



City of Los Altos

Planning Division

(650) 947-2750

Planning@losaltosca.gov

REVIEW PROCESS AND SUBMITAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ALTERATIONS TO HISTORIC PROPERTIES

OVERVIEW

The City of 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.

The Historical Commission is a seven-member advisory body that is made up of local volunteers appointed by the Los Altos City Council. The Commission's primary tasks are to maintain the City's Historic Resources Inventory (HRI), review projects related to Historic Resources, Historic Landmarks and Historic Districts, and to work with property owners and citizens on preservation, maintenance, and other development activities related to the City's historic resources.

The HRI is 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 or a Historic Resource to be listed in the HRI. The HRI has been developed in accordance with State and Federal guidelines for evaluating historic resources and includes Primary Records (aka historic property evaluations) for designed Historic Landmarks, Historic Resources and Heritage Trees. The HRI and the Primary Records are available by request for review at City Hall.

All exterior changes to a property designated as a historic landmark or historic resource requires review and approval by the Historical Commission. The intent of the review process is to ensure that proposed changes will not adversely affect or destroy their historic character or architectural integrity and that all changes are consistent with the spirit and purpose of the Historic Preservation Ordinance (Los Altos Municipal Code Ch.12.44).

TYPES OF REVIEW

- **Administrative:** For residential properties that are historic landmarks or historic resources, improvements such as ordinary maintenance, painting, repair of any exterior features, minor accessory structures such as trellises or barbecues, swimming pools, fences, and landscaping that do not adversely affect the physical integrity or the historic significance of the resource may be exempt from historical commission review with approval from the Community Development Director. Planning staff shall be consulted to confirm if an improvement may be exempt from historical commission review, or if the improvement requires further review.

- **Advisory Review Permit:** For historic resources listed on the historic resources inventory, the Historical Commission shall complete a review and provide recommendations for an advisory review (Section 12.44.140) if a project alters, demolishes, removes, relocates or otherwise changes, in any manner, any exterior architectural feature or natural feature that contributes to the integrity or the historic significance of a historic resource.
- **Historical Alteration Permit:** For historic landmark properties, a historical alteration permit (Section 12.44.150) shall be reviewed by the Historical Commission for project's that alter, demolish, remove, relocate or change any exterior architectural features of the designated landmark structure(s), or remove or relocate any improvements, structures or natural features that contribute to the integrity or the historic significance of the historic landmark.

APPLICATION, FEE & REQUIRED MATERIALS

1. [General Application](#)

2. **Application Fee:** No application fee is required for Historical Commission review

3. **Technical Reports**

- **Advisory Review Permit:** The applicant shall submit a digital (.pdf) copy of a Secretary of the Interiors Standards for Rehabilitation report completed by a historic professional who meets the National Parks Service Qualification Standards, and the report shall be consistent with Section 12.44.130 (Advisory Review) of the Los Altos Municipal Code.
- **Historical Alteration Permit:** The applicant shall submit a digital (.pdf) copy of a report completed by a historic professional who meets the National Parks Service Qualification Standards, and the report shall be consistent with Section 12.44.140 (Historic Alteration Permit) of the Los Altos Municipal Code. The report shall also show compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

4. **Architectural Design Plans**

- One (1) digital set (.pdf)
NOTE: All plan sheets prepared by a licensed professional (architect, landscape architect, engineer, land surveyor) shall include that professional's stamp on the header.

5. **Materials Board**

Provide a digital (.pdf) materials board with color photos on an 8.5" x 11" sheet showing all proposed exterior materials: roofing material(s), siding, windows and doors, applied materials (e.g. stone, brick), trim, etc., and identify manufacturer and product specifications

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN PLANS

The architectural design plans shall be consistent with the [Single-Family Residential Design Review Submittal Requirements](#) handout.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- To view the City's Historical Preservation Ordinance, visit the City of Los Altos website at www.losaltosca.gov and look for the "[Municipal Code](#)" icon. The Historical Preservation Ordinance is located in "Title 12, Building and Construction," Chapter 12.44.

- To learn additional information about the Historical Commission, visit the City of Los Altos website at www.losaltosca.gov. Under the “Government” header on the home page, click on “Commissions and Committees” to find the Historical Commission’s webpage.
- The Los Altos History Museum – www.losaltoshistory.org
- The Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/tax/rehabstandards.htm
- California State Parks, The Office of Historic Preservation – <http://ohp.parks.ca.gov>
- Historic Buildings of the Santa Clara Valley – www.geocities.com/SoHo/Veranda/4103
- The California Historical Society – www.calhist.org

The Los Altos Historical Commission looks forward to working with you to help maintain and preserve the historic integrity of your property while allowing you to make changes that continue the structure’s useful life and bring you enjoyment.