# OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORIC EVALUATION PROCESS

The Los Altos historic evaluation process has been developed using the criteria outlined in the State and National evaluation practices and is intended to coordinate the areas of integrity, significance, and association between the California Register and the City of Los Altos, in order to avoid conflicting information or interpretations. The evaluation process consists of three steps which are summarized below.

The first step is to determine whether or not the property is over fifty years of age – buildings must, in most cases, be fifty years old or older to be considered historic resources. Certain properties that were constructed less than fifty years ago may be important as examples of mid-century modernist design or suburban development patterns. These properties may be eligible as historic resources if they are demonstrated to meet certain specialized criteria, sometimes referred to as demonstrating exceptional significance.

The next step is to determine whether the property retains enough original materials and features to convey its value as a historic resource. For example, a residence potentially important as a notable example of the Tudor Revival Style of architecture in Los Altos should retain the majority of its original cladding materials, as well as decorative details such as leaded glass windows, half-timbering and/or overhanging gables. These elements would be considered to be the structure's Character Defining Features. This integrity assessment is commonly done in the field, usually as part of a survey or individual site visit. Most aspects of physical integrity can be easily assessed by a preservation professional in the field without knowing the full historic background on a property beforehand.

If a resource meets the age requirement (or demonstrates the potential for exceptional significance) and retains physical integrity, the next step is to determine if the resource has historic significance (i.e. has it been relocated, is it associated with a person or event of importance, is it associated with an event, person/people, architecture/design, and/or yields important information based on national, state or local definition). Significance is based on a property's relationship or association with an important historic context. This context could be an association with a person, event or pattern of events significant in local, state or national history or themes within these associative values. It could be an association with a notable architect or an important architectural style or method of construction. A building, structure or object could also be important for its ability to provide information about prehistory. If a property is found to have a clear association with an important historic context, then it is determined to have significance as a historic resource on a national, state or local level.

# INTRODUCTION

Los Altos is a community that celebrates its history. This rich past has been incorporated into the fabric of the City and provides a link to the community's heritage and history. The remaining sites and structures of architectural and/or historic significance enhance the community's unique character and contribute to a sense of place.

As outlined in the Los Altos General Plan, it is a goal of the City to preserve and enhance historic and cultural structures and resources within the community. To support that goal, the General Plan identified specific historic preservation policies:

- Ensure that the integrity of historic structures and the parcels on which they are located are preserved through the implementation of applicable design, building and fire codes.
- The City shall regard demolition of landmark and historic resources listed in the Historic Resources Inventory as a last resort. Demolition would be permitted only after the City determines that the resource has lost its physical integrity, retains no reasonable economic use, that demolition is necessary to protect health, safety and welfare, or that demolition is necessary to proceed with a new project where the benefits of the new project outweigh the loss of the historic resource.
- Work with property owners to preserve historic resources within the community.

These goals and policies are implemented through the City's Historical Preservation Ordinance. The primary purpose of the Ordinance is to ensure the protection of irreplaceable historic resources, enhance visual character through architectural compatibility, and encourage appreciation and recognition of the City's past.

In order to properly identify historic resources within the City of Los Altos, the City Council authorized the Historical Commission to conduct a historic property survey in the spring of 1990. In 1997, the Historical Commission completed a Historic Resources Inventory (HRI). The HRI was developed to catalogue all of the historic resources that were subject to the Historic Preservation Ordinance and rank each resource based on their significance. To rank the historic resources, a numerical evaluation system derived from *The Evaluation of Historic Buildings* by Harold Kalman (1979) was used. The "Kalman Scale" used a numeric scale to rate the resources in five categories: Architecture, History, Environment, Age and Integrity.

Over the years, the methods and techniques for evaluating historic resources have evolved. As outlined in the criteria for the National Historic Register and the California Historic Register, current historic resource evaluation is based on using four areas of *eligibility criteria*: events, persons, design and the ability to yield important information, with age and integrity as separate entities. The Kalman Scale generally covers the same criteria, but is not totally consistent with the National Register and California Register evaluation methods in that it uses a ranking system and is quantitative rather than qualitative. In order to maintain the City's HRI and evaluate historic resources in a way that is consistent with current historic preservation practices, a new historic rating methodology has been developed for the City.

# DEFINITIONS

In order to better understand the terminology used within this document, the following is a glossary of terms as they relate to historic preservation in the City of Los Altos.

