving lanes and two 8' parking lanes).

Recommendation: It is recommended that maximum cartway and ROW widths be added to street standards, rather than addressing only the minimum widths. Also, an overall statement should be added to the plan that recognizes historic corridors and states that the application of street standards will be intended to avoid negative impacts to historic resources.

Likewise, a plan amendment should point out the threat that the City's adopted turning radii standards have on historic corner buildings. The adoption of an administrative review process for addressing such streets should also be considered.

Recommendation: Add language to the plan indicating that the City's adopted turning radii standards will be relaxed when their implementation might negatively impact historic corner buildings.

One-Way Streets

A number of the major streets in the downtown area and the MacArthur Park Historic District are one-way. These streets were converted to one-way directions years ago to improve traffic flow into and out of downtown and to increase the safety of pedestrians. Studies on the effectiveness of one-way streets and their impacts to historic areas are mixed. A one-way street is basically a traffic funnel designed to quickly and efficiently sweep cars through an area. Two-way streets tend to be better for businesses depending on foot traffic and tourism—they're slower and more inviting to pedestrians, generating more customers. Cars are less likely to speed past shops and restaurants, and walkers are more likely to drop in. While overall traffic flow may be improved, one-way streets can also cause confusion for visitors and require extra turns that would not be necessary for two-way streets. Tourists can also end up going the wrong way on one-way streets resulting in more accidents.

Studies on the effectiveness of one-way versus two-way streets are relatively new, but cities such as Lexington, Kentucky, and St. Petersburg, Florida, are in the process of converting their downtown streets from one-way back to two-way. In both instances transportation planners have concluded that while conversion may impede traffic flow, increased business and more pedestrians will be of greater benefit.

Recommendation: Little Rock should consider converting one-way streets to two-way streets in areas with high rates of tourism. This would include streets in the MacArthur Park Historic District. Over the next one to three years the city should also monitor the results of similar conversions in other cities to see if these efforts have had the intended results.



Two-way streets are the general rules in most of the city's older neighborhoods.

Back to the future

Downtown planners and developers think it is important to return downtown Lexington's one-way street pairs to two-way traffic, as they were before the early 1970s.



Lexington is one of a number of cities nationwide considering converting one-way streets back to two-way (Courtesy Lexington-Herald Leader).

Subdivision & Zoning Ordinance

Subdivision Regulations

Section 31-210 – General access and circulation – contains curb turning radii standards consistent with those found in the City’s street plan. It states that “Turning radii shall be thirty (30) foot minimum radius for areas subject to truck traffic.” Because many existing historic areas feature streets with radii in the five to ten foot range, these standards are excessive and a threat to historic buildings located on corner lots.



The block bound by E. 17th Street on the north, E. 18th Street on the south, McAlmont Street on the east, and Vance Street on the west, is illustrated above and below. It clearly does not meet the City’s minimum front setback standard of 30 feet (because 17th is designated as a “collector”) or the minimum lot width requirement of 60



Recommendation: Amend this section of the regulations to note that exceptions to the turning radii standards will be made for historic areas in which corner historic buildings would be adversely impacted.

All single-family detached residential lots, regardless of their zoning district or location, are required to have a minimum width of 60 feet. Given that the average lot width of most of Little Rock’s historic neighborhoods is 50 feet, this standard should be revised to 50 feet. This section also requires that all residential corner lots have a minimum 75 foot width on both street frontages. That standard should be reduced. With respect to front setbacks, it is required that lots fronting collector streets must be at least 30. The setback must be at least 35 feet for minor arterials. Because such setback requirements are too deep to be compatible with many of Little Rock’s historic neighborhoods, these setbacks should either be reduced or a special provision should be made for historic areas. Also, maximum setbacks should be addressed, not just minimum setbacks.

Recommendation: Revise the subdivision regulations to require a minimum lot width of 50 feet rather than 60 feet, and add a maximum width requirement that insures that historic lot patterns are maintained. Corner lots should not be required to feature additional widths. Also, front setback standards should include a new provision stating that, for historic areas, average front setbacks shall be followed.

