



Historic Preservation Policy Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. Why is there a special process for demolition of buildings in Ukiah based on the age of the building?

Adopted in the late 1980s, the demolition regulations for buildings over the age of 50 years are found in Section 3016 of Ukiah City Code and were intended as a temporary policy until a comprehensive historic preservation ordinance could be developed. Section 3016 establishes mandatory review by the Demolition Review Committee and City Council for all buildings at least 50 years in age prior to those buildings being approved for demolition. This ensures that no potentially historic building is demolished prior to review.

2. What CEQA review is required for historic resources?

CEQA provides the legal framework by which historical resources are identified and given consideration during the planning process. Two main steps are involved in the process:

- Determination of whether or not the property is a "historical resource."
- Whether the proposed changes to the property would cause a "substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource." Some examples of proposed changes may include demolition, complete alteration of a front façade or addition of a substantial vertical addition visible from public rights-of-way.

3. What is the purpose of a Historic Preservation Ordinance?

A Historic Preservation Ordinance is a local law that provides the regulatory and legal framework for identifying and regulating the treatment of historic properties. A Historic Preservation Ordinance is an important component of a comprehensive historic preservation program that can be tailored to the needs of the community to provide protection for historical resources, add predictability to the local planning process, and promote development that is compatible with the community's goals.

4. Doesn't the City already have a Historic Preservation Ordinance?

No. Over the past 40 years, there have been attempts to develop a historic preservation program in Ukiah, but a comprehensive historic preservation policy and ordinance have never been undertaken. The City did complete a Historic Resources Survey 1985, as well as an update to this Survey in 1999.

In December 2022, the City Council adopted the Ukiah 2040 General Plan. Within the newly updated General Plan were two new implementation programs directing implementation of a historic preservation policy. Included were deadlines for when the policy would need to be developed (2030).

5. What is a Historic Resources Survey?

Historic resource surveys are performed to identify, record, and evaluate historic properties within a community, neighborhood, project area, or region. Surveys provide information needed

to make informed planning decisions, prioritize preservation goals and objectives, develop and implement land use policies, perform environmental reviews pursuant to CEQA, develop adaptive reuse and heritage tourism initiatives, educate the public and increase the understanding of and appreciation for the built environment as a tangible reminder of the community's history. Surveys also assist in the identification of resources worthy of designation in a local register of historic resources, the California Register of Historical Resources, or the National Register of Historic Places, as well as properties potentially eligible for federal tax benefits or other state and local preservation incentives.

6. What is a Historic Context Statement?

A Historic Context Statement is a written document that outlines the broad patterns of a city's history and development. It describes the city's key historic events and development trends and includes an overview of typical building types and architectural styles. It helps to provide greater clarity and consistency for identifying historical resources, reduces the burden of original research for property owners and applicants, and helps to streamline designation decisions, as appropriate.

7. Will I still be able to renovate my house if my property is designated historic?

Yes—preservation ordinances allow for maintenance, updates, repairs, and even additions.

8. What impact does historic designation have on property value?

Historic designation may affect property value. Several studies have been conducted throughout the country examining that question and the majority of studies have determined that property value generally increases for properties in designated historic districts. However, there is no way to be certain how historic designation would affect a particular property.

9. I don't own property- how will a Historic Preservation policy affect me?

Preservation policies can shape how neighborhoods look and feel, create a unique environment and sense of place, guide what types of buildings are preserved, and help manage change. Historic preservation policies can highlight and celebrate the uniqueness of Ukiah's past.

10. Will a historic preservation policy limit how properties are developed in the future?

Preservation focuses on the physical character of buildings and neighborhoods, not land use (like zoning for certain types of businesses). However, historic preservation policies can help to inform how buildings are reused or adapted over time.

Sources:

Historic preservation websites from the Cities of Davis, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Rosa, and Rancho Mirage; the California Office of Historic Preservation, and the National Park Service
City of Ukiah 1985 Historical Resource Survey and 1999 Survey Update
Ukiah 2040 General Plan