**Alteration.** Any act or process that changes any portion of the exterior architectural appearance of a structure or object, including, but not limited to, the erection, construction, reconstruction, removal of exterior architectural features or details, or the addition of new structures, but does not include painting, ordinary maintenance and landscaping.

**California Historical Building Code (CHBC).** The California Historical Building Code is Part 8 of Title 24 (State Building Standards Code) and applies to all qualified historic structures, districts and sites, designated under federal, state and local authority. It provides alternative building regulations for the rehabilitation, preservation, restoration or relocation of structures designated as qualified historic buildings.

**California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS).** California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) is a statewide system for managing information on the full range of historic resources identified in California. Specifically, those resources evaluated in historic resource surveys conducted in accordance with criteria established by the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP), formally determined eligible for, or listed in the National Register of Historic Places or designated as California Registered Historical Landmarks or California Points of Historical Interest. CHRIS is a cooperative partnership between the citizens of California, historic preservation professionals, twelve Information Centers, the CHRIS Hub and various agencies.

**California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP).** The governmental agency primarily responsible for the statewide administration of the historic preservation program in California.

**California Register of Historical Resources.** The California Register of Historical Resources is a comprehensive listing of California's historic resources, including those of local, state and national significance. The "significance" criteria for the California Register are similar to those used by National Register of Historic Places, which includes resources formally determined eligible for, or listed in, the National Register of Historic Places.

**Certified Local Government (CLG).** The CLG program is a model and cost-effective local, state and federal partnership that promotes historic preservation at the grassroots level. Through an agreement between the City and the California OHP, the City carries out some of the functions of the National Historic Preservation Act. The OHP also provides the City with technical assistance and the ability to apply for grants to aid in the preservation of local historic resources.

**Character Defining Features.** The defining elements, such as prominent architectural features, materials, craftsmanship or other elements, that, individually or in combination, identify a historic property, building or landscape.

**Commission Staff.** The staff liaison assigned to the Historical Commission.

**Contributing Resource.** A public or private property that is not a Historic Resource individually, but contributes to the historic character of a Historic District.

**DPR 523.** The California Department of Parks and Recreation Historic Resource Inventory Forms used for historic evaluations. The DPR 523A form provides descriptive information about a resource. The DPR 523B form provides an evaluation of the resources and includes a determination as to whether the resource is eligible for the National or State Register of Historic Places or listing on the Los Altos Historic Resources Inventory. The 523D form is used to identify districts or clusters of buildings that consist of a concentration or continuity of associated historic resources. The District Record is used for documenting the linkages among individual resources within the framework of an historic context.

**Exterior Architectural Feature.** The architectural elements embodying style, design, general arrangement and components of all the outer surfaces of an improvement, including but not limited to, the kind, size, shape and texture of building materials, and the type and style of windows, doors, lights, signs and other fixtures appurtenant to such improvement.

**Historic District.** A distinct section of the City, specifically defined in terms of geographical boundaries that has cultural, historic, architectural and/or archaeological significance and is designated as a historic district by the City Council.

**Historic Landmark.** A building, improvement, structure, natural feature, site or area of land, under single or common ownership that has significant historical, architectural, cultural, and/or aesthetic interest or value, and is designated as a historic landmark by the City Council.

**Historic Resource.** A property or structure that has been determined to be over 50 years old, retains its physical integrity, has historical, architectural, cultural, and/or aesthetic value, and is listed on the Historic Resources Inventory.

**Historic Resources Inventory (HRI).** The City's official inventory of the historic resources, as adopted and amended from time to time by resolution of the Historical Commission and/or the City Council. A property or structure must be designated as a Historic Landmark, a Historic Resource or located within a Historic District in order to be listed in the HRI.

**Historical Commission.** A seven-member advisory commission appointed by the City Council that is tasked with maintaining the Historic Resources Inventory, making recommendations on historic landmarks and historic districts, working with property owners on preservation, maintenance and other development activities related to historic resources, and other activities as identified in the Municipal Code.

**Improvement.** Any building, structure, parking facility, wall, work of art or other appurtenance or addition thereto constituting a physical betterment of real property or any part of such betterment.

**Integrity.** Integrity is the authenticity of the characteristics, also referred to as Character Defining Features, from which resources derive their significance. Integrity is the composite of seven qualities: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. When properties

retain integrity, they are able to convey their association with events, people, and designs from the past.