Zoning Regulations

The Urban Use (UU) zone requires a conditional use approval for the development of any commercial parking lot. Language might be added to this section to state that the proposed demolition of historic buildings will be one consideration for such conditional uses. This zone also allows buildings to be as high as five stories, and they can be as tall as fifteen stories with bonuses for various desirable features. It is recommended that either special provisions to help preserve historic buildings be added to this zone, or a protective overlay zoning should be applied to relevant areas.

Recommendation: Amend the conditional use provisions for commercial parking lots in the UU zone to include the goal of saving historic buildings when considering approvals. If there is insufficient support to apply a historic overlay zone to the historic core of downtown Little Rock, the UU zoning should be amended to not allow density bonuses for sites on which the demolition of a historic building is proposed. The City should also consider a lower height limit for sites featuring historic buildings, such as three stories.

Most of Little Rock's historic neighborhoods are zoned R2, R3, and R4 and feature lots no wider than 50 feet and no deeper than roughly 150 feet (yielding lots averaging 7,500 square feet in area). Little Rock's R2 zoning requires a minimum lot size of 15,000 square feet and front and side setbacks of 35 feet and 10 feet, respectively. Because the R3 zone is much more consistent with historic development patterns, it is recommended that R2 areas - as applied to historic neighborhoods - be reevaluated for a friendlier designation. Of course, protective overlay zoning is another option. Some historic areas are zoned R4, which allows two-family houses. Where applied to historic areas, R3 should be considered as an alternative unless provisions can be added to the R4 zone to require design compatibility. Also, "maximum" standards should be applied to these districts.



New construction in the city's historic neighborhoods should follow the traditional patterns of setback and lot widths (15th and Cumberland Streets).

Recommendation: For historic neighborhoods not protected by a local ordinance district, there are two options for the City: 1) Rezone R1 districts to R3, which allow smaller lots and more shallow front setbacks consistent with historic development patterns; or 2) Add a provision in the zoning that requires a deviation from the lot size and setback standards where necessary to accommodate historic development patterns. Also, historic neighborhoods zoned R4 should be treated in either of the following two ways: 1) They should be rezoned to R3 if allowing duplexes is not a significant priority; or 2) The R4 zoning should require that duplexes be designed in a manner that has the appearance of a historic single-family house. Finally, maximum lot sizes and setbacks should be included in all residential zoning to reflect historic development patterns.

The Planned Residential District (PRD) is applied to many areas downtown that are not zoned. Because the flexibility of design offered by such planned districts has more potential to harm rather than help historic areas, one of two alternatives should be considered. Either such areas should be rezoned to a more sympathetic zoning, or the PRD provisions should state that development patterns for new development should respect historic patterns within historic neighborhoods.

Recommendation: As a near-term effort, it is recommended that language for the PRD zoning be amended to require that new development reflect historic development patterns for their context with respect to lot sizes, building setbacks, and building design. Long-term, alternative zoning classifications for such care should be explored.

The City's parking standards appear to presently lack "shared parking" provisions that would allow less parking when lots serve multiple uses that have staggered peak demand hours. This omission should be rectified, as decreased parking demands typically result in decreased threats to historic buildings.

Recommendation: Add new parking standards that allow urban mixed use areas to get by with fewer parking spaces because of "shared parking" opportunities and on-street parking relative to the parking needs of single-use suburban areas.

X. GOAL – ENHANCE EDUCATION EFFORTS ON THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS AND SUSTAINABILITY OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Action – Involve the historic commercial areas of the Heights, Hillcrest and Stiffts Station within the Arkansas downtown network

Within the historic districts of Hillcrest and Stiffts Station and the Heights Neighborhood are concentrations of pre-1960 neighborhood commercial buildings. These buildings are generally one- to two-stories in height, of masonry construction and were designed in typical commercial styles and forms of the period. These areas are thriving neighborhood commercial districts although some of the two-story buildings are underutilized on the upper floors. Properties in the Hillcrest and Stiffts Station districts are particularly attractive for rehabilitation since they would, in most cases, qualify for both the state and federal tax credits.

