



# HISTORIC PRESERVATION



## HILLSBORO PRESERVATION HISTORY

Hillsboro is the county seat of Hill County, when Hill County was established in 1853, three locations were suggested for the county seat, but none was near the center of the county. A 220-acre plot was donated by Thomas M. Steiner a mile from the center of the county, and the community was called Hillsborough, in honor of Dr. George W. Hill, a surgeon from Tennessee; Hill was the first settler in Navarro County, which later became part of Hill County. In 1853 the first school in Hill County opened, and in 1854 Hillsborough received a post office. Before the last courthouse was built in 1890, several courthouses served the community. The first, built of elm poles, was replaced by a frame building in 1854. In 1872 a two-story brick courthouse was constructed; it burned and was replaced by a fourth courthouse in 1874 and that structure burned in 1993 and was restored and occupied today.

## Introduction

This pamphlet has been prepared by the Hillsboro Preservation Commission to provide the public with an easy-to-understand summary of the location and purpose of the City's local historic districts and the Commission's role and responsibilities in administering the affairs of the District.

In 2004, the Hillsboro City Council established the **Designation of Landmarks and Historical Districts** in order to safeguard the City's historic and cultural heritage as embodied and reflected in historic properties, districts, and landmarks, by application of appropriate resources. The Council established the Hillsboro Preservation Commission, which recommended to Council the boundaries of the designated District's. Additionally, the Commission was given the responsibility to "preserve and protect" the District's architectural character. To accomplish this, the Commission is authorized by city ordinance to



review proposed changes to the exterior features of buildings (and certain structures) within the Districts visible to the public and to decide upon the appropriateness of such changes within the context of the District.

To assist with carrying out its responsibilities, the Commission has developed and adopted a Preservation Handbook that is utilized to help the Commission decide upon the appropriateness of activities proposed within the Districts. The handbook is also intended to help residents of the Districts understand the Commission's general preferences as it reviews proposed changes.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **A Property Owner's Guide**

#### **Q: How do I know if my property is located in the District?**

**A:** The District encompasses the City's downtown Central Business District and the residential district encompasses the area primarily designated by the National Register of Historic Places. To view a map of the Districts or, for a list of properties in the Districts, contact the Community Development Department at 254-582-2119.

#### **Q: What type of work requires the Commission's review and approval?**

**A:** Though not an exhaustive list, the following work generally requires the Commission's approval if visible from a public view (even if obstructed by landscaping): erecting a building or structure; altering one or more exterior architectural features of a building or structure (e.g., replacing windows); and demolishing or removing a building or structure. (Structures include fences, signs, and walls.) You are advised to check with the City's Community Development Department before proceeding with any proposed work to determine if it requires the Commission's approval from the Hillsboro Preservation Commission.

#### **Q: Is there any type of work that DOESN'T require the Commission's review and approval?**

**A:** Yes, there is nothing in the ordinance that prevents the property owner from performing ordinary maintenance and in-kind repairs or replacement of any exterior architectural feature of a historic landmark or property within in a historic district which does not involve a change in design, material, similar color scheme or outward appearance visible from a public right of way; design of the feature; the installation of mailboxes; interior building alterations; and the replacement of certain types of roof shingles. The Community Development Department is authorized to issue a stop work order if the owner's planned activity exceeds ordinary maintenance and repair. Please check with the Community Development Department before proceeding with any proposed work to determine if it requires the Commission's approval.

#### **Q: If the work I'm proposing requires the Commission's review and approval, what do I need to do?**

**A:** You'll need to obtain from the Commission a Certificate of Appropriateness (Certificate), which represents the Commission's formal approval of work proposed to be undertaken on a property located the District.



**Q: How do I go about obtaining a Certificate?**

**A:** In order for the Commission to review and decide upon the appropriateness of the work you're proposing, you'll need to file an application for a Certificate with the City's Community Development Department. Its staff serves as the Commission's administrative arm and is responsible for processing all Commission applications. They can provide you with the necessary application form, offer assistance and advice, and try to answer your questions about the application submission, review and approval process.

**PURPOSE OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

1. Approve or disapprove applications for Certificates of Appropriateness utilizing the approved Hillsboro Preservation Handbook.
2. Adopt criteria for the designation of historic, architectural, and cultural landmarks and for the delineation of historic districts, which will be ratified by the City Council.
3. Recommend recognition for owners of landmarks or properties within historic districts with certificates, plaques or markers.
4. Increase public awareness of the value of historic, cultural and architectural preservation by developing and participating in public education programs.

