



Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning

Planning for the Challenges Ahead



Richard J. Bruckner
Director

November 7, 2013

TO: Regional Planning Commission:
David W. Louie, Chair
Esther L. Valadez, Vice Chair
Harold V. Helsley, Commissioner
Curt Pedersen, Commissioner
Pat Modugno, Commissioner

FROM: Phillip Estes, AICP, Principal Planner
Community Studies East

SUBJECT: Project No. R2012-02290-(1-5)
Advance Planning Permit No. 201300005
Proposed Historic Preservation Ordinance

Our approach to developing a county-wide historic preservation program has been twofold; adopt a Mills Act ordinance and adopt a comprehensive historic preservation ordinance.

As you know, the Board of Supervisors conducted a public hearing on May 28, 2013 and directed County Counsel to prepare a final Mills Act ordinance. The Mills Act ordinance is nearing completion and it is expected to be finalized within 30 days.

Additionally, the Departments of Regional Planning and County Counsel are working with the Historical Landmarks and Records Commission to prepare a draft historic preservation ordinance for the unincorporated areas of the county. To facilitate an initial discussion with your commission, attached is a short outline of key aspects of a preservation ordinance.

Should you have any questions or wish to discuss further, please feel free to contact our office at (213) 974-6425 or email pestes@planning.lacounty.gov.

MC:CS:PE

1. Types of designations and sample designation criteria

- a. Individual landmarks (buildings, structures, sites, interiors accessible to the public)

Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the history of the County, region, or State; it is associated with the lives of persons who are significant in the history of the County, region, or State; it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, architectural style, period, landscape, or method of construction, or represents the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder, or possesses artistic values of significance; yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important locally in prehistory or history.

- b. Landmark tree

One of the largest or oldest trees species located in the County; has historical significance due to an association with a historic event, person, site, street, or structure; defining landmark or significant outstanding feature of a neighborhood.

- c. Historic district

Minimum of 50 percent of properties contributing; grouping represents a significant and distinguishable entity of importance of a defined historic, cultural, development and/or architectural context.

(Historic districts would require 51% of property owners to designate.)

2. Nomination and designation

- a. Property owner notified of nomination application; owner authorization not required to submit application to nominate property.
- b. Staff determines eligibility; prepares recommendation report for Landmarks Commission.
- c. Landmarks Commission: Considers all nominations. May recommend Board approval or disapprove all designation types. Decision to disapprove is final, unless appealed to Board.
- d. Planning Commission: Considers historic district nominations only. May recommend Board approval or disapprove historic district overlay map. Decision to disapprove is final, unless appealed to Board.
- e. Board of Supervisors: Considers all nominations types recommended for approval. Final authority to approve all designation types reserved by Board. Considers appeals of commission decisions.

3. Development review process for designated landmark and historic districts

- a. Staff reviews and may authorize any project which is deemed consistent with the “Secretary of the Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.”
- b. Landmarks Commission reviews a project that staff deemed inconsistent with the Secretary’s Standards, staff referrals, and appeals of staff determination.
- c. Economic hardship application considered by Landmarks Commission (a provision where the owner of a landmark property may seek relief from the preservation ordinance).