



## CITY LANDMARK INFORMATION SHEET

### **DEFINITION:**

A *landmark* is any structure, natural feature, site or area having historic, architectural, archaeological, cultural or aesthetic significance and designated as a *landmark* under the provisions of Municipal Code Chapter 22.22.

"Structure" is defined as any building or any other man-made object affixed on or under the ground.

### **ELIGIBILITY:**

In considering a proposal to recommend to the City Council any structure, natural feature, site or area for designation as a *landmark*, the City Historic Landmarks Commission applies any or all of the following criteria as reasons for a decision:

- a) Its character, interest or value as a significant part of the heritage of the City, the State or the Nation;
- b) Its location as a site of a significant historic event;
- c) Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the City, the State or the Nation;
- d) Its exemplification of a particular architectural style or way of life important to the City, the State or the Nation;
- e) Its exemplification of the best remaining architectural type in a neighborhood;
- f) Its identification as the creation, design or work of a person or persons whose effort has significantly influenced the heritage of the City, the State or the Nation;
- g) Its embodiment of elements demonstrating outstanding attention to architectural design, detail, materials or craftsmanship;
- h) Its relationship to any other *landmark* if its preservation is essential to the integrity of that *landmark*;
- i) Its unique location or singular physical characteristic representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood;
- j) Its potential of yielding significant information of archaeological interest;
- k) Its integrity as a natural environment that strongly contributes to the well-being of the people of the City, the State or the Nation.

### **PROCEDURE:**

- 1) A proposal for designation of a *landmark* may begin with action initiated by the Historic Landmarks Commission itself, or with a letter written to the Commission by the property's owner or by an interested person.
- 2) If the Commission decides to proceed, it may adopt a resolution of intention to consider recommending the resource for designation. The proposal may be referred to the Commission's designations subcommittee for comment.
- 3) The Commission's staff then prepares the proposal for presentation at a public hearing. At least ten (10) days before the hearing, notice is put in the newspaper and is sent to the applicant, to the property owner, and to owners of abutting properties.
- 4) The public hearing is held by the Historic Landmarks Commission, and oral or written comments are received at the meeting. The public hearing may be continued to subsequent meetings if there is no objection. Reasons for a continuance may include the need for more information, or the desire to consult with other persons, among other things.
- 5) If the Commission decides to recommend designation of a *landmark*, it adopts a resolution to recommend the designation to the City Council.

**PROCEDURE (cont.):**

- 6) The Commission's written report and resolution are sent to the City Council, and the Council considers them at a public hearing. If the Council decides to designate a *landmark*, it adopts a resolution within ninety (90) days after receipt of the recommendation.
- 7) The designation becomes effective with adoption of the City Council resolution, and the designation is then recorded with the County Recorder.

**BENEFITS:**

Designated *City Landmarks* are eligible for a variety of benefits under federal, state and local programs.

- A) California law (the State Historical Building Code) enables local building officials to permit alternatives to regular building code requirements in order to facilitate preservation of *landmarks*. The law also provides for use of equivalent methods under the handicapped access requirements.
- B) Under California law historic properties may be assessed on a "present use" basis rather than the usual "highest and best use" basis for property taxes, under certain conditions. They may also be eligible for rehabilitation loan financing.
- C) *Landmarks* are afforded protection through the City planning process. When a governmental agency or private entity prepares plans for an area which includes or is adjacent to a *landmark*, it is expected to take this into consideration, and to orient its studies and decisions accordingly.
- D) Under the City's Municipal Code Chapter 22.22, a *landmark* is protected from demolition.
- E) Chapter 22.22 permits a designated *landmark* located within a landmark district and not conforming to any of the architectural styles required in the district to be altered in its particular architectural style, for the purpose of restoration of its original appearance, or to substantially aid its preservation or enhancement, with the prior written approval of the City Historic Landmarks Commission.

Designated *City Landmarks* may be eligible for certain types of tax benefits and for grants and loans if they are also listed on the National Register of Historic Places or are eligible for such a listing.

**RESPONSIBILITIES AND RESTRICTIONS:**

- A) Exterior alterations may be made to a *landmark* for the purpose of restoration to its original appearance, or to substantially aid its preservation or enhancement, with the written approval of the Historic City Landmarks Commission.
- B) A *landmark* may be relocated, under certain conditions, with the written approval of the above named bodies.
- C) A *landmark* may only be demolished, subject to the written approval of the Historic Landmarks Commission, if it is damaged by earthquake, fire, or act of God to such an extent that it cannot reasonably be repaired and restored.
- D) Municipal Code Chapter 22.22 requires that every *landmark* shall be maintained in good repair by the owner or other person in legal control of it.

**GENERAL INFORMATION:**

Title to *landmark* property does not change as a result of designation. There are no restrictions on sale of *landmarks*. Designation as a *landmark* does not establish a requirement that the site, area or structure be open to the public.

In many cases, research performed during the City's Survey of Architectural and Historic Resources has provided information about the background of individual buildings. The survey forms are available for study by interested persons.

The office of the City Planning Division, Community Development Department, has a collection of publications on the preservation of historic properties. Interested persons are welcome to contact the office to see these publications, or to obtain further information on the designation process. A list of designated *landmarks* is available at the office.