To further the promotion and marketing of these neighborhood districts, merchants should consider joining the Arkansas Downtown Network. The Arkansas Downtown Network (ADN) is a new state program that works beyond the Main Street Arkansas network to serve a broader base of Arkansas communities that are focused on revitalizing historic commercial buildings. The program was created to offer resources and education to historic commercial areas which are not able to commit to the level of a certified Main Street program.

The benefit for merchants and property owners in these districts is being tied into the larger statewide effort of historic commercial district revitalization. By being a part of the ADN these areas would receive promotional and marketing assistance from the Main Street office. Businesses would also be able to network and be part of state and regional tourism development efforts. The Hillcrest Merchants Association should join with the property owners of the commercial areas in the Heights and Stiffts Station to consider the benefits of the ADN program. Such participation may assist in continued economic development of these areas.



Historic commercial districts such as Stiffts Station should consider becoming part of the Arkansas Downtown Network to promote revitalization.



These areas contain historic businesses as well as historic buildings (Stiffts Station Historic District).

Action – Partner with the Little Rock Realtors Association to promote historic preservation



Realtors should be informed about the potential for tax certification projects in commercial historic districts, such as South Main Street.



...and residential properties in historic districts, such as Capitol View (400 block of Pearl Street).

With almost 27% of the city’s buildings at least fifty years old, most Realtors in Little Rock engage in buying and selling older properties as part of their everyday work. As the number of National Register and local ordinance historic districts increase in the future, the Historic District Commission and City Department of Planning and Development should work with the Little Rock Realtors Association to create an informational brochure on historic properties. This brochure should include maps of the districts, financial incentives available for older homes for prospective buyers, and a summary of design review standards for overlay districts. At least once a year the chair or vice-chair of the HDC should attend one of the Association’s meetings to provide information on the historic districts and new areas which may be added to the National Register or as local ordinance districts.

The city’s Historic District Commission and the Quapaw Quarter Association should also consider sponsoring an annual one-day workshop for Realtors. There are several examples of such programs such as “Selling Historic Austin: New Building Regulations and Local Historic Districts” sponsored twice each year in Austin, Texas. In Austin the city’s Heritage Society and the Austin Board of Realtors offer a one-day Mandatory Continuing Education (MCE) course on historic real estate. This course is designed primarily for real estate agents who want to improve their knowledge and skills in working with old and historic homes. The course, entitled “Marketing and Selling Historic Properties,” provides an overview of the history of the city’s architecture and neighborhoods and information on federal, state and local regulations related to historic preservation, including tax incentives for rehabilitation of historic buildings. Economists cover the economic impact of historic preservation efforts, and local Realtors offer tools for the successful marketing of historic property and neighborhoods. This type of program would prove useful in marketing and selling historic properties as additional National Register districts are added in the city.

Action – Recognize Historic Preservation as an Essential Component of the City’s Sustainability Efforts

Cities across the country are increasingly focusing efforts on conservation, energy efficiency and recycling as part of overall sustainable development. Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Historic preservation is a valuable tool for protecting the environmental resources that have already been expended as well as those not yet used. The greenest building is the one that already exists, and reusing sound older buildings is much more sustainable than abandoning them or demolishing them. Preserving and revitalizing Little Rock’s older neighborhoods is “recycling” on a community-wide scale. As energy costs increase and resources dwindle, encouraging preserving and maintaining Little Rock’s historic buildings and districts is one of the city’s best opportunities for sustainable development.

The city’s commitment to sustainability was demonstrated in 2008 with the formation of the Little Rock Sustainability Committee. This volunteer civic group was appointed by the Mayor and is examining city policies and programs to make them more sustainable. In addition to this city-wide effort, the Arkansas Sustainability Network is also promoting sustainability on a statewide basis. This organization is based in Little Rock in a historic building at 1419 S. Main Street. Highlighting the importance of historic preservation to the city’s sustainability programs should be a priority of the Historic District Commission, the Capitol Zoning District Commission, the Quapaw Quarter Association and other preservation groups.



