



Historic Resource Review in Portland, Oregon: What it Means for Owners of a Historic Property in Irvington

Historic Resource Review is a formal process, managed by the City of Portland Bureau of Development Services, which determines if proposed exterior changes to historic homes and buildings comply with the City Codes written to protect designated historic buildings.

Your building will potentially be subject to Historic Resource Review if it meets any of these conditions:

- It is contained within a National Register Historic District. (This is the case for all of Irvington.)
- It is individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- It is contained within a City of Portland Conservation District and is designated as “Contributing.”
- It is individually designated by the City of Portland as a City Landmark.

There are different types of Historic Resource Review and some exemptions for certain types of properties or projects. This guide contains an overview of the types of reviews and the exemptions to help you better comply with City of Portland laws. Note that there are many older structures in Portland – in some areas 80% of the buildings are over 50 years old, but only those meeting one of the specific criteria above are officially protected by Historic Resource Review.

Your Irvington Property is Subject to Historic Resource Review

There are nearly 9000 homes in Historic or Conservation Districts in Portland, and over 2800 of these are in the Irvington Historic District. Your starting point is PortlandMaps.com. If you aren't certain whether your property is in the Irvington Historic District, type in your address to find the listing for your property. Click on the Maps tab and check the line item for “Historic District”. If there is a link to the Historic District, your property is in the district. Clicking on that link and you get a map of the district and a listing of all the “Contributing” and “non-contributing” properties it encompasses. To see all the districts in Portland on individual maps with links to the included properties go to <http://tinyurl.com/m8m9wgv> or <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/article/133983>

Irvington also has over two dozen historic buildings individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Most of these have a metal plaque in a prominent place on the front indicating their status.

Making Changes to a Historic Property Requiring Historic Resource Review

Historic Resource Review is required for any alterations to the exterior of the building; especially for changes to things that are “character defining” like windows, doors, decorative elements, and siding. If a building permit is required for the work, the Historic Resource Review must be performed first. Some types of alterations have been exempted by City Code from requiring Historic Resource Review. These are detailed further in this guide.

Applying for Historic Resource Review

The City's Land Use Review Application Form is used to apply for Historic Resource Review. Download the form here: <http://tinyurl.com/l7rdfts> or <http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bds/index.cfm?a=71783>. Print it out. You cannot submit it on-line. In the section labeled "Identify Requested Land Use Reviews" write "Historic Resource Review". You deliver the form with supporting documentation to The Bureau of Development Services, 1900 SW Fourth Avenue, Portland, 97201, any weekday except Monday.

Supporting documentation will vary with the size and complexity of the proposed changes, but typically will need to include:

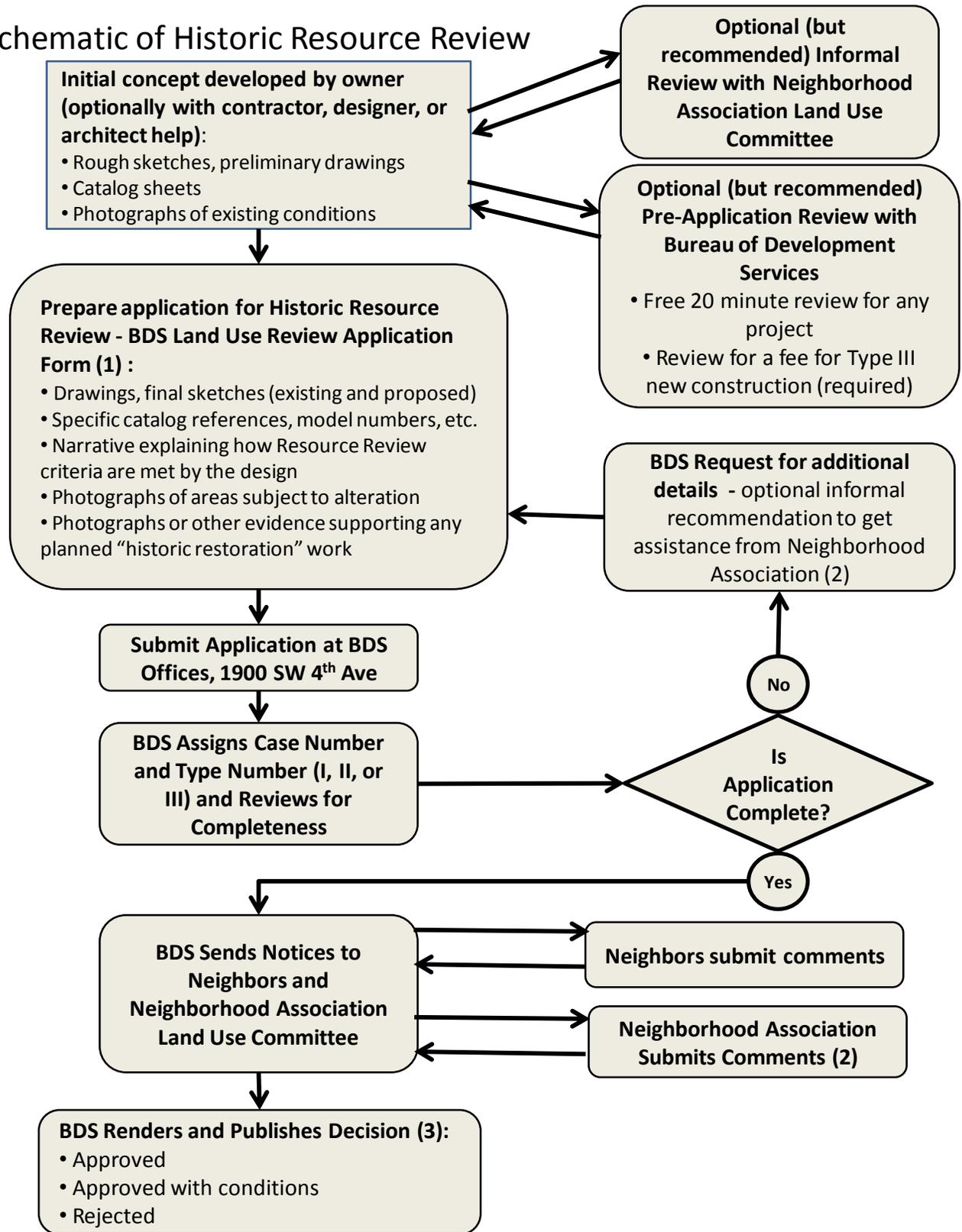
- Written description of the alterations
- Dimensioned sketches or architectural drawings showing the existing and changed areas
- An 8.5x11 or smaller site plan, no matter how minimal the work. Work area must be circled. Notation of distance from property lines is strongly encouraged,
- Catalog materials for new components proposed to be added, including windows, siding, doors, etc.
- If historic materials are being removed and replaced with modern, provide photographic evidence that the historic materials are too badly deteriorated to be restored or rehabilitated.

Getting Help from the Irvington Community Association

The Land Use Committee of the Irvington Community Association fields inquiries from homeowners at various stages of the historic review process. With almost three thousand properties, the Irvington Historic District sees a lot of these reviews. Among the volunteer members of the Land Use Committee are architects, historians, lawyers, realtors and all are your fellow Irvington neighbors. The Land Use Committee meets monthly, usually on the last Thursday evening of the month. Property owners may request time on the Land Use Committee schedule by emailing the Chairperson Dean Gisvold at: deang@mcewengisvold.com

An informal pre-application conference with the Land Use Committee before putting a formal application in to the City may help you refine your project, save on architectural or contractor services, and ease your path through the process. Or, you may also choose to get on the Land Use Committee schedule after your project application has been accepted by the Bureau of Development Services (BDS). Both these options will give you and/or your architect a chance to get feedback from the neighborhood. The Land Use Committee is only advisory to BDS, but the committee does give that advisory opinion to BDS on every Historic Resource Review.

Schematic of Historic Resource Review



Notes:

- 1) See above for the link to the application form
- 2) At any point the BDS Case Reviewer may recommend applicant obtain assistance from Neighborhood Association Land Use Committee
- 3) The applicant or the Neighborhood Association may appeal the Decision to the Historic Landmarks Commission in Types II and III cases

Frequently Asked Questions

Why do I need a historic resource review in addition to a building permit or a zoning permit?

Building, plumbing, electrical, and mechanical permits address safety issues. Zoning permits primarily address site issues. Historic Resource Review ensures that your property maintains its historic character or that your building will not diminish the character of a Historic District. The City Code covering the detailed rules for Historic Resource Review is here: <http://tinyurl.com/l8f8trw> or here: <http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/?c=34566&a=53488>

Do my neighbors have a role in this process?

