



JEFFERSON PARK HISTORIC PRESERVATION OVERLAY ZONE Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)?

A Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ) is a special zoning ordinance designed to protect and preserve the cultural and architectural heritage of select communities in Los Angeles, now and for future generations. In recognition of the distinctive character and beauty of our neighborhood, Jefferson Park was designated a historic district in 2011.

How did Jefferson Park become an HPOZ?

Our community worked very hard for nine years to have the City of Los Angeles recognize Jefferson Park for its cultural history and historic architecture. Because of our community based, grass-roots effort, the City authorized a survey of all the structures in the historic district as well as a report on the history of the neighborhood. After a lengthy public hearing process with overwhelming community support, the City Council unanimously voted to make Jefferson Park a historic district.

What does “Contributor,” “Non-Contributor” mean?

Our property is either a “Contributor” (“Contributor”/ “Contributor Altered”), or a “Non-Contributor.” A “Contributing” structure retains its historical significance and contributes to the historic district. A “Non-Contributing” structure does not retain sufficient historical integrity or is outside the period of significance for the historic district.

Do we need permission to do work to the property?

Yes. The HPOZ Ordinance only applies to the exterior of the home or commercial building, to the exterior of accessory structures (such as a garage) and to significant landscaping projects. Whenever we pull a permit to do work on the exterior of our homes, the HPOZ review is a step in the standard permit process. HPOZ review may also be required for some projects that do not require permits, such as changing the exterior paint color. The HPOZ review ensures that the work we do on our houses enhances the architectural and historic qualities of our homes and of our neighborhood. (Although interior work does not fall under the HPOZ, the city also requires permits for interior projects such as drywalling, electrical and plumbing work.)

Who reviews our projects?

Our projects are reviewed by the Office of Historic Resources (OHR) in the Department of City Planning. In certain cases the project may also be reviewed by the Jefferson Park HPOZ Board, most of whose members are appointed by the City.

Who is on the Jefferson Park HPOZ Board?

The Jefferson Park HPOZ Board has five members, including experts in architecture, and real estate and/or construction. They are neighbors who are knowledgeable in historic preservation and the culture, history and architecture of Jefferson Park. The Board holds regular meetings twice a month in Jefferson Park.

What criteria are followed when reviewing a project?

The Jefferson Park HPOZ Preservation Plan is the document that the Office of Historic Resources and the Jefferson Park HPOZ Board follow when reviewing proposed projects. When planning work on the exterior of our houses, it is important for us to read the relevant portions of the Jefferson Park HPOZ Preservation Plan. We can find a copy of the Jefferson Park HPOZ Preservation Plan at <http://preservation.lacity.org>.

Can we talk to someone before we submit our projects for review?

Property owners who wish to improve their properties should speak to the Office of Historic Resources [213-847-3676] about the project before submitting it for review and as early in the project timeline as possible. They can describe the process, the amount of time involved, and what kinds of alterations comply with the Jefferson Park HPOZ Preservation Plan. Property owners can also ask to be on the agenda of a regular Jefferson Park HPOZ Board meeting in order to get a free consultation from them as well as information on resources that can assist with the project. Consultations with the Board need to be scheduled through the Office of Historic Resources.

Does the HPOZ review cost anything?

Many projects fall under the category of “Minor Conforming Work” which covers maintenance, repairs, and restoration. Review of projects that are “Minor Conforming Work” is free.

Additions that fall under certain requirements and are not visible from the street, as well as the construction or demolition of an accessory structure, fall under the category of “Major Conforming Work,” and there is a fee to cover administrative expenses.

Demolition, removal or relocation of a structure, landscaping, or natural feature requires a “Certificate of Appropriateness” and there is a fee to cover administrative expenses.

If the building or house is a “Non-Contributing” structure to the HPOZ and we want to demolish it or build a new structure, then the project requires a “Certificate of Compatibility” and there is a fee to cover administrative expenses. We can call the Office of Historic Resources for more information about the category a particular project will fall under.

What steps do we follow if we want to do work on the exterior of our house?

- 1) Read the relevant sections of the Jefferson Park HPOZ Preservation Plan
- 2) Talk to the Office of Historic Resources in the Department of City Planning [213-847-3676].
- 3) (Optional) Schedule a free consultation with the Jefferson Park HPOZ Board.
- 4) Apply for the required permits through the City’s Building & Safety Department and submit the necessary documentation to the Office of Historic Resources.

How long does the review take?

Once the application is complete, there is a 21 day time limit for the review of “Conforming Work” projects. For some “Minor Conforming Work” projects that do not require Board review and are simpler, it may take as little as a few days once the application is complete. For more information on the review process, please see the Office of Historic Resources website. It is important that we read the Jefferson Park HPOZ Preservation Plan and discuss the project with the Office of Historic Resources in advance (and with the Jefferson Park HPOZ Board) in order to streamline the process.

What happens if we do work on the exterior of our house but did not go through the HPOZ approval process?

The Department of Building and Safety is responsible for making sure that the work we do on our houses is safe and meets the building codes and ordinances, including the HPOZ Ordinance. They enforce the HPOZ Ordinance when we do exterior work without the necessary permits and approvals. Work that is not permitted and/or does not have HPOZ approval may need to be reversed, and any historic material will need to be put back or reconstructed, potentially making the project far more expensive.

Are there any programs that can help us financially?

If our building or house is a “Contributing” structure to the HPOZ, we may be eligible for participation in the Mills Act. The Mills Act is a state program that can significantly reduce our property taxes if we qualify.

Where can we go for more information?

Explore our Jefferson Park community web site: <http://historicjeffersonpark.org>

The Office of Historic Resources has an excellent web presence with information on the HPOZ program, the HPOZ review process, the HPOZ Ordinance, the Mills Act, and other preservation incentives: <http://www.planning.lacity.org>

To find out if a property is a “Contributing” structure or not, go to ZIMAS, <http://www.zimas.lacity.org>.

Join the Facebook page “Historic Jefferson Park” and click on “Files” for valuable resources and ideas.