The Arkansas Sustainability Network works to promote sustainability in housing and construction.



Downtown rehabilitation projects include the National Register-listed Capital Hotel.



Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards are increasingly recognizing the value of historic rehabilitation to sustainability.

Over 27 percent of dwellings and apartments in Little Rock were built between ca. 1840 and 1960. This coincided with an era of high quality and affordable materials such as hardwoods for construction, plaster for walls and ceilings, and advancements in electrical lighting and coal-fired furnaces. The majority of the dwellings built in Little Rock in these years are of frame and brick construction and can last indefinitely as long as they are maintained and protected from water infiltration.

The quality of Little Rock's older houses allows them to readily adapt to the needs and requirements of 21st century families. Issues regarding the rehabilitation of older houses include updating of mechanical features such as electrical, plumbing and HVAC and weatherization of the house to conserve energy. Many houses in Little Rock are now one hundred years old or older, and more will reach this milestone in the next two decades.



Dwellings built in the early 20th century were built with old-growth lumber which is now expensive and difficult to obtain.

During the past century common upgrades to these dwellings included the replacement of coal-fired furnaces with furnaces using natural gas or heating oil. Replacement of original knob and tube electrical wiring with modern wiring has also been widespread along with the installation of central air conditioning. Basements, crawl spaces, and attics all afford room for continued retrofitting of modern mechanical upgrades to insure that the houses last at least another one hundred years.

Little Rock's older buildings also have embodied energy which is an important part of sustainability practice. Embodied energy is the amount of energy associated with extracting, processing, manufacturing, transporting and assembling building materials. Embodied energy in historic buildings includes the expense and effort used to fire bricks, cut and tool stone, transport and assemble the wood framing, and prepare and apply interior plaster. Construction of a building represents an enormous expenditure of energy from its foundation to its roof. Demolishing a historic building and replacing it with a new energy efficient building would take decades to recover the energy lost in demolishing the building and reconstructing a new structure in its place.

Action – Promote Appropriate Rehabilitation Through Compatible Weatherization

It is important that in its various housing rehabilitation programs, the City of Little Rock promote and encourage appropriate weatherization of older dwellings. Energy costs are a big concern of all homeowners, and energy efficiency is especially important in maintaining historic houses. Owners of historic buildings should take measures that achieve reasonable energy savings, at reasonable costs, with the least intrusion or impact on the character of the building. Care should be taken to preserve and maintain historic building materials and character defining elements such as windows and doors. Retaining original windows and adding storm windows can often offer similar thermal values and be more cost effective than wholesale window replacement.

Action – Provide Training for Builders and Contractors in Historic Rehabilitation Methods and Techniques

Finding contractors and builders sensitive to historic building renovation is often a challenge, and there is a need to provide additional venues and opportunities for the sharing of information and preservation rehabilitation techniques. The HDC is encouraged to prepare a list of contractors and builders known to have skills and crafts in historic building rehabilitation and make this list available to the general public at their meetings or on the web. The HDC should state that the list does not reflect endorsement but simply provides the names of those known to have successfully completed rehabilitation projects in the city.

A statewide program currently on hold is the Arkansas Institute for Building Preservation Trades. This school opened in 2000 and offered a practical, hands-on program that culminated in a two-year degree: Associate of Applied Science in Historic Preservation Trades. The Institute was established to address the need for artisans to be comprehensively trained in the traditional preservation trades. Students learn skills and methods to maintain, rehabilitate, and restore historic buildings in a curriculum that blends classroom theory and workshop practice. The Institute is presently being reorganized and may be reopened at the University of Arkansas – Fort Smith in coming years.



The Arkansas Institute for Building Trades programs should be utilized in the future to help train local contractors and builders.

