

Preservation Program Strategies for Little Rock, Arkansas



Design guidelines represent community policy and that the Commission's role is to administer them.



Across the nation, thousands of communities promote historic preservation because doing so contributes to neighborhood livability and quality of life and yields economic rewards.

Little Rock has operated a preservation program for many years and has a series of historic districts. Some districts are under local ordinance protection and others are National Register Historic Districts. In the year 2000, a controversy arose about the effectiveness of the program and its relationship to neighborhood revitalization objectives. In response, the city requested that the preservation program be evaluated to identify where refinements in policies, ordinances and guidelines might be needed.

Winter & Company conducted an analysis of the system which included public workshops, interviews with preservation commissioners, city staff, elected officials and property owners. A technical analysis included a comparison of the components of the City's preservation ordinance with a checklist of standard features found in preservation programs in most communities. The City's design guidelines were also evaluated in detail with consideration of their basic organization and format, as well as the clarity and appropriateness of the content. Several recommendations include amendments to the zoning ordinance as well as to the preservation ordinance. New design guidelines were developed that anticipate the addition of other districts in the future. The work program also recommends educational initiatives and incentive strategies.

Services:

- Ordinance review
- Design guidelines

Client: Little Rock, Arkansas

Year: 2002

What does Preservation mean?

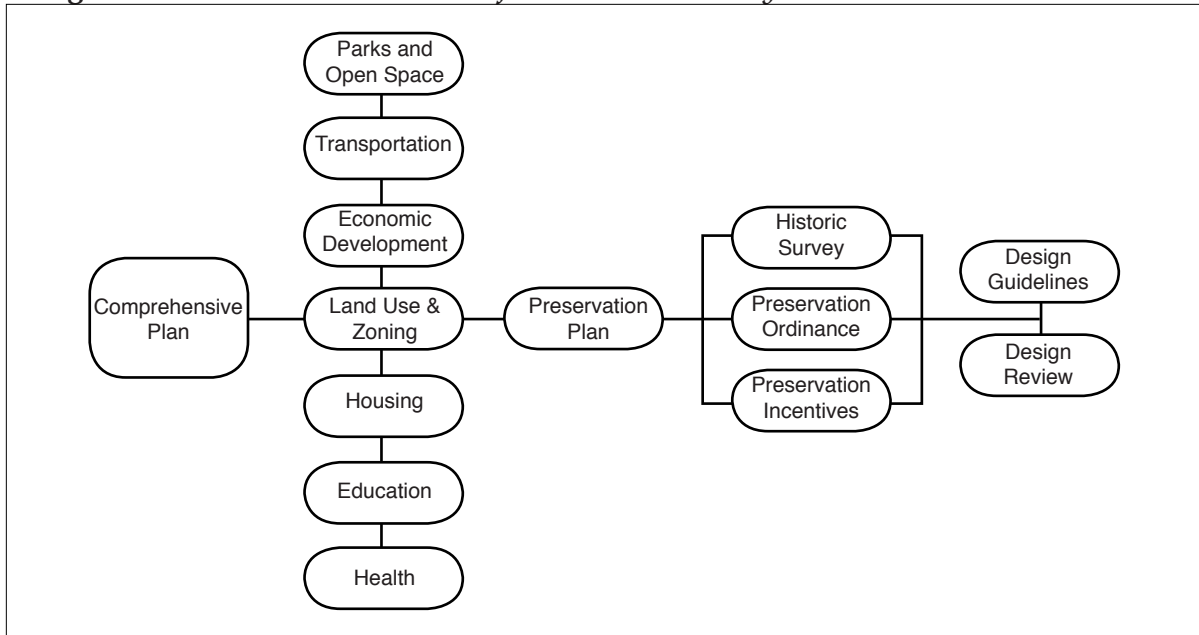
- Preservation means using historic properties.
- Preservation means accommodating change.
- Preservation means maintaining key character-defining features.

Preservation does NOT:

- Stop development
- Require making improvements, or
- Require removing inappropriate changes that have happened

Excerpt from "Assessing Little Rock's Design Review Program"

Design Guidelines in the Context of Other Community Policies



This chart illustrates a typical organization of community policies, which organizes historic preservation programs, including design review, as a part of a Preservation Plan that establishes goals for preservation and provides the theoretical basis for design review. This Preservation Plan is in turn a component of community-wide Comprehensive Plan.



"It is therefore important to make preservation of historic resources the primary strategy of development and re-development, looking first and foremost to keep what we have" (Recommendations of the Little Rock Mayor's Historic Preservation Task Force, 1996).