

DESIGN GUIDELINES
for
LANDMARKS & HISTORIC DISTRICTS
in
KIRKWOOD, MISSOURI



WHERE COMMUNITY AND SPIRIT MEET®

I. OVERVIEW

A. City of Kirkwood, Missouri

Kirkwood is located in south-central St Louis County near the City of St. Louis. It is one of the larger suburbs of St Louis, covering roughly 57,000 acres and hosting a population of about 27,500. The commercial and governmental center, which is in the oldest part of the community, is located around the intersection of Kirkwood Road and Argonne Drive at the railroad right-of-way still utilized by both passenger and freight trains. The historic Kirkwood depot was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1985 and continues in service as an Amtrak station. The commercial center and the adjacent neighborhoods contain a large concentration of historic resources with more recent suburban development found in the outlying parts of the community.

Although by today's standards Kirkwood is relatively close to the City of St Louis, it was a distant satellite community when it was created in the mid-1850s. Kirkwood has the distinction of being the first planned railroad suburb in Missouri, and may have been the first such development anywhere west of the Mississippi River.

The original town of Kirkwood was developed to take advantage of the establishment of Missouri's first railroad corridor. It was designed to serve city dwellers who wished to live in the country and commute to St Louis via the new train system. Kirkwood was envisioned by its creators as a largely residential community, and it remained so for much of its early history. As a result, a large majority of the historic resources found here are residences.

B. Landmarks Commission Founding and Mission

The City of Kirkwood has long recognized the value of its historic resources. The City established the Landmarks Commission on March 5, 1981 "to make a continuous study of all the buildings and structures in the community, taking into account the age, design, period of construction, aesthetic value, past use and historical significance and to consider such buildings for designation as historical landmarks." Kirkwood became the first certified local government in Missouri in August of 1986. The enabling legislation of the Landmarks Commission is authorized by the City of Kirkwood Code of Ordinances Section 12 ½.

The Landmarks Commission proudly recognizes and preserves properties that represent or reflect elements of the City's thriving cultural heritage and architectural history. There are more than eighty designated landmarks, eight local historic districts and four National Register districts located in Kirkwood. Included among these historic properties are businesses, schools, churches, cemeteries and a multitude of significant homes. A general registry of all historic properties is available on the City's website at www.kirkwoodmo.org. The Landmarks Commission has actively pursued its mission to protect, retain and enhance such properties from its inception to the present.

C. Meetings of the Commission

The Commission meets regularly every 2nd Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. in City Hall, 139 S. Kirkwood Road. On occasion, special meetings occur at different times and venues. Agendas for every meeting are posted 48 hours before the meeting at City Hall and on the City's website.

D. Citizen Commissioners

Coming from a variety of backgrounds, the volunteer Commissioners utilize their expertise as an advisory body for the benefit of the community. They give guidance to property owners on exterior renovations in order to preserve the character and historic integrity of existing landmarks and historic districts. Furthermore, any person who owns property in Kirkwood can seek free advice regarding historic preservation from the Landmarks Commission. The expertise and knowledge of the Commissioners can save time and money for citizens and add to the value of their property.

II. LANDMARKS AND HISTORIC DISTRICTS

A. What makes a Landmark Historic?

Generally, there are three major principles to consider when designating a Landmark. If one or more of the following premises apply to an applicant's property, then the applicant has valid reason to nominate the property:

- It is associated with a particular person, event or historical period;
- It is of a particular architectural style or school, or of a particular architect, engineer, builder, designer or craftsman; and/or
- It contains historic and prehistoric archaeological resources with the potential to contribute to the understanding of historic and prehistoric cultures.

B. What is a Local Historic District?

If citizens want a local historic district designation for their neighborhood, they must sign a petition to be submitted to the Landmarks Commission with a majority of property owners supporting local designation. In designating a district, the Commission shall consider the following additional criteria to

those set forth for a Landmark above:

- The proposed District is a definable area possessing a significant concentration, linkage or continuity of sites, buildings, structures or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development or a non-contiguous grouping of thematically related properties which contribute to each other; and,
- The proposed District is of importance to the history of the City, State or nation for historical, architectural, archaeological, engineering or cultural values.

Within each historic district, a property may be referred to as "contributing" to a historic district. This means that the resource is at least 50 years old, was built during the district's "period of significance" and still looks much as it did "back then." When a property is altered, it must be done with caution and consideration because it is possible to lose the contributing status if the work removes historic features of the building's exterior.

There are eight designated local historic districts which include hundreds of contributing resources:

- Barrett Brae (1950s, designated 2015)
- Central Place (circa 1920s, designated 1998)
- Craig Woods (1950s, designated 2011)
- Jefferson-Argonne (circa 1850s through 1950s, designated 2007)
- Meramec Highlands (circa 1890s, designated 1988)
- North Taylor (circa 1850s through 1950s, designated 2010)
- Savoy (1950s, designated 2008)
- West Argonne (1850s through 1950s, designated 2014)

C. Undeveloped Historic Sites

With respect to property which does not contain a building, structure or any gravesite, the Commission must find that such property has considerable historical significance, such as a battle site, landing place or meeting place, so as to justify its historic designation and maintenance as an undeveloped parcel of property.