XI. IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of Little Rock's Citywide Historic Preservation Plan will be critical to achieving the goals and actions which were recommended through the planning process. There are various types of actions that will be necessary to reach these goals, and the actions will be the responsibility of various agencies and organizations. Implementation is based on the following:

- Financial Incentive Policies
- Regulatory Policies
- Education and Training
- Funding Sources
- Partnerships and Networking

FINANCIAL INCENTIVE POLICIES

The plan details a variety of financial incentives that are successfully utilized in other communities to promote rehabilitation and investment in older neighborhoods. The recent passage of the Arkansas Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit is an important financial incentive which is expected to be widely used in the city. Other recommendations such as Urban Homesteading and the use of the Land Bank to acquire and rehabilitate properties will require financial commitments by city government. Annual appropriations for the completion of reconnaissance and intensive surveys will also need to be enhanced.

REGULATORY POLICIES

Successful protection of historic neighborhoods will depend on adding to the city's existing preservation toolbox of regulatory oversight. Only one-fourth of the city's National Register-listed historic buildings have any level of protection, and other approaches such as Conservation Zoning or limited local ordinance historic districts are needed. Changes to the city's overall zoning, master street plan and new construction guidelines also need to be more in alignment with preservation goals.



Terra cotta decoration at 212 Center Street.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The economic benefits of historic preservation and its role in sustainability need to be promoted and highlighted through additional outreach and educational materials. This can include the gathering of economic data on tourism, property values, money generated from building rehabilitation projects and other sources. This economic data must be compiled on an annual basis and its value conveyed to Little Rock citizens.

FUNDING SOURCES

As a Certified Local Government, Little Rock can take advantage of competitive grants from the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program for the completion of historic surveys, National Register nominations and other preservation activities. Grants from federal agencies, such as Preserve America and Save America's Treasures, are also available for preservation projects. The city also has in place numerous assistance programs for low-income and elderly residents which provide opportunities for rehabilitation and preservation.

PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKING

Historic preservation efforts depend on participants from neighborhood residents to employees of the National Park Service. Local, state and federal partnerships are critical to the success of the city's preservation goals and actions. The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, Quapaw Quarter Association, Historic District Commission, Historic Preservation Alliance of Arkansas and neighborhood groups and organizations all need to communicate with each other on a regular basis and work in tandem to promote specific and general preservation efforts.



Part of the eclectic mix of new and old in the River Market.

SUMMARY

The City of Little Rock has taken major steps in the past twenty years to stabilize and improve its historic downtown and neighborhoods. The Central High Neighborhood now boasts a National Historic Site and Visitor's Center which tells the story of the city's Civil Rights struggle. The Governor's Mansion and MacArthur Park Historic Districts are stable neighborhoods containing some of the city's finest residential architecture, and both attract thousands of tourists annually. The River Market District is an important success story centered around restored historic buildings and modern development next to the river. Heritage tourism is increasingly a major part of the city's economy.



Leaded and stained glass transom, 201 S. Izard Street.

Little Rock continues to build on this success, but faces challenges with disinvestment and depopulation of older neighborhoods and slow revitalization efforts on Main Street. The majority of the city's historic buildings lack protection and thousands of buildings remain to be assessed and recognized. The importance of historic preservation to the city's economic development is not well known among its citizens, and historic preservation organizations need better coordination and focus.

The recommendations of this plan are intended to provide achievable goals and actions over the next one to ten years. Commitment will be required on the part of all of those involved with policy decisions regarding protection and incentives. Little Rock's rich past deserves no less, and this heritage will enrich the lives of succeeding generations of its citizens.

Action:	Timing:			Responsible Parties:
	1 – 3 years	3 – 5 years	5 + years	
Goal 1: Increase Identification and Recognition of Historic Resources.				
Complete Reconnaissance-Level Surveys and Intensive Surveys of Pre-1960s Neighborhoods	<p>1-3 Years Stephens/Oak Forest South End John Barrow</p> <p>3-5 Years Hanger Hill Prospect Terrace/Heights</p> <p>5+ Years Broadmoor Briarwood Midtown Westwood/Pecan Lake 65th St. West Wakefield</p>			<p>labor: students labor: volunteers oversight: City of Little Rock or historic preservation nonprofit organization</p>
List Eligible Properties and Historic Districts on the National Register of Historic Places	<p>1-3 Years South End Dunbar Hanger Hill Stephens/Oak Forest John Barrow</p> <p>3-5 Years Fair Park Prospect Terrace/Heights Broadmoor Scott-Rock</p> <p>5+ Years West 2nd and 3rd Sts. Briarwood Midtown Westwood/Pecan Lake/66th St. West Wakefield</p>			<p>labor: students labor: volunteers oversight: City of Little Rock or historic preservation nonprofit organization</p> <p>Or:</p> <p>Professional Consultants</p>
Complete a National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form for Downtown Commercial Buildings	1-3 Years			Professional Consultant