**BENEFITS OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

The owners of historic structures and homes in Hillsboro are entrusted with proper preservation of the community's architectural past. Proper preservation will help Hillsboro maintain its historical designations and ensure that tourism and its economic benefits continue to grow. Preserving Hillsboro's old structures enriches the community and maintains a strong link to its past. Both Hillsboro and its residents benefit financially from the City's revitalization. Visitors and new residents come to Hillsboro to step back in time and savor the rural, frontier heritage of Texas. Cherishing and preserving that heritage has enabled Hillsboro to pave a new pathway to the community's growing future.

**LOCAL EXAMPLES OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION**



**Hillsboro City Library:**  
118 S. Waco Street, Built in  
1913...originally the U. S. Post Office



**The Tarlton-Morris House:**  
211 N. Pleasant, Built in 1895  
for attorney Green D. Tarlton,



**Hillsboro** TEXAS



**The Hill County Courthouse:**  
Built in 1890, Restored from fire in 1993



**The Palace Theatre:**  
Located on South Waco

The marquee shows movie *Treasure Island* (Wallace Beery, Jackie Cooper, Lionel Barrymore) and *Hide Out* (Robert Montgomery and Maureen O'Sullivan). Both were released in August 1934.



**MKT (Katy) Depot:**  
115 N. Covington. The depot was restored and moved to its current location from the original site in 1978.



**Historic City Hall:**  
127 E. Franklin  
Built in 1909-1910 by Tom Sowell, contractor/builder.

Internet information regarding Hillsboro Historic Preservation is available on the web at the following address: [http:// www.hillsborotx.org](http://www.hillsborotx.org)



## What are the Qualifying Criteria for the Tax Incentive Program?

Applicants must meet the qualifying criteria listed below (A - D)

**A.** All work must fall into one or more of the following categories:

**Preservation** - The act or process of applying measures to sustain the existing form, integrity and material of a building or structure.

**Restoration** - The act or process of accurately recovering the form and details of a property and its setting as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of later work or by the replacement of earlier work.

**Rehabilitation** - The act or process of returning a property to a state of utility through repair or alteration which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions or features of the property which are significant to its historical, architectural, and cultural values.

**Reconstruction** - The act or process of recreating a portion of a building, in all new materials based on factual evidence such as photographs.

**B.** Qualifying costs must equal or exceed a formula rate of the taxable value of the home as determined by the Hill County Appraisal District (HCAD) at the time of application for a Certificate of Eligibility. Qualified costs are those costs that are directly related to correcting and preventing structural defects and/or extending the life of the structure.

**C.** The property must be a home either land-marked by the Historic Preservation Commission or at least 50 years old, and located within Hillsboro's Historical Districts.

**D.** Preservation, restoration, rehabilitation or reconstruction projects requiring a Certificate of Appropriateness will need the approved C of A before any financial incentive can be approved.

## A Few Examples of Qualifying Costs

Structural work - Only projects that retain or restore the historic integrity of the home through the use of proper design qualify for the incentive. Example: Foundation repair, original frame and beam repair.

Restoration, repair, or replacement of siding and/ or trim, windows and/ or doors (painting included) with like materials - Only projects that retain or restore the historic integrity of the home through the use of proper materials and design qualify for the incentive. Example: replacing wood siding with aluminum or vinyl siding or the replacement of historic wood windows with vinyl or metal windows would not qualify.

Restoration of existing historic porches and porticos - However, rebuilding a porch that was original on the house but has since been removed would qualify for the incentive.

Plumbing and electrical repairs associated with structural work

Labor costs-this can include sweat equity.

Donated materials and services as long as all of said materials and labor are documented.

Design costs

Roof replacement associated with structural work or major rehabilitation projects.

Exterior painting - Large scale painting of historic homes would qualify so long as they meet the threshold amount.



## **A Few Examples of Non-Qualifying Costs**

Renovation - A modernization of a historic building in which alterations are made and important features and details are eliminated.

- Acquisition costs
- Additions
- Appliances
- Cabinets
- Carpeting
- Decks (not part of original building)
- Demolition costs
- Enlargement costs
- Fencing
- Feasibility studies
- Financing fees
- Furniture
- Landscaping
- Leasing Expenses
- Parking lot
- Paving
- Planters
- Porches and Porticos additions (not part of the original building)
- Retaining walls
- Sidewalks
- Signage
- Storm sewer construction costs
- Window treatments
- Outdoor lighting remote from building
- Other features which the Historic Commission believes to be similar in nature
- Moving (building) cost (if part of acquisition)

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

1. Does this tax incentive affect HISD taxes?

Answer: No, the tax exemption program is for city taxes only and does not include the value of the land.