

Historical Downtown Overlay District Information Sheet

January 2010

1. **Question**

Why has the City of Winter Garden initiated an architectural overlay district for the Historic Downtown area?

Answer

The City Commission directed City Staff to study this topic. The City had adopted both a residential and commercial historic district designation in 1994. A local historic architectural ordinance will provide additional protection to existing historic resources and identify exterior architectural elements that would need to be met.

Having an ordinance protects the integrity of designated historic properties with design review requirements and authorizes design guidelines for new development or major changes to existing development to ensure that structures are consistent with the area's historic character.

2. **Question**

Will the architectural standards and guidelines require additional maintenance to commercial properties?

Answer

The City already has an ordinance that requires minimal commercial structures within the C-1 zoning district area to be properly maintained. The ordinance was adopted in 2008.

3. **Question**

What is the size of the adopted overlay area?

Answer

The area for the proposed Historic Downtown overlay is approx. 116 acres and includes 150 commercial properties and 125 residential properties.

4. **Question**

What effect will the overlay have on already developed properties?

Answer

- a. The proposed ordinance will not require changes or restoration to existing properties.
- b. The overlay will encourage appropriate historic colors for residential properties and will identify building materials and other design features that are encouraged for commercial buildings.
- c. Interior changes or alterations do not require approval (other than regular City permit when needed).

5. **Question**

How specific are the architectural standards and guidelines?

Answer

There are various design categories that will have several encouraged standards for each category (Example of fences: Encouraged - picket style, natural wood and white vinyl; Strongly Discouraged - split rail and chain link). Any existing improvements can remain. Only replacements and new improvements will be affected.

[Please refer to the architectural Design Standards and Guidelines Manual for more information.]

6. **Question**

What additional approvals or permits will be needed?

Answer

There may or may not be any impact depending on the kind and type of improvements proposed.

- a. Customary maintenance will be exempt from these requirements, which normally do not require a permit from the City.
- b. Replacement of either the same or acceptable materials (ex. Reroof or replacement of air conditioner) requires a permit from the City's building department but would not require any other requirements to be met.
- c. Building additions, adding mechanical equipment or replacing awning, for example, will be reviewed for consistency of the historic standards and guidelines. In situations for improvements of existing structures that do not meet the encouraged standards and guidelines, will either have to comply with acceptable features or will have to be reviewed by the Architectural Review Historic Preservation (ARHP) Board. This review will determine if the application is consistent with the overlay.
- d. Any building or structure to be removed or demolished, except for sheds, will need to reviewed and approved by the ARHP Board.

- e. Any new commercial construction will have to be submitted with the plan and submit an application for ARHP Board review. These applications can be submitted simultaneously.

7. Question

What will be the process for building improvements?

Answer

- a. Residential and commercial without site plan.
- Pre-application meeting will be encouraged.
 - Application is submitted to City. Staff will determine if ordinance applies.
 - For residential, if request meets standards, proceed to obtain a building permit. If request does not meet standards, ARHP Board can review request, or request can be revised to meet architectural standards.
 - For commercial requests, where ordinance applies, ARHP Board reviews requests.
 - If ordinance does not apply, proceed to obtaining a building permit.
 - If a determination is made that the ordinance applies, staff will prepare a staff report by the 2nd week of the month, and the request goes to the ARHP Board.
 - ARHP Board meets on the 3rd Tuesday of the month and will review and make a decision.
- b. Commercial with a site plan.
- Pre-application meeting will be encouraged.
 - Site plan is submitted with an architectural plan with separate application.
 - Staff review and staff report will be prepared.
 - Concurrent DRC review and DRC meetings occur.
 - ARHP Board meets on the 3rd Tuesday of the month.
 - Plans either resubmitted or recommended action
 - Plans proceed to City Commission for final action.

8. Question

How much time will be added to receive architectural approvals?

Answer

City staff will perform an architectural compliance review that will typically not exceed 2-3 business days and will be done simultaneously with the building permit application. If there is a need to have a full architectural overlay review, the customer will be notified on what must be done to proceed.

The typical time for residential permits that require Board review will take approx. 3 weeks for review and a decision to be made. Commercial applications that have a site plan will be submitted to the City for both DRC review and review for the architectural standards and guidelines. A companion application will be made with the site plan application. A nominal review fee will be established for both residential and commercial reviews.

9. Question

What grants or other programs are available to assist in improvements to historic structures?

Answer

There are numerous grants and programs to support funding for renovations, restoration or preservation to historic structures. The City will be preparing a list of these programs and grant opportunities over the next few months. Some of the state programs currently have limited funding. Having a local ordinance enhances the possibility of eligibility and/or enhances the possibility of receiving funding.

For more information on the Historical Downtown Overlay District, please visit the City's web site at www.wintergarden-fl.gov under "Whats New" or call the City's Planning and Zoning Division at 407-877-5156.