All land use reviews are subject to mailed public notifications. Your neighborhood association(s) will be notified. For those properties in the parts of the Irvington Historic District that overlap with neighborhoods other than Irvington, notices will go out to both neighborhoods. Your immediate neighbors within a distance of from 100 to 300 feet depending on the type of Historic Resource Review will receive notice. Any member of the public may submit a comment to the city on your project. City staff must read these comments if they are received within the prescribed comment period.

In addition, any person may, for a fee, appeal the City's staff decision to the Historic Landmarks Commission. The Neighborhood Association that includes your property has the right to appeal the decision, except in the case of a Type 1 Review.

What role does the Portland Historic Landmarks Commission play?

The Portland Historic Landmarks Commission is required to review Historic Resource Reviews for large projects and considers appeals by concerned parties objecting to a Historic Resource Review decision. You can read more about the commission at: <http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bds/article/168808>

Do I need a Historic Resource Review to paint my house?

No you do not, with two very limited exceptions. If your property is individually listed on the National Register or designated as a Portland City landmark and its documented historic features include specific colors, you must maintain those colors.

Do I need Historic Resource Review to make interior changes to my house?

In all of Portland, a very few properties individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places are subject to Historic Resource Review of interior alterations. If you have such a property, you should contact the State Historic Preservation Office for more detailed information.

Do I need Historic Resource Review to remove secondary siding (metal, vinyl or concrete-asbestos) that was added to my house on top of the original siding?

Removal of non-historic secondary siding is an exterior alteration and could trigger a Historic Resource Review. In cases where removal of this siding does not affect the original siding underneath, the removal would be exempt from historic review. However, in cases where original siding, trim and decorative details were removed when that secondary siding was installed – or they are damaged by the siding removal, then any replacement of lost or damaged historic details or original siding will be subject to Historic Resource Review.

Do I need historic resource review to re-roof my house?

Generally, no, for typical asphalt composition shingle roof replacement, which is considered repair under City Code. This includes replacement of the plywood sheathing under the roofing materials. However, a change from one roofing material to another (from ceramic tile to composition shingles, for example) or if surrounding architectural elements are damaged or have to be replaced in the process, then Historic Resource Review will be required.

Do I need historic resource review to add solar panels or skylights to my historic building?

Historic Resource Reviews are generally required for solar panels, skylights and roof hatches that are visible from the right of way in Historic Districts. In general these proposals are not likely to gain approval due to their impact on the character defining aspects of the district.

However, there are very specific rules granting exemptions from Historic Resource Review for solar panels, skylights and roof hatches that are placed inconspicuously out of view from the right of way. These specifications can be found in City Code section 33.445.320 for Historic Districts. See particularly diagrams 445-2 and 445-3.

My chimney is no longer working can I just remove it?

If there is a building safety issue, and if a city building inspector has deemed, in writing, that a chimney is dangerous, it can be removed without Historic Resource Review. However, any replacement chimney would require review. Any other chimney removal would require Historic Resource Review. Typically, simple removal of old, unused kitchen chimneys unrelated to other exterior alterations will be evaluated through a Type I Historic Resource Review process.

Basic chimney maintenance such as tuck-pointing the masonry does NOT require any Historic Resource Review.

What kinds of things are exempt from historic resource review?

Some of the more common exemptions include:

- Alterations to existing basement windows on non-street facing facades within certain size provisions and percentages below grade
- Storm and screen window/door additions or removals
- Wheelchair ramps that can be removed without destroying existing building material
- Construction of a detached accessory structure with 200 square feet or less of floor area when that structure is at least 40 feet from a front property line and, if on a corner lot, at least 25 feet from a side street lot line.
- Alterations to non-contributing resources on non-street facing facades where alterations on all facades total less than 150 square feet.

Do I get any tax break for going through Historic Resource Review?

In general, no. However, Historic Resource Review may be required to participate in the State of Oregon Special Assessment tax incentive program for rehabilitation of historic properties, if the required "preservation plan" includes changes or additions to the structure. Eligibility for the Special Assessment is a major benefit to being a property owner in a historic district. Since 2010, homeowners in Irvington do not need to get their property individually listed on the National Register in order to apply for the Special Assessment. For more information on the Special Assessment see: <http://tinyurl.com/n6d74nw>

Can I demolish my house or building?

