



ROCHESTER HILLS HISTORIC DISTRICTS COMMISSION

Question & Answer Guide for Historic Property Owners

What is the purpose of the Rochester Hills Historical Preservation Ordinance?

The Rochester Hills Historical Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 118) was adopted to ensure the preservation and protection of historical, architectural, archaeological, engineering and cultural elements that reflect the history of the City of Rochester Hills. Historic preservation is declared to be a public purpose, according to State Act 169 of the Public Acts of 1970 of the State of Michigan, as amended. The Historical Preservation Ordinance for Rochester Hills declares its purpose shall be to do one or more of the following:

1. Safeguard the heritage of the City by preserving its Historic Districts;
2. Stabilize and improve property values in these Districts and the surrounding area;
3. Strengthen the local economy;
4. Promote the use of the Historic Districts for the education, pleasure and welfare of the citizens of the City, State and Nation.

What is the definition of “Historic”?

This term applies to any resource that is significant to the overall appearance of a Historic District and which plays a role in the evolutionary growth and development of the Historic District’s streetscape. This significance can be either architectural, historical, association with significant people or events, or representative of the work of a craftsman or architect.

How are Historic Districts Established, Modified or Eliminated?

Any property owner in the City of Rochester Hills may make a request to establish, modify or eliminate a Historic District. Once determined that there are reasonable grounds for such a request, the Historic Districts Study Committee will investigate further in order to determine whether or not the request should be granted.

As part of the investigation, research is conducted and a written preliminary report is prepared. The preliminary report will contain recommendations as to actions to be taken on the request for establishment, modification or elimination of a Historic District. Copies are sent for review and recommendation to the City’s Planning Commission, and the State Historic Preservation Office.

A public hearing will be held not less than sixty (60) days after the transmittal of the preliminary report. A final report is submitted with its recommendations and those of Planning Commission and a draft of a proposed Ordinance to the Mayor and City Council. After receiving the final report, the City Council may pass or reject an ordinance to establish, modify or eliminate a Historic District. Once designated, the District is recorded in the Ordinance and County Register of Deeds.

For modifications, alternations and new construction (including additions), the Ordinance and review process applies only to work affecting the exterior appearance of a resource. In addition, a review is required of all proposed work to resources, historic or non-historic, located within the boundaries of

designated historic districts. Contact the Planning & Development Department for more information at 248-656-4660.

What are “Contiguous” and “Noncontiguous” Historic Districts?

Contiguous Historic Districts include ALL properties (both historic and non-historic or non-contributing) that are contained within the defined boundaries of a Historic District. Rochester Hills has two contiguous districts: Stoney Creek and Winkler Mill Pond.

Non-contiguous Historic Districts are typically freestanding properties not contained within the defined boundaries of a Contiguous Historic District. There are 31 Non-contiguous Historic Districts within the City of Rochester Hills.

When is a Review Not Required?

Ordinary maintenance that does not change the exterior appearance of a resource except through the elimination of the usual and expected effects of weathering, does not require a review. Work on interior arrangements that does not change the exterior appearance of a resource does not constitute work by Ordinance definition and, therefore, does not require review and approval by the Historic Districts Commission.

When and Where are Reviews Performed?

The HDC reviews applications and plans for proposed work at their regularly scheduled meetings, which are held on the second Thursday of each month at 7:30 PM. A person seeking to perform work on a resource within a Historic District must submit a completed application and all other required materials to the Rochester Hills Planning & Development Department at least three (3) weeks prior to the HDC meeting at which you wish the matter to be considered.

What Factors Does the HDC Consider During a Review?

The Historical Preservation Ordinance provides guidelines and standards which the HDC must follow in its review and decision making process. In reviewing proposed plans, the HDC follows the *U.S. Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*. A copy of these guidelines may be obtained from the Rochester Hills Planning & Development Department.

The HDC shall also consider all of the following:

1. The historic or architectural value and significance of the resource and its relationship to the historic value of the surrounding area;
2. The relationship of any architectural features on the resource to the rest of the resource and to the surrounding area;
3. The general compatibility of the design, arrangement, texture and materials to be used; and
4. Other factors such as aesthetic value that the HDC deems relevant to its determination under the above review standards and guidelines.