

Proposed Eastmoreland Historic District



Historic District Frequently Asked Questions

The following questions were developed in advance of the May 26 Neighborhood Workshop and will be supplemented as additional questions are added to the list.

(Answers are based on response from Bureau of Development Services staff. The answers reflect the experience of reviewing past applications using existing regulations and are not advice for a particular application.)

1. Will I be limited in the colors I can paint my house or for the color of roof shingles?
No. Paint color selection will not be part of the design guidelines for Eastmoreland and colors are not regulated through historic resource review. Repair and maintenance are also exempt from historic resource review.
2. What will be the impact of the historic designation on development activity in Eastmoreland, and will we have a say in what kinds of infill construction happen in the District?
*The historic resource review guidelines will be based on analysis of existing neighborhood patterns, neighborhood input, and national preservation standards that may supersede local zoning regulations. Houses considered **non-contributing** may be demolished or substantially altered, but in design they will conform to historic resource review guidelines. Speculative exterior remodeling and additions will likely decrease due to increased time and expense of the historic resource review process. In general, the aesthetic qualities, character, and scale of Eastmoreland will remain intact.*
3. Will historic resource review put a stop to demolitions?
*Demolitions of **contributing** properties will virtually end except for owners who are very determined and willing to undergo a public process including City Council hearing to gain approval. Those houses considered **non-contributing** can be demolished without any special reviews. However, in rebuilding the historic district guidelines will apply.*
4. Will I be able to add an addition or second floor to my house?
*A qualified yes. An addition, up or out, to a **non-contributing** resource is like any other provided that it is in keeping with the character of the existing resource and guidelines for the district. For **contributing** resources, the same standards apply except larger additions that impact the street facing elevations will be held to a more stringent standard. The purpose of historic designation is to preserve the integrity of the existing historic resources; however, alterations and additions may be approvable if they do not adversely affect significant features or compromise the historic character of the resource.*
5. Will an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) be allowed?
A qualified yes. An accessory dwelling is allowed as long as the design is in keeping with the character of the existing resource and guidelines for the district. If the ADU is an interior remodel with no exterior impacts, it would not require a historic resource review.
6. Will rear yard garages be covered by historic resource review?
Alterations to both contributing and non-contributing garages are subject to historic resource review, unless exempted by 33.445.320.B. and guidelines for the district.

7. In an historic district, can I remodel the interior without a special review?

Yes. Interior alterations are not subject to historic resource review. Historic resource review would be required if the interior alterations resulted in an exterior alteration such as relocation, introduction, or removal of a window or door, for instance.

8. Can I build a modern addition to a traditionally styled house?

In general, compatibility and context is valued over differentiation. A design that contrasts significantly from the existing character is less likely to be approved. Historic resource review is discretionary and will depend on a number of factors, including where the addition is located and compatibility with neighborhood specific guidelines.

9. What is the difference between “contributing” and “non-contributing” properties in a District?

Contributing resources are identified as having architectural or historic character that contributes to the historic significance of the district. Typically contributing resources are those that were built during the “period of significance” and/or have associations with significant people or events. **Non-contributing** resources are those resources that do not have architectural or historic character that contributes to the significance of the district, those built after the period of significance, or those constructed during the period of significance but have been significantly altered to the point of no longer retaining their original historic character.

10. Does historic district status affect property values, either for taxes or resale?

Many studies on the economic impacts of historic district designation have found that designation has a tendency to stabilize or increase property values.
<http://www.achp.gov/economic-designation.html>

11. Are there different types of historic resource reviews depending on the work to be done?

Yes. See next question.

12. What is the cost and duration of historic resource review?

*Historic Resource Review fees are based on the valuation of the scope of the project. Typically, the fees are equal to 3.2% of the valuation of **exterior** alterations in addition to other land use and plan review fees. With the exception of construction of a new building, the fees are based only on the value of the exterior work. For example, if remodeling a kitchen that includes the relocation of one exterior window, the valuation only applies to the relocated window, not the cost of the interior remodel.*

Each application begins with a completeness review which is targeted to last 14 days, but may be as long as 30 days. After an application is deemed complete, a public notice is mailed to neighboring property owners and the neighborhood association.