If your building is designated as Contributing to a Historic District or as an individually listed property, demolition is technically possible, but the process is difficult, lengthy and expensive. The process is a Type IV Land Use Review that requires multiple meetings with city staff and public hearings before the Portland Historic Landmarks Commission and before the City Council. Any replacement structure is subject to a Type III Land Use Review.

If your building is listed as Non-Contributing within the Historic District, you can demolish your building without Historic Resource Review, but a regular demolition permit is still required. Approximately 85% of the properties in Irvington are listed as Contributing. So very few structures would be eligible for this process in this neighborhood. Again, all replacement structures are subject to a Type III Historic Resource Review. Consult Title 33.445.330 of the zoning code for more detailed information.

Can I demolish or alter my detached garage?

If you have an individually designated property, and the garage is part of the designation, the rules for individually listed structures discussed above would apply.

If your garage is located in a Historic District and the garage is specifically called out as a Contributing structure the rules are the same as those for a Contributing house. Portland Maps does not show Contributing status for most garages. Consult your neighborhood Land Use Committee, City of Portland BDS staff or the State Historic Preservation Office (see http://www.oregon.gov/oprd/HCD/Pages/contact_us.aspx).

What can I do if I disagree with the city's decision on a Historic Resource Review?

Types Ix, II and III can be appealed first to the Portland Historic Landmarks Commission, and second to the City Council. All appeals have a fee attached to them. Appeal fees are waived for City designated neighborhood associations. If you believe your neighborhood will support you in your appeal, contact them for assistance. Type I & Type IV Reviews can only be appealed at the state level to the Oregon Land Use Board of Appeal. This is expensive and time-consuming. Appeal fees cannot be waived.

Glossary

Conservation district -- Areas designated by the City of Portland, which contain a concentration of related historic buildings. Historic Resource Review applies to Contributing Structures in Conservation Districts, but Contributing Structures are NOT eligible for any State of Oregon or Federal Government rehabilitation tax incentive programs. In Portland, new structures in a Conservation District may, at the option of the builder, be covered by Historic Resource Review or by Community Design Standards, which impose a reduced requirement for compatibility with the historic character of the District. Up until November of 2010, a large section of Irvington was a Conservation District. Once the Irvington Historic District was listed on the National Register, the rules governing a National Register District supplanted the old Conservation District rules.

Contributing Structure – A building or structure in a Historic District that contributes to the District's historic associations or historic architectural qualities. Its presence adds to the historic integrity or architectural qualities that make the District historically important. Contributing buildings generally retain a significant amount of their original historic appearance. Contributing buildings in most districts fall within certain construction dates specific to the district and outlined in the district's nomination. In Irvington the period of significance includes all structures built up through 1948.

Design Guidelines -- Detailed, written standards governing new structures and alterations to existing structures in a Conservation District or a Historic District. Many, but not all such Districts in Portland, have their own Design Guidelines written specifically for that district approved by the Landmarks Commission and adopted by City Council. For Historic Districts without their own Design Guidelines (Irvington is one without Guidelines), the

standards are defined in section 33.846.060.G of City Code. They are based loosely on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Resource Rehabilitation.

Historic District -- An area designated as historic by listing in the National Register of Historic Places. It includes within its boundaries a significant concentration of properties linked by architectural style, historical development, or a past event. Contributing structures in Historic Districts may be eligible for rehabilitation tax incentives from the State of Oregon and the Federal Government. All structures in the Historic District are subject to Historic Resource Review regardless of their contributing status. Any new structure in the District is subject to Historic Resource Review

Historic Resource Review – A formal process administered by the City of Portland Bureau of Development Services that evaluates proposed changes to buildings in Historic or Conservation Districts, new construction in Historic Districts and changes to Landmarks under the applicable Design Guidelines. Changes which do not meet the Guidelines will not be permitted.

Landmark – A site or structure designated pursuant to a local preservation ordinance or other law that is worthy of preservation because of its particular historic, architectural, archeological, or cultural significance. In Portland, "Landmarks" are either buildings listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places or designated individually as Portland Historic Landmarks by the City of Portland.

