

YOUR GUIDE TO OWNING A HISTORIC HOME IN LAWRENCE



What Do I Need to Know About Caring for a Historic Home?

Owning a historic home can be a bit like being the curator of an antique. Ownership brings responsibilities to preserve and protect a home's value. There are resources you can use to help you with maintenance or alterations you seek without harming the things that give your home its historic value. For larger projects, following the guidelines can mean rehabilitation tax credits for your project.

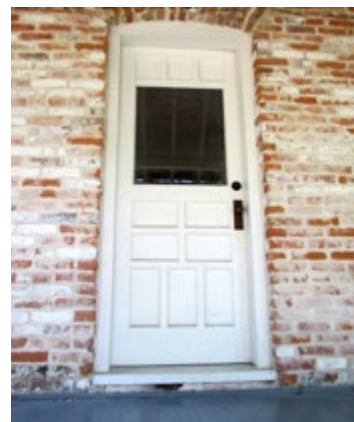
What Does "Historic" Mean?

Many existing structures could be considered historic, but thorough documentation is needed to be designated in registers of historic places. In Lawrence, it is possible to be listed on three different registers as an individual structure or as part of a historic district:

- Lawrence Register of Historic Places
- Register of Historic Kansas Places
- National Register of Historic Places

What is a Historic District?

A historic district is an area with defined boundaries that contains a high concentration of buildings documented to be historically and/or architecturally significant. The district is established by city ordinance or state and/or national nomination. Structures within a district usually share common characteristics such as architectural style or dates of construction. These properties are referred to as "contributing" to the district. Infill properties of a later date, or ones that have been irrevocably altered, are called "non-contributing" to the district.



How Does Historic Designation Affect What I Can Do With My Property?

There is no historic review for any general maintenance or building activity that does not require a permit. If you apply for a permit, your plans

will be reviewed by local officials to ensure that the changes you seek will not remove or damage defining characteristics that make your property significant.

How Do I know If My Project Requires Review?

To determine whether your property is listed on a historic register, or to get advice about what effects the changes you are considering could have on your historic property, contact the City Planning Office (785-832-3150), and ask to speak with the Historic Resources Administrator.

How Does Historic Review Work?

Building or repair projects that require a permit will undergo some type of review by the Planning Office when they impact a property that has a historic designation, are within a historic district, or are located near a listed property.

If you file for a demolition permit, there is a 30-day waiting period for the permit, regardless of your location. For building permits, city Planning Staff will check to see if your project impacts a property that has received historic designation. If it does, your plans will be forwarded to

the Historic Resources Administrator. Most projects pass review administratively. Larger projects are reviewed by the Historic Resources Commission (HRC), which conducts monthly hearings for projects impacting properties listed on our state and national registers, as well as our local register.

Most Projects Pass Review!

Reviews recognize that properties do change over time. The goal is to direct those changes so they have as little impact on the historic integrity of the listed property as possible. Many approved projects incorporate suggestions agreed to by the property owner that reduce that impact while still achieving project goals.

Old House Basics to Keep in Mind

Original windows are a character-defining feature of your historic home. A well-maintained historic window with a good storm window can be as energy-efficient as a replacement window, at a fraction of the cost. And because they are made to be repaired, they last longer than replacement windows.

For items such as trim, floors, and siding, it is better to repair rather than replace. Original materials are considered part of your home's character and history.

Additions or new detached structures should be subordinate to the historic structure in placement, height and mass.



WHY PRESERVE HISTORIC PLACES?

To protect and honor culturally significant places

To stabilize and increase personal and community investments

To promote public appreciation of our local culture and history

To advance education, sustainability, and local investment

Sources of Information

[City of Lawrence Historic Districts & Historic Environs](#)

[City of Lawrence Historic Resources](#)

[Kansas Historical Society: State and National Registers of Historic Places](#)

[National Park Service Technical Preservation Briefs](#)

[Kansas Historical Society: Historic Preservation Tax Credits](#)

[The National Trust for Historic Preservation](#)

[Lawrence Public Library, Genealogy and Local History](#)

[Researching the History of a House in Douglas County](#)

This information is furnished by the Lawrence Preservation Alliance, a non-profit membership organization. Our mission is to preserve historically significant buildings and natural environments and to educate the community about the benefits of historic preservation.

To join the LPA or learn more, please visit lawrencepreservation.org.