D. National Register of Historic Places

Over two dozen buildings in Kirkwood are individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The City also contains four National Register historic districts:

- East Monroe (circa 1850s through 1950s, listed in 2004)
- Downtown Kirkwood (circa 1850s through 1950s, listed in 2009)
- Jefferson-Argonne (circa 1850s through 1950s, listed in 2004)
- North Taylor (circa 1850s through 1950s, recognized in 2012)

E. Differences between Local and National Register Landmarks and Districts

Local landmarks or historic districts are designated by the Kirkwood Landmarks Commission whereas National Register individual properties or historic districts are recognized by the United States Department of Interior (administered through the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)). Each type of designation incurs differing treatment for modifications to the individual properties.

LOCAL LANDMARKS - PURVIEW OF LANDMARKS COMMISSION:

- Any alteration to the site or exterior modification, including additions, to the building that requires a building permit must be reviewed and approved using design guidelines.
- Stay of Demolition of a structure is required for at least 60 and

up to 270 days while a preservation alternative is sought.

- New construction is subject to review using design guidelines.
- Advisory review of city improvements in and within 200 feet of district may be undertaken.

LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICTS - PURVIEW OF LANDMARKS COMMISSION:

- Stay of Demolition of a structure is required for at least 60 and up to 270 days while a preservation alternative is sought.
- New construction is subject to review using design guidelines.
- Advisory review of city improvements in and within 200 feet of district may be undertaken.
- Review does not include additions or modifications to existing structures although optional design review of exterior changes using design guidelines may be requested by owners to avoid modifications to existing contributing properties that may render them noncontributing.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACE – INDIVIDUAL BUILDINGS AND DISTRICTS

- Honorary status.
- No stay of demolition.
- No review of new construction.
- No design review.
- A property that is architecturally significant and has maintained its historic integrity may be eligible for tax credits for rehabilitation through the SHPO.
- Honorary status and incentives may not be enough to save structures under development pressures. If the majority of property owners want to preserve the long-term character of their properties, they need to petition for local designation.

III. PROCEDURES

The application and procedures for nomination of Landmarks and Historic Districts are available upon request. Designation does not incur new taxes nor are fees assessed when meeting with the Landmarks Commission. Once a landmark or historic district is designated by the Commission, the Commission will oversee changes to the resources. Demolitions, alterations, additions and new construction on a lot occupied by a landmark and demolitions and new construction in a historic district will require a Certificate of Appropriateness (CoA) before a building permit can be obtained. (See Landmarks Ordinance Sec. 12¹/₂-12(f).)

A. Application for Certificate of Appropriateness

Apply for a CoA before applying for a building permit for the following activities:

- New construction on a landmark property or in a historic district.
- Modification and/or addition to the exterior of a landmark.

Apply for a Demolition Permit and a CoA in order to begin the procedures for:

- Demolition of a landmark or structure in a historic district.

The application must be completed and returned to the Commission Office in City Hall no less than a week before the next regularly scheduled Commission meeting. Procedures and the Application for CoA are available upon request.

B. Review

All complete CoA applications shall be reviewed by the Commission within 60 days of submittal. With regard to

alterations or new construction, it is best to begin review during the schematic design phase of the project. Generally, the Commission requires site plans, elevations, photos of existing conditions of the structure and streetscape, and physical samples of materials of the proposed project. CoA applications for demolitions will require a Public Hearing on or about the expiration of the 60-day automatic stay period. After issuance of the CoA by the Commission, building permits for the proposed work may be issued by the Office of the Building Commissioner.

C. Appeal of a Decision of the Commission



If the review is not satisfactory and the CoA is denied by the Commission, the property owner may appeal to the City Council. Application for City Council review shall be made to the City Clerk within fifteen days of the notification of the decision to the affected party. Review by the City Council shall occur within thirty-one (31) days of the receipt of the appeal. If the City Council is in agreement with the Landmarks Commission regarding disapproval, then the property owner will not be issued the building permit from the Building Commissioner. (See Landmarks Ordinance Sec. 12¹/₂-13.)

IV. INTENT OF DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Design Guidelines are intended to assist citizens and the Landmarks Commission in their efforts to preserve the rich and unique heritage of Kirkwood. The Guidelines also serve to encourage sensitive, appropriate and compatible renovations and new development when changes are warranted. Owners of contributing properties to a historic district are encouraged to seek advice from the Landmarks Commission to avoid alterations that may render their properties noncontributing.

Section 1: Introduction

MAP: LOCATIONS OF HISTORIC DISTRICTS IN KIRKWOOD

-  LOCAL DISTRICT
-  NATIONAL REGISTER DISTRICT