**Kalman Scale.** A quantitative rating system that was derived from *The Evaluation of Historic Buildings* by Harold Kalman (1979) for evaluation of potential historic resources at the local level in five categories: Architecture, History, Environment, Age and Integrity. This rating system was used by the City through 2010 to identify and evaluate historic resources.

**National Register of Historic Places.** The official inventory of districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects significant in American history, architectural, archeology and culture, maintained by the Secretary of Interior under the authority of the Historic Sites Act of 1935 and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

**Mills Act.** The Mills Act is the single most important economic incentive program in California for the restoration and preservation of qualified historic structures. Enacted in 1972, the Mills Act grants participating local governments the authority to enter into contracts with owners of qualified historic properties to reduce the property tax assessment in exchange for the restoration and maintenance of the historic resource.

**Preservation.** The act of identification, study, protection, reconstruction, restoration, rehabilitation or enhancement of historic and/or cultural resources.

**Reconstruction.** The act or process of reproducing by new construction, the exact form and detail of a vanished building, structure or any part thereof, as it appeared at a specific period of time.

**Rehabilitation.** The act or process of returning a property to a state of utility through repair or alteration that makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions or features of the property which are significant to its historical, architectural and cultural value.

**Restoration.** The act or process of accurately recovering the form and details of a property and its setting as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of later work or by the replacement of missing earlier work.

**Secretary of Interior's Standards.** The Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* (*Standards*), with accompanying interpretive guidelines, are utilized by federal agencies in the preservation of historic properties that are listed or determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places; by State Historic Preservation Offices in evaluation projects proposed for historic properties in accordance with federal regulations; and by local governments, organizations and individuals in making decisions about the identification, evaluation, registration and treatment of historic properties. The list of ten Rehabilitation Standards, published as the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, is aimed at retaining and preserving those features and materials that are important in defining the historic character of a resource. Technical advice about archaeological and historic preservation activities and methods is included in the *Standards* along with guidelines for archaeology and historic preservation.

# HISTORIC EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Historic resources can be defined as buildings, sites, structures or objects which demonstrate historical, architectural, archaeological or cultural importance. Various regulations - at local, state and federal levels - seek to protect and encourage the revitalization of historic and cultural resources. The survey and evaluation process considers the historical significance and physical integrity of a property to determine whether it can be considered a historic resource, and thus subject to certain regulations and financial incentives.

## The National Historic Preservation Act

The National Historic Preservation Act, 16 U.S.C. §§ 470a to 470w-6, is the primary federal law governing the preservation of cultural and historic resources in the United States. The law establishes a national preservation program and a system of procedural protections that encourage the identification and protection of cultural and historic resources of national, state, tribal and local significance. Key elements of the act include:

- Establishment of a comprehensive program for identifying historic and cultural resources for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).
- Creation of a federal-state/tribal-local partnership for implementing programs established by the act.
- Requirement that federal agencies take into consideration actions that could adversely affect historic properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, commonly known as the Section 106 Review Process.
- Establishment of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation which oversees federal agency responsibilities governing the Section 106 Review Process. [1]

## The National Register Criteria

The National Register is the nation's master inventory of known historic resources. It is administered by the National Park Service (NPS) in conjunction with the State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs). The National Register includes listings of buildings, structures, sites, objects and districts that possess historic, architectural, engineering, archaeological or cultural significance at the national, state or local level. The National Register criteria and associated definitions are outlined in National Register Bulletin Number 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation. The following is a summary of Bulletin 15:

Generally, resources (structures, sites, buildings, districts and objects) over 50 years of age can be listed in the National Register provided that they meet the evaluative criteria described below.

[1] http://www.preservationnation.org/resources/legal-resources/understanding-preservation-law/federal-law/nhpa.html (Accessed 9.1.2009).

Resources can be listed individually in the National Register or as contributors to a historic district.[2] The National Register criteria are as follows:

A. Resources that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history;

B. Resources that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;

C. Resources that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or

D. Resources that have yielded or may likely yield information important in prehistory or history.

Certain resources are not usually considered for listing in the National Register. These properties can be eligible for listing, however, if they meet special requirements, called Criteria Considerations (A-G), in addition to meeting the regular requirements (that is, being eligible under one or more of the four significance criteria and possessing historic integrity). Generally, such properties will qualify for the National Register if they fall within the following seven criteria considerations:

A. A religious property deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance;

B. A building or structure removed from its original location, but which is significant primarily for architectural value, or which is the surviving structure most importantly associated with a historic person or event;

