

CREATING A HISTORIC OVERLAY DISTRICT

The first step in establishing a new HOD is for neighborhood residents to contact the Fargo Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). If the area is historic and eligible for HOD designation, the HPC will form a working group to partner with neighborhood volunteers.

A public open house will be held in the neighborhood to explain the process. Some preliminary work will then be done, such as surveying and photographing the properties in the proposed HOD, and after several months of work, a proposal will be drafted. A letter will be sent to all property owners to notify them about the proposed HOD, and another public open house will then be held to present the proposal to the neighborhood.

Next, the Historic Preservation Commission will hold a public hearing to review the proposed HOD. After that, the Fargo Planning Commission will hold a public hearing, and upon recommendation for the adoption of the new HOD, City Commission will hold a public hearing, which is the final step in the designation of a new HOD.



This brochure was created by the Fargo Historic Preservation Commission and the City of Fargo Department of Planning and Community Development.

200 3rd Street North
Fargo, ND 58102

Phone: 701-241-1474

Fax: 701-241-1526

E-mail: planning@cityoffargo.com

www.cityoffargo.com/HistoricPreservation

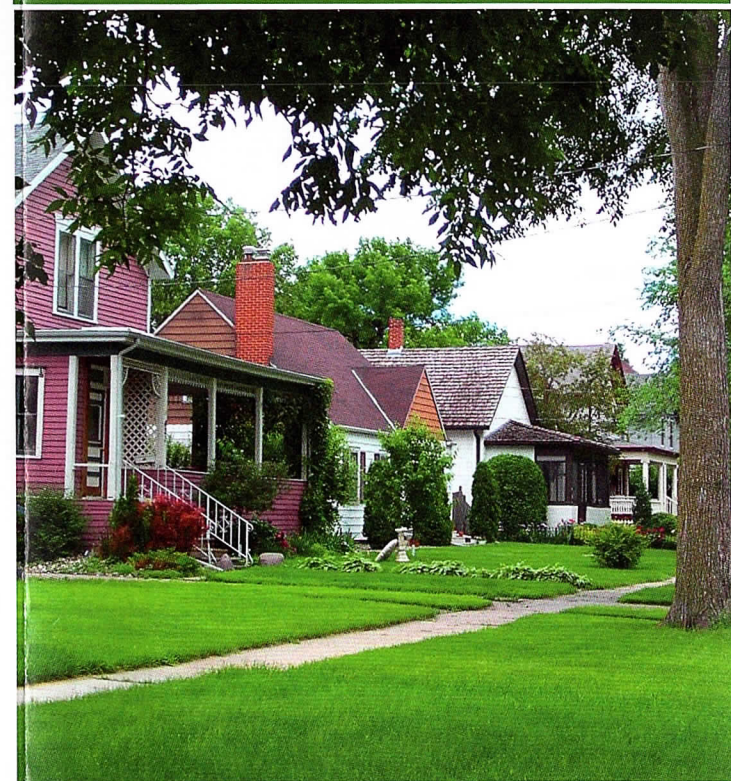


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HISTORIC OVERLAY DISTRICTS



Preserving Fargo's Historic Neighborhoods



WHAT IS A HISTORIC OVERLAY DISTRICT?

A Historic Overlay District (HOD) is a tool to help preserve the unique features of historic neighborhoods. It's a special type of zoning that "overlays" the base zoning of a property, and adds some additional requirements, in the form of design standards.

For property owners, this means that when they are going to make exterior changes which require a building permit, they need to submit an application for review by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) to make sure the project meets the HOD design standards.

The design standards also apply to demolition, new construction, and the moving of a historic property in a Historic Overlay District.

For more detailed information about Historic Overlay Districts, maps of current HODs, design standards and the review process, please visit our website at:

www.cityoffargo.com/historicpreservation

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How does the City decide to establish a Historic Overlay District (HOD)? Because neighborhood residents request it. The City does not initiate Historic Overlay Districts, but will support efforts to establish such districts.

How does an HOD impact property owners? Basically, it is a step in the building permit process. Any exterior project that requires a building permit will first be reviewed to make sure it meets the historic overlay design standards. Interior projects are not affected by the Historic Overlay District.

Will an HOD affect my property value? There are more than 2400 Historic Overlay Districts throughout the United States, and numerous studies show that property values in these districts stabilize and increase more than in historic neighborhoods which do not have the protection of an HOD.

How long has Fargo had HODs? The first one was designated in 2005, so they are a relatively new tool to help stabilize our older neighborhoods. Since that time, several more HODs have been adopted, and they have been working well.

Is the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) going to tell me what color to paint my house? No—only exterior projects which require a building permit would trigger review—house painting and other minor work does not require a building permit.

Who is on the HPC? It is made up of seven volunteer members from the community who have an appreciation for historic properties. Some members are architects, and others have historical expertise. The HPC is a great resource that can offer professional advice to owners of historic properties.

Will having an HOD in my neighborhood delay my project? Some minor renovations can be reviewed and approved by Planning Department staff – these projects can typically get their building permit the same day. Projects which require HPC review will need to allow a little extra time for the monthly HPC meeting schedule (3rd Tuesday of each month). However, in cases of emergency circumstances, a special meeting of the HPC can be scheduled to accommodate homeowners.

What is the difference between a National Register District and a Historic Overlay District? While both districts honor and acknowledge the special historic nature of the neighborhood, there is no review process for exterior changes to buildings in the National Register District, unless the owner is using federal funds for the project.

I have always heard that once a property was designated historic, it could never be changed or altered. An HOD does not prohibit change. Rather, it is a tool to ensure that changes to a historic property will not harm its historic value, or negatively impact neighboring properties.