



## City of Laguna Beach

Community Development  
Department

INFORMATION GUIDE FOR:

# HISTORIC PRESERVATION

### **Intent and Purpose**

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The intent and purpose of the Historic Preservation Ordinance is to encourage the preservation of older homes and buildings by establishing incentives intended to benefit property owners when remodeling such structures. The preservation of historic buildings contributes significantly to the City's unique village atmosphere and helps to enhance the visual character of the City. Recognizing the beauty and accomplishments of the past fosters public appreciation of and civic pride in the City. A person may contribute to the City's cultural heritage by participating in the City's Historic Preservation Program.

### **Applicability and Requirements**

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Provisions of the Historic Preservation Ordinance apply only to properties listed on the City's Historic Register. Inclusion on the Historic Register is completely voluntary, available upon an individual property owner's request. An inventory of the historic structures was completed in 1981. A similar inventory of structures in South Laguna was done as part of the South Laguna Specific Plan. These two inventories have been combined to form the Laguna Beach Historic Resources List. Structures included on this Historic Resources List which have not been significantly altered are automatically eligible for inclusion on the Laguna Beach Historic Register. Applications require review by the Heritage Committee prior to designation on the Historic Register.

The structures on the Historic Resources List have been rated, and consist primarily of buildings which have retained their original architectural integrity and which were constructed before 1935. Buildings rated "E" for "Exceptional" are considered to be outstanding and/or unique historic architectural examples and could be eligible for the National Historic Register. Buildings rated "K" for "Key" represent very good historical architectural examples and have significant architectural, historical and/or aesthetic value. Buildings rated "C" for "Contributive" are those which contribute to the overall character and history of a neighborhood, even though they may not be architecturally unique.

### **Procedures for Designation**

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Structures identified on the Historic Resources List are placed on the Historic Register upon submittal of an application provided by the Community Development Department. If there has been any exterior alteration(s) to the structure after the official recognition on the Historic Resources Inventory (December, 1982) or the South Laguna Specific Plan (September, 1983), whichever is applicable, then the request to the Heritage Committee must contain information describing those exterior alterations. Review of changes by the Heritage Committee may be required. There is no filing fee associated with this request.

If a property owner wishes to participate in the Historic Preservation Program, but has a structure which is not included on the Historic Resources List, placement on the Historic Register is still feasible. There is no filing fee. The Heritage Committee reviews the proposal and makes a recommendation to the Community Development Director for a final determination.

## **Incentives**

Structures listed on the City's Historic Register are eligible to apply for the following preservation benefits. The granting of any benefit is conditioned upon a written agreement between the City and the property owner that ensures preservation of the building's historic character.

### **Parking**

Once placed on the Historic Register, additions to non-conforming single-family and multiple-family dwellings with substandard parking may not be required to provide any additional required parking, if the addition is 50% or less of the original square footage of the structure. At least one covered parking space, however, must be provided on-site for a single-family dwelling and at least half of the required parking spaces must be provided on-site for multiple-family dwellings.

Historic Register property owners may be eligible for a 75% parking reduction for "E" rated historic structures in commercial zones and a 50% parking reduction for "K" or "C" rated structures. Reductions may be granted only as part of a Conditional Use Permit, and only if the historic character of the building is preserved. Additions to historical commercial structures of up to 15% of the existing floor area and not exceeding 500 square feet may be made without providing additional parking.

### **Fees**

All building and planning application fees may be refunded by the Community Development Director for those projects affecting a structure on the Historic Register, provided the historic character of the building is being preserved.

### **Building Code Deviations**

Building code deviations may be granted by the Community Development Director for Historic Register structures, if findings can be made in conformance with the California Historical Building Code.

### **Zoning Standard Deviations**

Structures listed on the Historic Register may be allowed to add more than 50% of the original structure, and properties with historic structures located in the multi-family zones of R-2 and R-3, where only one unit exists, may obtain an additional unit, without bringing any existing zoning standard nonconformities into compliance, if it is determined that such an addition will not diminish or detract from the historic significance of the original structure, and if such addition is found to be compatible with the scale and character with the surrounding neighborhood. Additions to any historic structures may be allowed to maintain existing nonconforming encroachments, if the Uniform Building Code setbacks are being maintained.

### **Density Bonus**

Historic structures located in the Local Business Professional Zone, and in the CBD-1,2,3 and the CBD Office District Zones of the Downtown Specific Plan may be eligible for a 50% increase in residential units, if it is determined that the additional units will not diminish or detract from the historical significance of the original structure.

### **Financial Incentives**

Owners of properties on the Historic Register are eligible to apply for available state and national financial benefits.