



August 21, 2023

Dear Property Owner,

Our records show that you are one of the keepers of St. Augustine's history! Out of more than 8,000 buildings in the city, you are the owner of one of the 1,659 designated or contributing historic buildings. These are buildings that are individually designated on the National Register of Historic Places or as a Local Historical Landmark, and/or buildings recorded as contributing to one of the city's seven (7) National Register Historic Districts, or within one of the five (5) city's local Historic Preservation Zoning Districts.

A similar letter was mailed in September 2021. Likewise, this letter is to inform you of proposed changes to the City Code and the related procedures required when proposed changes to the exterior of your historic building are considered *partial demolition**. After being discussed and reviewed since 2020 at multiple public meetings of the Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB), the Planning and Zoning Board (PZB), and at the July 10, 2023 City Commission meeting, the upcoming **second reading of this proposed city ordinance will be heard and a vote taken by the City Commission at the August 28, 2023 meeting, which begins at 5 pm in the Alcazar Room at City Hall (75 King Street, 1st floor).**

(**Partial demolition* is the permanent removal or replacement of significant exterior features or character defining elements of the building.)

Currently, if full or partial* demolition is proposed for any building 50 years old or older and located anywhere in the city limits, an approved Certificate of Demolition is required before a permit may be issued. This requires a public hearing by the HARB and applies to any building regardless of location, significance, or design. This amounts to almost half of the city's entire building stock or about 4,000 buildings.

The goal of the proposed ordinance is to preserve the unique architecture and historic character of our city's significant buildings and neighborhoods. Property owners can apply for demolition as before; however, a new process is proposed for applications that include partial demolition*. Instead of only being able to consider what is being removed or replaced, staff and the HARB will have the ability to review the design of the project as a whole, which will promote compatible redevelopment. Depending on the project scope, applications will be reviewed either by the HARB or historic preservation staff and will take into consideration the compatibility of the replacement design. With this proposed change to the process, design review will also be conducted for partial demolition* of designated or contributing buildings outside of the local Historic Preservation Zoning Districts (HP-1 through HP-5). If compatible replacement elements are proposed, staff may be able to administratively approve the project during the building permit review process.

The proposed ordinance addresses partial demolition* review only:

- **The current review process for demolitions will change by reducing proposed partial demolition* review requirements to only designated or contributing historic buildings (existing and future).**
- **Full demolitions of any building 50 years or older within the city and/or all exterior changes to properties zoned HP-1 to HP-5 will continue to be reviewed by the HARB.**
- **Changes to the exterior or interior of all buildings or properties, regardless of the location or designation, still require a building and possibly other permits and must meet all city standards prior to approval and issuance.**

For more information, go to www.citystaug.com and search "historic preservation update" in the search box. You will find details on the proposed ordinance and an interactive map which can show if a property is designated historic or contributing to a National Register Historic District by entering an address. Please feel free to contact the Historic Preservation Division in the Planning & Building Department with any questions.

Sincerely,

Julie Courtney

Historic Preservation Officer

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How will this proposed partial demolition ordinance affect me?

Partial demolition is defined as the permanent removal of significant architectural features. National historic preservation review standards identify what is considered a significant architectural feature of a building and they are also detailed in the City's Architectural Guidelines for Historic Preservation (AGHP). An illustrative guide, *Preserving the Historic Building Envelope* draft is available on the city's website at www.citystaug.com (search for "historic preservation update") to help explain the proposed procedure for partial demolition review, which focuses on the following five critical elements of the building's exterior:

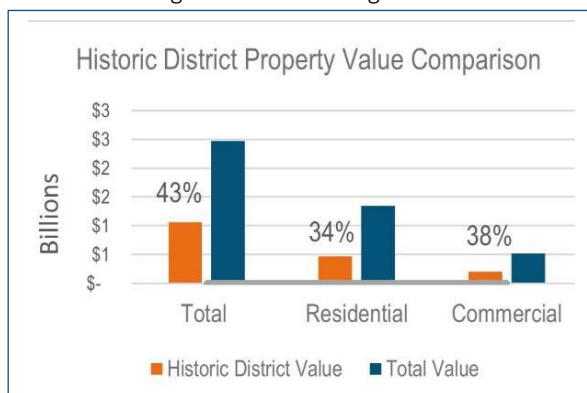
- ☐ Roofs and related elements
(chimneys, cupolas, parapets, dormers, soffits)
- ☐ Windows
- ☐ Exterior finishes
- ☐ Porches, balconies, stoops, loggias
- ☐ Foundations



Consideration will be given for the existing character of the feature, its location, and how many of these features there are, whether the change is required for flood mitigation, and the impact of the replacement feature on the historic character of the building. Minor repair and maintenance like re-roofing or repairing some deteriorated siding boards to match is not subject to this revised policy.

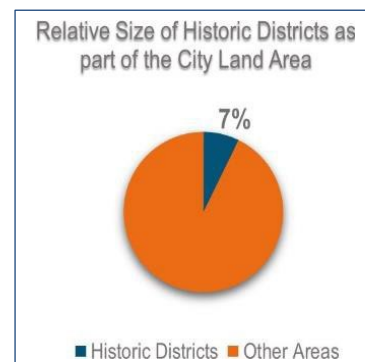
Why is the city considering these changes?