Action:	Timing:	Responsible Parties:
Goal 2: Expand the Range of Incentives and Protection to Property Owners		
Adopt Conservation Zoning Provision and Promote its Use	1-3 Years	City of Little Rock Planning and Development Dept. Arkansas Historic Preservation Program State Legislature
Investigate and Inventory Archaeological Sites	Ongoing	City of Little Rock Planning and Development Dept. Arkansas State Archaeologist
Adopt Design Overlay Districts or Conservation Zoning Provisions to Promote Appropriate Infill	1-3 Years	City of Little Rock Planning and Development Dept. Neighborhood Organizations
Adopt a Demolition by Neglect Ordinance Provision	1-3 Years	City of Little Rock Planning and Development Dept.
Reduce Abandonment and Demolition Through an Urban Homesteading Program	1-3 Years	City of Little Rock Planning and Development Dept. Land Bank Commission Housing and Neighborhood Programs
Promote Rehabilitation Through a Revolving Fund Program	3-5 Years	Quapaw Quarter Association
Promote Building Rehabilitation by Easing Home Occupation Standards	3-5 Years	City of Little Rock Planning and Development Dept.
Goal 3: Increase Effectiveness of Preservation Agencies and Organizations		
Increase the Size and Role of the Historic District Commission and Its Operations	1- 3 years	Historic District Commission City of Little Rock Planning and Development Dept.
Increase Staff for the Historic District Commission and Capitol Zoning District Commission	3- 5 years	City of Little Rock City of Little Rock Planning and Development Dept.
Improve the Knowledge and Expertise of the Review Boards and Staff Through Regular Training	Ongoing	Historic District Commission Capitol Zoning District Commission
Expand the Role of the Quapaw Quarter Association	1-3 Years	Quapaw Quarter Association
Improve Enforcement Provisions in the Historic Districts	1-3 Years	City of Little Rock Planning and Development Dept.
Conduct a Base Survey of Downtown to Identify Preservation Opportunities	1-3 Years	City of Little Rock Planning and Development Dept. Downtown Little Rock Partnership
Expand Heritage Tourism Opportunities	3-5 Years	Little Rock Convention and Visitors Bureau
Coordinate and Standardize Signage and Wayfinding	3-5 Years	City of Little Rock Planning and Development Dept.
Revise Planning Policies to Support Historic Preservation Goals	3-5 Years	City of Little Rock Planning and Development Dept.

Action:	Timing:	Responsible Parties:
Goal 4: Enhance Education Efforts on the Economic Benefits and Sustainability of Historic Preservation		
Involve Historic Commercial Areas of the Within the Arkansas Downtown Network	1-3 Years	Arkansas Downtown Network Commercial Merchants Associations Business Owners
Partner with the Little Rock Realtors Association to Promote Historic Preservation	1-3 Years	Historic District Commission Quapaw Quarter Association Little Rock Realtors Association
Recognize Historic Preservation as an Essential Component of the City's Sustainability Efforts	1-3 Years	City of Little Rock Planning and Development Department Arkansas Sustainability Network Quapaw Quarter Association
Promote Appropriate Rehabilitation Through Compatible Weatherization	1-3 Years	City of Little Rock Housing Department Housing & Neighborhoods Programs
Provide Training for Builders and Contractors in Historic Rehabilitation Methods and Techniques	3-5 Years	Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Quapaw Quarter Association