

City of New Richmond Historic Preservation

Frequently Asked Questions



What is a historic district?

A historic district is a unified, well-defined, visually and architecturally distinctive area that exhibits cohesion in contrast to the area outside of the defined historic district.

What is the difference between New Richmond’s historic districts?

The West Side Historic District is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), and the only locally designated district. Local designation means that properties within the West Side District are subject to the [Historic Overlay District regulations](#). Per [Municipal Code Section 121-59](#), no owner or person in charge of a historic structure, historic site or structure within the West Side Historic District shall reconstruct, alter or demolish all or any part of the exterior of such property or construct any improvement upon such designated property or properties or cause or permit any such work to be performed upon such property or demolish such property unless a Certificate of Appropriateness has been granted by the Historic Preservation Commission.

The East Side and Commercial Historic Districts are also listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), but not locally designated. This means properties within the East Side and Commercial Historic Districts have no restrictions on what a non-federal owner may do with their property, unless the property is involved in a project that receives Federal assistance, usually funding or licensing/permitting. Of course, because the properties within the districts are historically significant, owners are encouraged to preserve them. Within the East Side and Commercial Historic Districts, individual properties are classified as contributing or non-contributing.

What does “contributing or non-contributing property” mean?

Within the East Side and Commercial Historic Districts, individual properties are classified as contributing or non-contributing.

- A contributing classification means the property adds to the historic association, architectural importance or archaeological value for which the district is important. The property can be a building, structure, site or object. It must have been present during

the district's historic period and must physically retain the features representing that era.

- A non-contributing classification means the property is excluded from the historic district due to low architectural integrity, loss of original building materials or date of construction. Essentially these types of properties are newer, altered or have lost many of the features that make them historic.

What is a Certificate of Appropriateness and when is it needed?

A Certificate of Appropriateness is required for any change to a historic structure or site within the West Side Historic District. This includes any exterior construction, reconstruction, alteration or demolition. The goal to preserve areas of particular historic, architectural and cultural significance within the City.

Ordinary maintenance and repairs may be undertaken without a Certificate of Appropriateness, following approval by City Staff, provided that the work involves repairs to existing features of a historic structure or site, elements of a structure are replaced with pieces identical in appearance and the work does not irreversibly change the exterior appearance of the structure or site.

What is the National Register of Historic Places?

The National Park Service administers the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register is the official Federal list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture.

How is property listed on the National Register of Historic Places?

Nominations for listing historic properties can come from State/Federal Historic Preservation Officers, individuals, organizations, or local governments. The nomination forms and documentation go to the Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). The SHPO can take one of several options: reject the property, ask for more information, list the property just with the state, or send the forms to the National Register for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

What are the benefits of having a property or district listed in the National Register of Historic Places?

- Help to preserve local, state and national heritage
- Eligibility for [state and federal tax](#) credits for rehabilitating listed historic properties
 - This can include tax credits for certain activities and costs including: masonry, roof repair/replacement, window repair/replacement, structural, etc.
- Eligibility for federal grants, when available
- Consideration in the planning of [federally assisted and state assisted projects](#), as well as projects of local governments and school boards, when those projects affect the property
- Eligibility to use the state's Historic Building Code, which may facilitate rehabilitation
- Qualification for state and federal charitable income tax deductions for the donation of historic preservation easements

Do I automatically receive a plaque as a result of being listed on the National Register?

No. Many sites listed in the National Register arrange for a commemorative plaque. Unfortunately the National Register of Historic Places does not issue plaques as a result of listing; rather leaves it up to the individual owners if they are interested in having one.

How can I learn more?

The Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and National Park Service both provide excellent resources regarding historic preservation.

The City Planner serves as the staff member to the Historic Preservation Commission, and reviews Certificate of Appropriateness applications. Please feel free to reach out for more information.