C. A birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance if there is no appropriate site or building directly associated with his or her productive life;

D. A cemetery which derives its primary significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events;

E. A reconstructed building when accurately executed in a suitable environment and presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan, and when no other building or structure with the same association has survived;

F. A property primarily commemorative in intent if design, age, tradition or symbolic value has invested it with its own exceptional significance; or

G. A property achieving significance within the past 50 years if it is of exceptional importance.

[2] A "contributor" is a building, site, structure or object that adds to the historic associations or historic architectural qualities for which a property is significant. The contributor was present during the period of significance, relates to the documented significance of the property, and possesses historic integrity or provides important information about a period; or the contributor independently meets National Register criteria. A "non-contributor" does not add to the historic associations or historic architectural qualities as it was not present during the period of significance; it has experienced alterations, disturbances, additions or other changes; or it does not independently meet the National Register criteria.

**The California Environmental Quality Act**

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEAQ) provides the legal framework by which historic resources are identified and given consideration during the planning process. The law was adopted in 1970 and incorporated in the Public Resources Code §§21000-21177. CEQA's basic functions are to:

- Inform governmental decision makers and the public about the potential significant environmental effects of proposed activities;
- Identify ways to reduce or avoid adverse impacts;
- Offer alternatives or mitigation measures when feasible; and
- Disclose to the public why a project was approved if significant environmental effects are involved.

Any type of action that has the potential to impact a historic resource is subject to CEQA review and analysis. This type analysis required by CEQA usually takes the form of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR), Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), Negative Declaration (ND) or Environmental Assessment (EA). The analysis will evaluate the potential impact(s) and, if necessary, look at ways to mitigate any negative impacts to the historic resource. If a significant impact to a historic resource is unavoidable, then a Statement of Overriding Considerations is required before the project is allowed to proceed.

**The California Register Criteria**

The California Register of Historical Resources is the official list of properties, structures, districts and objects significant at the local, state or national level. California Register properties must have significance under one of the four following criteria and must retain enough of their historic character or appearance to be recognizable as historic resources and convey the reasons for their significance (i.e., retain integrity). The California Register utilizes the same seven aspects of integrity as the National Register. Properties that are eligible for the National Register are automatically eligible for the California Register. Properties that do not meet the threshold for the National Register may still meet the California Register criteria.

1. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to broad patterns of local or regional history, or cultural heritage of California or the United States;
2. Associated with the lives of persons important to the local, California or national history;
3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a design-type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic value; or
4. Yields important information about prehistory or history of the local area, California or the nation.

In addition to meeting one or more of the above criteria, the California Register requires that sufficient time must have passed to allow a "scholarly perspective on the events or individuals

associated with the resource." Fifty years is used as a general estimate of the time needed to understand the historical importance of a resource.[3] The California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) recommends documenting, and taking into consideration in the planning process, any cultural resource that is 45 years or older.[4]

The application of National Register and California Register criteria for evaluation is very much the same, with *national* significance as the threshold for National Register eligible properties and *statewide* significance as the threshold for California Register being the only substantial difference. These are the standard criteria used by preservation professionals who qualify under the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards.

**Historical Resource Status Codes**

When a Historic Property Evaluation is prepared which consists of the applicable California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) forms (Primary Record, Building, Structure or Object, District form, etc.), an appropriate status code is selected and entered in the *NR Status Code* section of the form. The code that is selected is the one that best defines the relationship of the resource to the National Register and/or California Register. The status code also helps define a resource's importance at the local (Los Altos) level. The California Historical Resource Status Codes are divided into seven major categories as follows:

Status Code 1: Properties listed in the National Register (NR) or the California Register (CR). Generally applied to properties already on one of the registers, but being re-evaluated for integrity and/or being updated due to age of the original evaluation.

Status Code 2: Properties determined eligible for listing in the National Register (NR) or the California Register (CR). Generally applied to properties when extensive research has been conducted and substantiated data concluded eligibility.

Status Code 3: Appears eligible for listing in the National Register (NR) or the California Register (CR) through survey evaluation. Generally applied to properties when limited research has been conducted and concluded potential eligibility.

Status Code 4: Appears eligible for listing in the National Register (NR) or the California Register (CR) through other evaluation. Generally applied to State-owned properties.

Status Code 5: Properties recognized as historically significant by Local Government. Generally applied to properties with significance at the local level.

