



HISTORIC PRESERVATION FAQ's

- 1. Do I have any say as to whether my property is locally designated – whether individually or as part of a district?**
Yes. Before a local designation is approved, affected property owners, residents and occupants have the opportunity to express their views at public hearings with the Preservation Commission and City Council.
- 2. Will local designation restrict the use of my property?**
No. Local historic designation does not restrict zoning or land use. The local designation serves as an overlay zone, which requires design review of any significant exterior material change in appearance of a building or site.
- 3. Will local designation prevent me from making changes to my property?**
No. Local designation does not prevent owners from making changes to their properties, but ensures that the changes do not detract from the architectural, historical, and/or aesthetic qualities of the district. Exterior material changes to locally designated properties – whether a change in exterior siding material, new construction, demolition, or other significant change – must obtain a *Certificate of Appropriateness* (COA) prior to starting work. Interior changes to a building do not require review and approval by the Preservation Commission.
- 4. Does local designation require permission to paint my building? Are there restrictions on color choice?**
No. Local designation does not require permission to paint your house, nor does it restrict color choice.
- 5. If I am unhappy with a decision made by the Preservation Commission concerning my Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) application, may I appeal?**
Yes. Appeals may be made to the Gainesville City Council and then to Superior Court.
- 6. Are all buildings in a local historic district historic?**
No. When the district boundaries are drawn, non-historic properties are often included. Changes made to a non-historic property generally can be done in a way that will enhance or be in keeping with the integrity of the entire district.
- 7. Will local designation require me to restore my building to its original condition?**
No. Local designation does not require that you restore a structure to its original condition. Should you want to restore the structure to its original condition, you would likely need to obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for the work project. Physical evidence (photograph, sketch, etc.) of how the structure looked originally would be required as part of the COA application. Ordinary maintenance and repair are required to keep the structure in sound condition and to prevent a public safety threat.
- 8. What might happen to the value of my property if it is included in a local district? Can I sell my property?**
Designation of an area as a historic district will not directly affect property values. Studies across Georgia and the United States have shown that local designation protects and enhances property values, as well as preserves the physical history of a community. Because local historic district properties have some protection, owners may be more inclined to make improvements to their properties, and this may increase the value of all property in a given district. Local designation does not restrict the sale of your property, but like the zoning classification, the local designation stays with a property regardless of ownership transfer.
- 9. Will I have to open my home or place of business for tours if locally designated?**
No. Local designation does not require your property to be opened for tours.
- 10. Where can I go for assistance in developing appropriate design changes ?**
Property owners of designated sites who want assistance in planning historically appropriate designs may contact the Gainesville Planning Department or the Gainesville Historic Preservation Commission. The Planning staff and Commission cannot develop plans or designs but can offer suggestions based on the design guidelines adopted for a local district. Consultations in the early design stages are especially encouraged.