

FAIRMOUNT HISTORIC DISTRICT FACT SHEET

What is the National Register of Historic Places?

The National Register is the nation's official list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history. It is maintained by the National Park Service and administered by the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

What is a historic district?

A historic district is an area that has a concentration of buildings over 50 years old that retains a high degree of historic character and integrity, and represents an important aspect of the city's history.

There are three established historic districts in Salem. They are the Gaiety Hill/Bush's Pasture Park Historic District, the Court Chemeketa Historic District, and the Salem Downtown Historic District.

What are the primary benefits of historic district designation?

Designating an area as a historic district protects the unique qualities of the neighborhood and increases community pride and awareness of neighborhood history. In addition, local planning protects the district from incompatible alterations and new construction, and prevents the demolition of historic properties. Local resources including the *Development Design Handbook* and city planning staff offer guidance to assist homeowners when they plan alterations to their houses or new construction within the district. Finally, all buildings which contribute to the district are eligible to apply for the Oregon Special Assessment program (15 year tax freeze).

What is the process for historic district designation?

The nomination of a historic district is a long process. It began when Fairmount neighborhood representatives approached the City of Salem for help nominating the neighborhood as a historic district. The City has allocated funds for the reconnaissance level survey of the Fairmount neighborhood to occur in the 2006-2007 fiscal year. This survey includes the documentation and evaluation of every building in the neighborhood, including photography and the collection of basic historic information such as the date of construction, style and original owner.

The next phase of the project, hoped to be completed in 2007-2008, includes the completion of a historic context for the neighborhood, outlining the overall history and development of the area, and more intensive survey of a percentage of the buildings in the neighborhood. Public meetings will be held, and the final nomination completed. Finally, the nomination will be submitted to SHPO, which will review it and then forward it on to the National Park Service, which approves it and lists it on the National Register of Historic Places.

How will the boundaries of the district be determined?

National Register district boundaries are determined based on the district's historic significance and the integrity of the structures. Visual barriers that mark a change in character of the area are considered as well as historic boundaries, such as when a subdivision was added.

A preliminary boundary for the initial reconnaissance survey of the Fairmount neighborhood extends from Rural Street on the south to Miller Street on the north, and from Commercial Street on the east to Rio Vista Way and River Road on the west.

Are all changes to buildings in a district subject to review by the Salem Landmarks Commission?

All alterations to buildings within the historic district, regardless of contributing or non-contributing status must follow the requirements outlined in Section 5 of the *Development Design Handbook*, and will be subject to review by the Salem Historic Landmarks Commission.

Are there restrictions placed on buildings within a historic district?

There are no federal or state restrictions placed on property within historic district. State law, however, requires local governments to offer some level of protection (beyond building permits) to National Register properties. Salem has established requirements for the renovation or development of historic properties, which are outlined in Section 5 of the *Development Design Handbook*.

Can property owners object to the proposed historic district designation?

A property owner may register an objection to a proposed historic district by sending a notarized statement to the SHPO. A majority (51%) of owners must object to block the district. Each deeded owner is allowed one vote, regardless of the number of properties he/she owns.

Do homes in the historic district need to have an annual public open house?

No. Historic designation alone does not require that homeowners hold public open houses. Only homeowners who voluntarily apply for the Oregon Special Assessment program are required to hold open houses.

What costs are associated with National Register listing and who pays them?

The City of Salem has received a Certified Local Government (CLG) grant for 2006-2007 which it has allocated to fund the reconnaissance survey of the potential historic district. This initial phase of work will be completed by the City's current historic preservation consulting team.

How can Fairmount neighborhood residents get involved?

The most important thing residents can do is register their support for the historic district designation and talk to neighbors about the district. In addition, there will be opportunities for volunteering, which will be made available as the process progresses.

The Salem Historic Landmarks Commission has formed a subcommittee with two Commission members and representatives from the neighborhood. The primary function of the subcommittee will be to coordinate neighborhood outreach and communication for the potential district and offer recommendations to the consultant team as the project progresses.