



**What Does it
Mean to be
Listed on
St. Petersburg's
Local Register
of Historic
Places?**

**Frequently asked questions
about the effects and benefits of
historic designation**



What is the Local Register of Historic Places? The Local Register is an official listing of neighborhoods, properties, sites and buildings throughout the City that are architecturally and historically significant to our community. Local Register designation is an official action taken by the St. Petersburg City Council through approval of an ordinance which grants certain benefits and imposes certain obligations on the landowner.

What kinds of properties are local historic landmarks? Local Register properties are buildings, sites, objects, districts or structures and include such architectural landmarks as the Vinoy Hotel and Snell Arcade, as well as Precolumbian archaeological sites like Maximo Point and Weeden Island. In addition, neighborhoods can be designated historic landmarks as historic districts; St. Petersburg has two - Roser Park and Granada Terrace. The City also has designated a hexagon sidewalk preservation district in Old Southeast designed to protect the character of its streetscape.

Does Local Register listing affect what I can do with my property? Exterior alterations to designated historic properties require review and approval by the City of St. Petersburg. This review, known as the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) process, is designed to protect landmarks from being adversely altered or demolished. It has imposed little burden on most property owners. Since the outset of the City's historic preservation program in 1987, the City has approved 97 percent of all COA applications.

Does building permit approval automatically grant COA approval? No. You will still need to obtain COA approval from Urban Design and Historic Preservation where required. It is important to file your building plans with both City agencies so your permit can be concurrently processed.

What types of work activities are regulated by local landmark designation? A property owner must obtain COA approval prior to commencing any exterior alterations such as fencing, window change-outs, additions, porch enclosures or new construction. In reviewing COAs, staff uses design guidelines that are straightforward and allow property owners latitude for completing their project provided the new work preserves important architectural features (i.e., windows, porches, exterior siding). A COA is not required for interior renovation work unless you are requesting property tax relief from the City (see discussion on benefits below).

How long does the review process take? Projects costing less than \$50,000 and not considered maintenance or minor work are reviewed by City staff and require notification of the surrounding property owners, a process that takes approximately twenty days. Maintenance and minor projects can be approved the same day as application. Projects costing more than \$50,000 are reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) about one month after submission of the COA application.

Are there any benefits for owners of property listed on the Local Register? Local Register listing offers tax and regulatory relief for property owners. Local Register properties are eligible for St. Petersburg's ad valorem tax exemption program, entitling them to a freeze on city and county taxes incurred from rehabilitating a historic property. A renovation increasing the building value of a property by \$10,000 would save the property owner \$140 a year in taxes for 10 years.

Under the new Florida Building Code, locally designated historic properties are exempt from meeting the literal application of certain parts of the code. For example, historic property owners are exempt from requirements to bring buildings into complete compliance when renovation costs exceed 50 percent of replacement value. In addition, historic property owners may receive variances from local flood hazard requirements when reconstructing, rehabilitating or restoring their structures.

Finally, in historic districts, designation provides neighborhood stability through property value appreciation. National studies demonstrate property value appreciation in historic districts is substantially greater than in undesignated neighborhoods, a finding repeated in St. Petersburg. In a study of property values in eighteen neighborhoods since 1996, single-family properties in Roser Park appreciated at a rate exceeded by only one other neighborhood.





If you have any questions about the National
Register program, please call St. Petersburg's
Historic Preservation Division @ (727)893-7153
or write:

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