*A **Type I Review** for alterations that affect less than 150 square feet of façade area is \$250. The review requires a two-week comment period, after which time a decision may be issued; there is no appeal period for a Type I review. Review time for a Type I review is about 35 days.*

*For **Type II Review** for exterior alterations (no new footprint) the minimum is \$991 rising as a described percentage to \$5,066. For a project that expands the footprint fees begin at \$2,078 and rise to \$5,818. A Type II application requires a three-week comment period; after the decision is issued, there is a two-week appeal period. Ideally, the total review time for a Type II review is about 56 days.*

***Type III Review** applies to new construction and may equal a minimum of \$9,381. A Type III review is longer, requires a public hearing, and is unlikely to be required for anything less than construction of a new single dwelling or larger building.*

Disclaimer: These numbers are a guide; individual projects may result in different amounts. Fees are in addition to fees charged by other service bureaus for reviews normally associated with the

plan review and building permit process. Depending on planner workload and the complexity of the proposal, review periods may be longer than anticipated.

13. Who and what agency is responsible for historic resource review and how does the neighborhood have influence in the process?

The Bureau of Development Services (BDS) provides historic resource reviews at the administrative level. For larger Type III applications, staff reviews and guides the application through the land use process with the Historic Landmarks Commission serving as the approval body. The Historic Landmarks Commission also serves as the appeal body for appeals of Type II historic resource reviews. Staff level Type II reviews can be appealed to the Historic Landmarks Commission for \$250. Applicants may meet with the neighborhood prior to or during the application process. The neighborhood association, as well as any member of the public, may provide written comments in response to any land use proposal.

14. Are there any “open house” requirements for houses in an historic district?

No.

15. Can historic resource review help make a house addition compatible with Eastmoreland’s historic built environment?

Yes, through the historic resource review process.

16. Is it true that solar panels aren't allowed in Historic Districts?

Not true. 33.445.320.B.11 provides a path toward exemption for solar panels. Neighborhood guidelines may affect this as well. The exemption depends on the siting of the house and the design of the solar array. The purpose is to ensure that solar panels are minimally visible from the street.

17. If there is a cataclysmic (earthquake or other) event how will the rebuilding be regulated?

Current code stipulates that in the event of an earthquake, if the building is deemed an immediate danger by BDS, it may be demolished without historic resource review. Also, assuming the damage is not significant, repair is exempt from historic resource review. BDS also considers certain seismic retrofit work (seismic straps at the basement level of single dwellings provided they are painted to match the foundation) to be “maintenance”; therefore, this work may be exempt from historic resource review. Beyond that, the code does not specify whether other regulations are lifted or enforced in the event of a cataclysmic event.

18. Won't Historic District designation make the City's affordable housing problem even worse?

No. If anything the existing and proposed zoning and market pressures are likely to result in replacement housing that is significantly larger and less affordable than protected existing housing. The “housing crisis” in any case is not for lack of buildable land, but for lack of available housing in well located areas that most people can afford.

19. Will there be limits on what plants and landscaping I can add to the grounds around my home?

Generally no. Fences, street walls, patios, plant selection, and low level decks are not subject to historic resource review unless local guidelines specifically address these issues.

Our Comprehensive plan has lofty aspirations and trumpets Portland neighborhoods but the zoning code and aggressive changes now under discussion appear headed to produce ill effects. They fail to protect the unique places and neighborhoods that attract and hold residents of all ages and incomes. Historic district recognition may not be a panacea but we should consider joining the other neighborhoods that have chosen to protect historic resources and guide development. Eastmoreland residents should consider the opportunity to move beyond the cynical “change happens” platitude - Yes, change happens, but if we work together we can change for the better and protect what we love.