

## Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Langley's Register of Historic Places

### **Will historic designation prevent me from changing my property?**

Historic designation does not seek to freeze a building in time. The goal of the Historic Preservation Commission is to preserve character-defining features of a significant property. The Commission uses [The Secretary of the Interior Standards](#) to inform new construction, development and restoration on historic properties.

[http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/standguide/overview/choose\\_treat.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/standguide/overview/choose_treat.htm)

### **Must buildings be kept in pristine original condition in order to remain "historic?"**

The most visible "character defining" features of a building should be maintained, but other elements - such as electrical systems, plumbing, kitchens, and bathrooms - must often be changed to accommodate new uses or improved standards of living. Even these changes can be done sympathetically so they complement the original character of the building.

### **Do I need permission to perform ordinary maintenance to my historic house?** [SEP]

No. Minor projects are those items that involve replacing existing material with the same materials or painting previously painted surfaces. As long as the materials and design are not changed, you do not need permission to paint, make repairs, or replace materials in-kind (replacing cedar shingles with cedar shingles, wood siding with same type of wood siding, etc.)

### **Are there any restrictions on remodeling the interior of my house?** [SEP]

No. However, the HPC strongly encourages the retention of historic interior features as they may contribute to the significance of a property. Moreover, there are substantial tax savings to be gained by remodeling interiors of National Register properties according to the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation.

### **Do I need approval to paint my historic building?**

If an architectural feature is not painted, the HPC will review whether paint is an appropriate finish. For example, a brick building that is unpainted will need approval to paint the brick. A wooden building that is already painted does not require approval to paint.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards suggest that you paint your historic property with colors that are sympathetic to the architectural style and time period of your property. Most major paint manufacturers have historic paint palettes available.

### **Do I have to get a permit when altering my property?**

A building permit is required when any substantial alteration is proposed and the Historic Preservation Commission must review the application and issue a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA).

### **Can I replace my windows and doors?**

There are many options available to building owners that seek to improve or replace historic windows and doors. The HPC will work with you to find the best solution.

Helpful information can be found in the following National Park Service Briefs:

[Preservation Brief #3 “Conserving Energy in Historic Buildings”](#)  
[Preservation Brief # 9 “Preserving Historic Wood Windows.”](#)

### **Can I add an addition/garage on my historic property?**

An attached exterior addition may radically change the appearance of an historic building and should be considered carefully. The HPC strongly urges project applicants to confer with the HPC and/or Langley Building Official early in the design process to identify potential limitations.

Preservation experts from the National Park Service recommend the following steps in restoring any historic structure.

First, identify the historically significant features.

Second, protect the features that are historically significant.

Third, repair damage to historically important features.

Fourth, replace what cannot be repaired.

Fifth, recreate missing features that were historically significant.

Sixth, avoid new additions that alter the historical appearance inside, or outside.

Helpful information may be found at:

<http://www.nps.gov/history/HPS/tps/briefs/brief14.htm>

### **Can landscape features be placed on the Register?**

Landscape features that contribute to the historic character of a site may be placed on the Register of Historic Places, but they must conform to the criteria for historic designation. . Once placed on the register, such features should be preserved.

### **Can I move my house?**

HPC reviews any proposed relocations of a historic house. Typically, an on-site relocation that respects the historic character of the property and the neighborhood is acceptable, but moving a building to a new site may not be.

### **Can I install solar panels on my historic building?**

It may be possible to install solar panels or other alternative energy technologies on Historic sites provided they do not obscure the historic character of the site.

The Historic Preservation Commission will work with owners of historic properties to help find solutions on a case-by-case basis.

### **How does historic designation affect the value of my property?**

What effect local historic designation might have on property values is a complex issue involving multiple variables that vary widely by community. Numerous studies of historic properties located within designated historic districts uniformly indicate that historic preservation helps to maintain property values. However, there are few studies of individual properties not

within a designated historic district.

**Why would I want to place my property on the Register?**

Properties of Historical Significance draw owners with a passion for preserving the character of the buildings they purchase. They bring an appreciation of the architectural elements, spent time researching both the history and style of their house, they put in the hard work of restoring features and invest their money in preserving a home that they love. By accepting the designation of a historical preservation status, owners create a legacy for the community and can rest assured that the character that drew them to the building will be protected for future generations.

**Does my property remain on the Register if the property is sold?**

Yes.

**What happens if my property is damaged as a result of a natural disaster?**

In the event that any property is no longer deemed eligible for designation to the Langley Register of Historic Places, the commission may initiate removal from such designation by the same procedure as provided for in establishing the designation. A property may be removed from the Langley Register of Historic Places without the owner's consent. (Ordinance 895; Section C. "Removal of Properties from the Register")