Status Code 6: Not eligible for listing or designation as specified. Generally applied to properties for various reasons noted.

Status Code 7: Not evaluated for National Register or California Register or needs reevaluation. Generally applied to properties recorded but not evaluated for a variety of reasons.

[3] CCR 14(11.5) §4852 (d)(2).
[4] California Office of Historic Preservation, 1995, p.2. Instructions for Recording Historical Resources. Office of Historic Preservation, Sacramento.

It is important to note that each of these categories have sub-sets that further define and articulate the status "value." For the City of Los Altos, the majority of historic resources listed on the HRI will be listed under Status Code 5. The subcategories of Status Code 5 are as follows:

5D1: Contributor to a district that is listed or designated locally.

5D2: Contributor to a district that is eligible for local listing or designation.

5D3: Appears to be a contributor to a district that appears eligible for local listing or designation through survey evaluation.

5S1: Individual property that is listed or designated locally.

5S2: Individual property that is eligible for local listing or designation.

5S3: Appears to be individually eligible for local listing or designation through survey evaluation.

5B: Locally significant both individually (listed, eligible or appears eligible) and as a contributor to a district that is locally listed, designated, determined eligible or appears eligible through survey evaluation.

The application of the most appropriate status code therefore communicates the *value* of the resource and is extremely useful in any preservation planning process. A complete listing of all of the California Historical Resource Status Codes is available from the Planning Division at City Hall.

# EVALUATING HISTORIC RESOURCES IN LOS ALTOS

When evaluating or re-evaluating a structure or property in Los Altos that has the potential to be a historic resource, the following process should be followed:

**Step 1: Age**

In order to understand the historic importance of a resource, sufficient time must have passed to obtain a scholarly perspective on the events or individuals associated with the resource. A resource less than fifty years old may be considered for listing in the California Register if it can be demonstrated that sufficient time has passed to understand its historical importance or that it is exceptionally significant.

To be potentially eligible for listing on the National or California Register, a structure is usually more than 50 years old, must retain its physical integrity and must have historic significance. Similarly, in order to be eligible for listing on the Los Altos Historic Resources Inventory, a structure must first be more than 50 years of age.

**Step 2: Determination of Integrity**

If a structure is more than 50 years old, then the next step in assessing its historic value is to determine if it has physical integrity. Specifically, the physical integrity of Character Defining Features needs to be associated with the historic attributes of the structure or property. When looking at historic integrity, it needs to meet one or more of the applicable (national state or local) criteria. In order to be considered historic, a structure or property must retain sufficient historic integrity in most of the "seven aspects" of integrity:

- Location: The place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred.
- Design: The combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure and style of a property.
- Setting: The physical environment of a historic property.
- Materials: The physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property.
- Workmanship: The physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory.
- Feeling: A property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.
- Association: The direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.

Of the seven aspects listed above, the following five aspects should be taken into consideration when evaluating a property or structure in the field for physical integrity: Design, Setting,

Workmanship, Materials and Feeling. These five aspects can be assessed on site to determine a property's physical integrity without having any information regarding the property's associative significance (association with significant events/people) or historical development (including relocation). This type of information is usually not known when completing a reconnaissance survey in the field. As such, an assessment of a property's *Association* and *Location* are further developed as part of Step 3 in the evaluation process.

Based on the five applicable aspects of integrity for a reconnaissance survey (design, setting, materials, workmanship and feeling), the "In-Field Physical Attributes" evaluation needs to be able to determine if a property retains or does not retain enough physical integrity to convey its historic association.

> Retains Physical Integrity: Properties that exhibit integrity of their Character Defining Features with regard to design, materials, feeling, workmanship and setting. Such properties retain approximately 50% or more of the building's original materials, form and character defining features, including one or more of the following: exterior siding and window materials, architectural detailing and stylistic features. Their general setting and physical context is intact. These properties may have alterations or additions, but the general form, massing and original stylistic features of the property – the basic elements that allow it to communicate its historic character – remain intact.
>
> Does Not Retain Physical Integrity: Properties that do not retain integrity of design, materials, feeling, workmanship and setting are properties with two or more of the following: removal and replacement of original windows with modern sash (vinyl or aluminum, usually), complete siding replacement, significant alterations to the setting/physical context and/or notably incompatible or out of scale additions. This includes alterations or additions to a property that present a false sense of history. Properties that do not retain physical integrity are not considered to warrant further evaluation as a historic resource. They may still be considered in planning in the context of an entire neighborhood or collection of properties as a contributor to a "sense of place."