1. St. Augustine has a rich historic heritage and abundant cultural resources. The goal of the proposed ordinance is to preserve the unique architecture and historic character of our city's significant buildings and neighborhoods, in response to the 2018 Historic Preservation Master Plan and 2020 Historic Preservation Element of the Comprehensive Plan recommendation of prioritizing the preservation of our historic resources.
2. Demolition in the city code includes full demolition and partial demolition (removal of significant architectural features). There has been ambiguity and inconsistency in how this is applied or reviewed. The proposed ordinance and policy procedure will provide clarity for city staff and property owners.
3. Demolition of historic buildings often changes the character of a neighborhood. Demolishing historic buildings and replacing with new reduces the historic authenticity of the city, one of the city's core values. There should be at least a concentration of 51% historic buildings in a National Register district.



4. Full or inappropriate partial demolition of historic buildings reduces the economic value of the city. Buildings within historic districts generally have higher and more stable property values.

PlaceEconomics found that St. Augustine's historic assets generate \$2.9B value in the city related to property values and the heritage tourism economy. In St. Augustine, these historic buildings comprise only 7% of the city's land mass but represent 43% of property values.



5. Partial demolition may be necessary in certain cases. When demolition is part of a larger rehabilitation plan, it can improve the compatibility of the historic building and associated additions or alterations. If design review is included in the partial demolition review process, HARB and the historic preservation staff can require compatible design and justify approving the partial demolition more easily.
6. If buildings are altered in an incompatible way, the property owner could cause the building to lose eligibility for preservation incentives as an individual building or for a district. Preservation incentives for private property owners can include federal historic tax credits for income-producing properties (even residential rental properties), local property tax exemptions for qualified historic rehabilitation and flood mitigation projects, and grants for owners that are non-profits or otherwise eligible through local programs that exist now (like the Lincolnville CRA) or future programs that may be developed for historic properties within the city.

Do You Own a Property in the City of St. Augustine?

Things to Help You Be in the Know!

Our city has quite the history!

Founded in 1565, St. Augustine is the nation's oldest, continually occupied city. There is no shortage of history and cultural assets in St. Augustine, including our Town Plan National Historic Landmark district, numerous properties designated individually on the National Register of Historic Places, as National Historic Landmarks, as Local Historical Landmarks, as contributing to one of the 7 National Register Historic Districts (St. Augustine, Lincolnville, Model Land Company, Abbott Tract, North City, Nelmar Terrace, Fullerwood Park), or within the 5 local Historic Preservation Zoning Districts (HP-1 to HP-5). We have also an abundance of archaeological resources and three Entry Corridors (King Street, San Marco Avenue, and Anastasia Boulevard) extending from our city's core!

Watch for updates to our Abbott Tract, Lincolnville, and Model Land Company National Register Districts in the coming year!

How do you know if your building is considered historic? While there are different definitions for the word historic and there are many older buildings in the city, a building is considered historic if the structure is individually listed or contributing to a district on the National Register of Historic Places, is designated as a Local Historic Landmark, and generally if it is eligible for historic designation.

St. Augustine values historic preservation

A Historic Preservation Master Plan was adopted in 2018 and the Historic Preservation Element Goals, Objectives & Policies in 2020 for the City's 2040 Comprehensive Plan. Read more about historic preservation in the city at www.citystaug.com/192/Historic-Preservation.

If you are planning any project to a building or property within the city

Projects on the exterior or interior of all buildings or properties, regardless of the location or designation, still require a building and possibly other permits and must meet all city standards prior to issuance and before work begins.

Full demolitions proposed for any building 50 years or older or in HP-1 to HP-5 require approval from our Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB), involving an application and hearing at a public meeting first.

Partial demolitions proposed for buildings that are designated or contributing may in some cases be able to be reviewed by Historic Preservation Staff if the proposed partial demolition ordinance is approved by the City Commission (see attached).

Thinking about doing any work that involves digging? Check if your property is within an Archaeological Zone. Soil disturbance more than 3" deep and over 100 square feet in size may require Archaeological Review before work begins.

Other guidance and requirements

The Architectural Guidelines for Historic Preservation (AGHP) provides guidance for all older buildings within our city, as well as requirements to exterior changes of buildings and properties located within Historic Preservation Zoning Districts (HP-1 to HP-5). *Look for an update to our AGHP to be reviewed by the Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB), the Planning and Zoning Board (PZB), and the City Commission in the next few months before it is adopted.*

Curious if those older windows are worth saving or can be fixed, instead of replaced? Most historic wood windows were built from virgin lumber and have lasted many years (some over 100!), can be fixed, and improved for efficiency and soundproofing. Watch an on-demand video from our Window Workshop: www.citystaug.com/1057/PreservationResources.

Incentives to Rehabilitate Your Building

Find out more about the City's Ad Valorem Tax Exemption and the Federal Preservation Tax Credit programs available for designated or contributing buildings by contacting the Historic Preservation Division or visit www.citystaug.com/196/Incentives.

Want to protect your building against flooding or water related damage?

Check out great resources available online at www.citystaug.com/905/Flooding-and-Historic-Properties (or by entering "resilient heritage" in the www.citystaug.com search box) including: *Flood Mitigation Design Guidance for Historical Resources*, the accompanying brochure *Flood Guidance for Historic Properties*, and StoryMap.

Also, to learn much more about the City's efforts and what you can do for your property, go to www.citystaug.com/863/Resiliency.