



## **Annual Internal Review**

**This report covers the time period of 7/1/2021 to 6/30/2022**

# **Historic Landmark Commission**

---

**The Board/Commission mission statement (per the City Code) is:**

Pursuant to Section 2-1-147(B) of the Code of the City of Austin, the Historic Landmark Commission:

1. Shall prepare and periodically revise an inventory of the structures and areas that may be eligible for designation as historic landmarks.
2. Shall prepare, review, and propose amendments to the Historic Landmark Preservation Plan.
3. Shall review requests to establish or remove a historic designation and make recommendations on the requests to the Land Use Commission, as determined in accordance with Section 25-1-46 of the Code of the City of Austin.
4. Shall provide information and counseling to owners of structures that are designated as historic structures.
5. May initiate zoning or rezoning of property to establish or remove a historic designation.
6. May recommend amendments to the Code of the City of Austin relating to historic preservation.
7. May recommend that the City acquire property if the Commission finds that acquisition by the City is the only means by which to preserve the property.
8. May advise the Council on matters relating to historic preservation.
9. For an object that is not permanently affixed to land, may recommend that Council confer special historic designation, and
10. Shall perform other duties as prescribed by the Code of the City of Austin or other ordinance.

**1. Describe the board's actions supporting their mission during the previous calendar year. Address all elements of the board's mission statement as provided in the relevant sections of the City Code.**

1. The Commission references several surveys in evaluating historical significance for historic-age properties subject to applications for demolition and relocation permits, as well as building permits in National Register districts. These include the East Austin Historic Resources Survey (2016), the Old Austin Neighborhood Association / West Downtown survey (2020), and the North Central Austin survey (2021), among others. A survey of Downtown Austin is anticipated to be completed in fiscal year 2022-23.
2. The Commission recommended new citywide Historic Design Standards as an essential resource for property owners and professionals that increases equity in City processes in fiscal year 2020-21. Action by City Council—the final step in formal adoption—as of this fiscal year, the adoption is still pending the resolution of a lawsuit that has halted changes to the Land Development Code.

On a larger scale, the City's historic preservation program is guided by the Austin Historic Preservation Plan (1981) and Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan (2012). Recognizing that the city's remarkable growth and pressing new challenges require fresh guidance, the Commission- appointed the Preservation Plan Working Group composed of 30 professionals and community members. The group has created a draft Equity-Based Historic Preservation Plan over the past 12 months (July 2021-June 2022), with intensive community engagement to follow in a second phase of the project which is set to start this fiscal year. The effort is supported by a Certified Local Government grant from the Texas Historical Commission.

3. The Commission reviews applications for historic zoning as part of its regular business at monthly meetings. In 2021-22, it reviewed twenty applications for historic zoning, including one application to rezone a designated historic property and one application recommendation for historic district zoning of the Travis Heights – Fairview Park National Register Historic District. Four applications were initiated or supported by the property owner or owners, with three historic zoning applications and one application to rezone a designated property after the relocation of the main structure. The Commission recommended these applications for historic zoning. See 1.5 for the additional details on the remaining sixteen cases, which did not receive historic zoning.

Notable historic zoning achievements by the Commission during the reporting year include the recommendation of the Dr. Sidney, jr. and Helen White House. The house is a wing-and-gable plan ranch-style house with features of mid-century Modern design. It has a brick veneer exterior with weeping mortar, a relatively rare architectural feature in Austin. The house was built in 1968 for Dr. Sidney White, Jr. and his wife, Helen. Dr. Sidney White, Jr. was a pioneer and a fighter for racial equality and civil rights. Besides attracting other Black professionals to Austin, he and Helen took on racial discrimination to ensure that the Black professional community in Austin could thrive.



*Dr. Sidney, Jr. and Helen White.*





*Dr. Sidney, Jr. and Helen White House, 8601 Azalea Trail*

4. The Commission's Architectural Review Committee is made up of three commissioners who bring expertise in architecture and architectural history. The Committee meets monthly (three weeks prior to the full Commission meeting) to provide feedback on historic review applications for locally designated properties. The Committee also reviews applications for building permits in National Register districts upon request and if time permits. The Committee reviews an average of six applications each month. The setting is informal: the applicant presents the proposal to Committee members, who then work closely with the applicant to ensure a successful proposal at the full Commission. The Committee has been extremely effective in guiding applicants towards Commission approval of their applications in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Properties and historic district design standards.
5. As part of its regular monthly public meetings, the Commission reviews applications for the demolition or relocation of potentially historic properties. It may initiate a historic zoning case to gather more information about the history of a property before deciding whether to recommend the case for historic zoning to the Planning Commission or

Zoning and Platting Commission and City Council. In 2021-22, the Commission initiated a historic zoning case on sixteen applications for demolition or partial demolition of a potentially historic building, with the following results: the Commission ultimately did not recommend historic zoning to advance the case (3009 Bowman Ave., 3703 Meadowbank Dr., 1204 E. 6<sup>th</sup> St., 1601 Cedar Ave., 1505 Forest Trl., 1617 New York Ave., and the 4<sup>th</sup> & Colorado properties: 310-312 Colorado St., 316-318 Colorado St./201-209 W.4<sup>th</sup> St., 211 W. 4<sup>th</sup> St., and 213 W. 4<sup>th</sup> St.); the recommendation vote failed to reach the necessary supermajority at either the Commission or land use commission to advance to Council for consideration (301 W. 6<sup>th</sup> St.); the Commission recommended historic zoning (2502 Park View Dr., 2501 Inwood Pl., 301 San Jacinto Blvd., 1403 E. Cesar Chavez St., 902 E. 7<sup>th</sup> St.).

6. The Commission works closely with City staff to identify and process amendments to City Code sections dealing with historic preservation issues. The Commission amended their bylaws to change the name of the Public Communication section of the agenda (previously Citizen Communication) to encourage inclusivity to all Austin residents.
7. The Commission did not have occasion to recommend that the City acquire property to preserve a property in 2021-22.
8. The Commission made recommendations to staff regarding the historic preservation sections of the Land Development Code rewrites during the reporting year.
9. The Commission did not have occasion to recommend historic zoning for an object not specifically affixed to land in 2021-22.
10. The Commission did not have occasion to perform other duties as prescribed by Code or ordinance, other than the activities described above.

**2. Determine if the board's actions throughout the year comply with the mission statement.**

Every action of the Historic Landmark Commission has complied with the mission statement and applicable City Code sections relating to the Commission and historic preservation in 2021-22.

**3. List the board's goals and objectives for the new calendar year.**

In addition to continuing the regular work described above, the Commission will review the draft of the new Equity-Based Historic Preservation Plan produced by

the Preservation Plan Working Group (see 1.2). Another ongoing effort is Council adoption of the Historic Design Standards (see 1.1).