If a property or structure is found to retain the physical integrity of its Character Defining Features, then a determination of association and location are made in the Significance assessment (Step 3). If found to have a majority of the seven aspects of integrity, it is eligible to be considered for listing in the Los Altos Historic Resources Inventory.

**Step 3: Significance**

This step of the process includes the establishment of the historic context for the property that is being evaluated. A Historic Context enables the assessment of a property's historical significance by creating a framework against which to objectively qualify its relationship to larger themes and events in the history of the City of Los Altos, the greater Peninsula region and the State of California. A historical context for the City of Los Altos and a history of the influence of transportation on the City's growth is included in Section II.

The process of analyzing a historic resource's association is an invaluable tool intended to identify, protect and maintain the historic status of a property or district, and its contribution to the built environment and community character. The historic resource evaluation process should include:

- Evaluation of the property's historic significance utilizing national, state and local criteria and status codes;
- Identification of Character Defining Features;
- Evaluation of the Physical Integrity (Step 2); and
- Establishment of the period of significance based on substantiated documentation.

A professional who meets the *Secretary of the Interior's* professional qualification standards for history or architectural history (Federal Code 36 CFR Part 61) should be used to conduct the analysis.

The evaluation of a subject property should use the historic context as a tool for understanding where the property's historic significance lies within the larger municipal historical timeline and to establish the property's period of significance. The establishment of a historic context involves both broad and property specific research to determine whether the property has a demonstrable association. This research investigates broad patterns of history (i.e., suburban development in Los Altos or the growth and decline of the apricot industry), as well as the specific owners/occupants, architects, builders or events that may be associated with a particular property. In addition, physical alterations over time are assessed through survey field notes and building permit history documents, if available.

Once the background research has been completed and the integrity aspects of location and association can be confirmed (because one would then know whether a property has been moved from its original location and whether or not is continues to be associated with the particular family or use for which it may be significant), the final evaluation of historical significance is outlined using four basic criteria. These criteria, discussed in the Historic Evaluation Framework section above, address four potential areas of significance. These criteria are used as a professional standard for determining significance at state, national and local levels, and are summarized again as follows:

- Event: Associated with a single significant event or a pattern of events that have made a significant contribution to broad patterns of local or regional history, or cultural heritage of California or the United States;
- Person/People: Associated with the lives of persons important to the local, California or national history;
- Architecture/Design: Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a design-type, period, region or method of construction, or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic value; or
- Archaeology: Yields important information about prehistory or history of the local area, California or the nation.

If a property is found to retain physical integrity and to be clearly associated with one of the above criteria, it is then able to communicate its historic character and can be considered a Historic Resource. The historical association of a structure or property will determine the level of importance within the context of Los Altos history and, depending on that level of importance, may make it eligible to be designated as a landmark. For example, if a property is the only or last remaining property associated with a particular context in Los Altos, it may be considered a historic landmark. A property could also be a landmark if it is an outstanding example of design or construction or if an event of citywide, statewide or national importance occurred there.

**Historic Designation**

The Los Altos Historic Resources Inventory (HRI) is the official list of historic resources, designated historic landmarks and designated historic districts that are significant at the local level (contribute to the history of Los Altos). If a property is over 50 years old, retains its integrity and has association with one or more of the criteria of significance, then it is eligible for designation as a Historic Resource. A property that has completed the historic evaluation process can be nominated for addition to the HRI as a Historic Resource by the subject property owner, the City Council, the Planning Commission, the Historical Commission or the Community Development Director.

The Los Altos Historical Commission, which maintains the HRI as part of its charter, will hold a public hearing to consider a property or structure that is nominated for addition to the HRI. Following a presentation of information supporting the nomination, the Historical Commission will take action on whether or not to designate the property or structure as a Historic Resource and list it on the HRI. Decisions made by the Historical Commission are appealable to the City Council. The Historic Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 12.44 in the Los Altos Municipal Code) outlines the complete process for Historic Resource designation.

All properties on the HRI are subject to the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance. Properties on the HRI are potentially eligible for designation as Historic Landmarks and historic preservation economic incentives, such as the Mills Act. For more information about the City's historic preservation program, incentives and resources available for historic property owners or the Historical Commission, contact the Community Development Department at City Hall.