Maintenance – Actions, such as painting a previously painted surface or re-roofing using the same type of materials, performed to prevent a structure, or one of its constituent systems, from falling into a deteriorated condition. (Official wording per City Code)

Non-contributing Structure – Building or structure in a Historic District that falls outside the district's specified period of significance. Or, a building or structure in a Historic District that has been significantly and irrevocably altered from its original construction.

Reconstruction – the act or process of depicting, by means of new work, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving historic structure or landscape, or any part thereof, for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific time and in its historic location.

Rehabilitation-- the act or process of making a compatible use for a historic structure through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features, which convey its historical, cultural and architectural values. Term often used for work on interior features. For example, rehabilitation might include an updated kitchen while retaining the historic stairwell and fireplaces.

Remodel – to change a building without regard to its distinctive features or style. Often involves changing the appearance of a structure by removing or covering original details and substituting new materials and forms.

Renovate – To repair a structure and make it usable again, without attempting to restore its historic appearance or duplicate original construction methods or material.

Repair – Actions to fix or mend a damaged or deteriorated structure, or one of its constituent systems, with similar material while retaining sound parts or elements. (Official wording per City Code)

Restoration – To return a building to its form and condition as represented by a specified period of time using materials that are as similar as possible to the original materials following the specifications of the Secretary of Interior Standards.

Special Assessment – a State of Oregon tax incentive program to encourage the rehabilitation of Contributing Structures in Historic Districts and individually listed Landmarks. This is administered by the State Historic Preservation Office in Salem. For more details see: <http://tinyurl.com/n6d74nw>

Types of Historic Resource Review –

Type 1 – Small projects and restoration, meaning that the historic state of the property can be documented and features are being reproduced to match this documentation. This applies to most residential properties in Historic and Conservation Districts.

Type 1X – Most small projects in commercial and industrial zones.

Type 2 – Larger renovation projects, exceeding 150 sq. of surface area, unless it qualifies as a restoration. Any exterior alteration to an individually listed landmark that is not a restoration.

Type 3 – Applies to new construction on vacant land in a Historic District

Type 4 – Applies to demolition of a landmark building or contributing building in a Historic District.

For detailed description of each Type of Historic Resource Review and its time line see:

<http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bds/index.cfm?a=71804>

Resources

City of Portland Bureaus and Offices:

Portland Bureau of Development Services –

Where to call: Zoning Information Hotline at (503) 823-7526.

Where to go: Development Services Center 1900 SW 4th Ave.

Online: <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bds/37988>

BDS brochure – Do I Need a Building Permit? - <http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bds/article/92685>

BDS brochure – Historic Resource Review Guide - <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bds/45480?a=421247>

BDS chart – Historic Resource Review Approval Criteria - <http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bds/article/445460>

BDS brochure – Windows - <http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bds/article/93025>

BDS brochure – Fences, Decks and Outdoor Projects - <http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bds/article/93020>

BDS brochure – Converting Attics, Basements & Garages to Living Space (making ADU's) –

<http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bds/article/93019>

BDS page - Accessory Dwelling Units from Concept to Construction - <http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bds/36676>

Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS) – <http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/39750>

BPS – Individual Historic Resources & Landmarks – <http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/article/132551>

BPS – Portland Historic Landmarks Commission – <http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bds/article/168808>

Portland Office of Neighborhood Involvement – <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/oni/28380>

Portland Archives & Records Center (PARC) – <http://tinyurl.com/kwf8ag7>

Other Organizations and References:

Architectural Heritage Center – <http://www.visitahc.org>

AHC – Window Repair & Weatherization Guide – <http://tinyurl.com/kfsvxvf>

Restore Oregon (formerly Historic Preservation League of Oregon) – <http://restoreoregon.org>

State Historic Preservation Office – <http://www.oregon.gov/oprd/HCD/SHPO/Pages/index.aspx>

National Register of Historic Places – <http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/research>

National Park Service Preservation Briefs (a guide to appropriate repairs and maintenance)

<http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs.htm>

Note: Internet links like <http://tinyurl.com/n6d74nw> are shortcuts to much longer Internet addresses that could be difficult to type manually.

This guide was originally produced by the Portland Coalition for Historic Resources a community group advocating for the preservation of Portland's historic buildings and neighborhoods in collaboration with the Irvington Community Association. This version has been specially adapted for the Irvington Historic District.