



Responsibilities of Home Ownership in a Historic District

In 1981, Glyndon became the first designated historic district in Baltimore County. While earlier listed on the National Register of Historic Places and on the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties, it is the local designation that provides the most protection for our community.

Across the country, landmarks designation has proven to be an effective way to preserve our nation's heritage and to enhance the value of property and neighborhoods. In many communities it has helped to instill a sense of pride and has brought about stability. Historic designation aids in the control of deterioration and contributes to community and property protection. There are financial advantages as well, such as income tax incentives for restoration. Experience has shown that property values go up in historic districts.

In Baltimore County, a 15-member Landmarks Preservation Commission is in charge of overseeing the Historic Preservation Legislation of 1976. The Commission has a legal obligation to review and approve plans for any

renovation, reconstruction, alternation, demolition, or other structural change to property within the district, including excavation, fences, and out buildings. This review process assists an owner in making any necessary changes which will enhance rather than detract from a historic property's value or appearance. In general, a rule of thumb is that any modifications to the property that are visible from the public way are subject to review.

The red tape involved is minimal; it is just one more step in the process of obtaining a permit for the project. All property owners in a designated historic district must apply for a building permit for any excavation, for demolition, or for the construction or erection of any building, fence, or other new construction of any kind. When contemplating such changes, property owners may want to check with Historic Glyndon, Inc.'s Architectural Design Advisory Committee for some advice before presenting the final plans before the Landmarks Preservation Commission at the Baltimore County Office of Planning. If the project is consistent with guidelines (the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties are the guidelines used), approval by Landmarks is quick. For cases involving major work, such as an addition, or for minor work that isn't in clear conformance with guidelines, plans must go to the full Commission, which meets monthly (2nd Thursday of each month except for August and December). Because the Commission includes design and construction professionals who are knowledgeable and experienced preservationists, their expertise can often save a homeowner time and money.

The above guidelines and procedures also apply to non-contributing structures within the historic district, such as my 1947 stone Dutch Colonial on Butler Road. While my house is in the middle of the Baltimore County Landmarks district, it is too new a structure to qualify for historic status. Yet exterior changes still must be approved.

Some additional responsibilities for the owner of landmark property include ensuring that a structure is not demolished through neglect. Also, if the owner of a landmark wishes to sell his or her property, the owner must notify a potential buyer of the property's historic status in writing prior to the sale.

For contacting the Commission and for additional information:

- Contact people: Caitlin Merritt and Taylor Bensley
- 410-887-3495, hispres@baltimorecountymd.gov
- Website:
https://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/Agencies/planning/historic_preservation/landmarks_preservation_on_commission/index.html
- Historic Preservation Design Guidelines:
https://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/Agencies/planning/historic_preservation/design_guidelines

- County tax credit:
https://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/Agencies/planning/historic_preservation/taxcreditfaq.html
- State tax credit: https://mht.maryland.gov/taxcredits_homeowner.shtml

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