City of Jacksonville
Historic Preservation Commission
WINTER 2014 NEWSLETTER

Historic Districts: *How Do They Affect Me?*

For many people, the term "Historic District" brings a negative reaction: "*The city will try to tell me I can't change anything in my house," "The government will pay for restoration of my house,"* or *"My home will have to be open to the public"* are common responses… and not really correct ones either. So let's try to clear it up so that you can help educate others as well!

First, you should know that there are two types of Historic Districts: A National Register District and a Local Landmark District. Each is separate and can exist alone or they can overlap and work together.

A National Register District is a concentration of buildings, structures, or objects linked by a central theme and location. The District is on the National Register of Historic Places, an official list of properties or districts significant to American history, architecture, engineering, archeology, and culture that is administered by the National Park Service. Individual properties may also be listed that are not part of a district. The property owner's permission is typically sought for National Register Listing, but not always required. Since 1966, the National Register has listed thousands of places deemed worthy of preservation.

National Register offers opportunities for building owners (both individually listed and those within a district) to access certain tax breaks and grants for restoration and preservation actions. For certain income-producing properties, a 20% Tax Credit is available for qualifying work. A Tax Assessment Freeze program allows homeowners who spend 25% of the property's market value on an approved rehabilitation project to have their property valuation frozen at pre-work levels for eight years, with a four year phase in to current rates. All work must meet the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation guidelines and be reviewed by a State Historic Preservation Office. Applications and project approval must occur prior to the commencement of work.

A Local Landmark is a single property, structure, site or object deemed worthy of recognition and preservation by the City for its architectural significance, its historical significance, or both.

A Local Landmark District is a concentration of these designated places within the City. A Local Landmark designation does not infringe on owner rights any more than National Register listing or mandate that any work must occur, but is a merit badge of sorts acknowledging the significance of the place to the local community with a plaque. While there are no real financial rewards affiliated with this designation, it is a real local honor.

As with National Register, anyone can nominate a potential site, though there are criteria that must be met and a process by which the nomination must follow that includes owner notification. The City has the authority to grant Local Landmark designations that are recognized by the National Park Service, while a state review board along with the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency oversee the National Register process.

As set forth by the National Park Service and the Illinois Zoning Enabling Act, the City establishes preservation guidelines in a local preservation ordinance which sets forth the preservation advocacy program by outlining rules and recommendations "to insure and facilitate the preservation of sites, areas, and structures of historical, architectural, and aesthetic importance." The preservation ordinance outlines the process for Local Landmark designation.

The City also establishes a preservation commission of citizen volunteers to oversee the local preservation program. The local commission is also required to review proposed work and issue Certificates of Appropriateness (COAs) for work that requires City building permits to occur on Local Landmark sites. The commission is also charged with educating the community about the value of its historic and cultural heritage, and how it is expressed in the community's buildings and neighborhoods.

Currently, Jacksonville's National Register Historic District and its Local Landmark District overlap exactly and include well over 650 properties.

-Includes excerpts from the National Trust for Historic Preservation and Illinois Historic Preservation Agency documents

Identify Our Local Landmarks

Can you can identify the Historic Names for some of Jacksonville's Local Landmarks? (Note: Some photos may be old!)

A

B

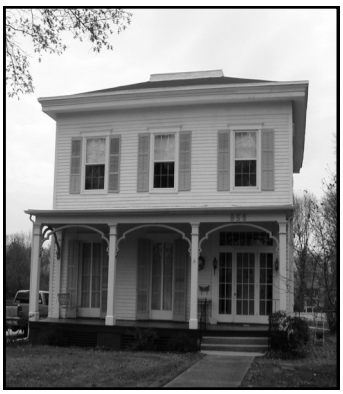
C

D

E

F

G



H

I

J

1) ____ Henry Stryker House (c. 1850)
2) ____ Isaac Morrison House (1851)
3) ____ Joshua Moore/Ensley House (1853)
4) ____ Catherine M. Routt McMillan House (1893)
5) ____ John Ayers House (1877)
6) ____ Walter Bellatti House (1915)
7) ____ Cyrus Epler House (1870)
8) ____ Dr. Samuel Adams House (1847)
9) ____ Walter Crawford House (1916)
10) ____ Augustus E. Ayers House (1857)

Answers: 1) D; 2) I; 3) H; 4) B; 5) F; 6) C; 7) G; 8) A; 9) E; 10) J