

What is a Waxahachie Historic Property?

A Waxahachie Historic Property is generally a fifty (50) year old structure characterized by its architectural design. It may be monumental or simple, residential or commercial. Historic properties provide links with the heritage of the community for present and future generations and illustrate diversity in lifestyle, present and past.

The Waxahachie Heritage Preservation Commission (WHPC) serves the public both as a steward for these properties and as a facilitator to those people fortunate enough to own these properties. It provides assistance to owners and tenants, helps them plan the alterations they are considering for their properties, and guides the owners through the application process necessary to implement those changes.

Is participation in this program mandatory if you own a historic property?

No, participation is strictly voluntary unless the property is in one of the Historic Overlay Districts. There are currently two—the Downtown Historic Overlay District and the Oldham Avenue National Register District Historic Overlay.

What are the benefits to me as a historic property owner? Are there any tax benefits?

Being a historic property owner participating in this program, you are ensured that your property will be protected from unmanaged change. The review process is based upon established guidelines, giving you greater security in the evolution of your structure.

Additionally, the City of Waxahachie offers tax incentives for residential and non-residential structures. To be eligible for the historical appraised tax value exemption and the historic reinvestment tax incentive, application must be made annually prior to the 15th day of March. To understand the procedures and requirements for receiving these tax exemptions/incentives, please see City Ordinance #2997, sections 24.57, 24.58, and 24.59.

If your property is commercial or income producing, you may be eligible for significant state and federal tax credits for rehabilitation work done on eligible historic properties. Contact the WHPC for more information on these programs.

As a historic property owner, can I still make changes to my property?

Yes, you may still make changes to your property. The purpose of the WHPC is to assist homeowners in shaping those changes to meet the requirements of the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* and to assist in following the WHPC's procedures. The WHPC provides for a process, which ensures that property changes are appropriate to the historical integrity of the structure. This special design review process examines the plans before the work is begun. Any exterior alterations, new construction, demolition, significant landscape changes, or moving of buildings is considered.

Will I be required to restore my property?

No, you will not be required to make changes to your property.

Is interior work reviewed?

No, interior alterations that do not affect the exterior appearance are not reviewed.

How can I find out if my project requires other permits?

The City Permit Office will be glad to answer your questions concerning additional required permits for your project. Contact them at 469-309-4020.

What can I use as guidelines for the changes I am planning?

One of the purposes of the WHPC is to assist and consult with you about the proposed changes for your property. Call us early in your planning stages with any questions or concerns you might have. We will provide you with design guidelines based upon a common sense approach for the enhancement of your historic structure. You can access the Downtown Waxahachie Design Guidelines on the city website www.waxahachie.com. Much of the information can be applied to residential structures as well as commercial.

The WHPC will also assist you in interpreting the guidelines for complex projects such as major additions and new construction. We will meet with you informally before you fill out your application prior to its review.

After I've taken the necessary steps, consulted the guidelines and WHPC, and I'm ready to have the project reviewed, what is the procedure?

Obtain an application form from the city website (www.waxahachie.com) or contact Anita Simpson, Heritage Preservation Officer, City Hall, 469-309-4111. Drawings and/or photographs depicting the proposed changes are encouraged for the review.

Many applications will fall into the minor work category and can be approved quickly. Major work (new construction, additions, demolition) requires a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) and is reviewed monthly at the regular meeting of the WHPC. Decisions are usually reached during the meeting in which the application is heard.

Can I call WHPC with my questions? Can they provide any technical help in maintaining my property?

Yes, the WHPC will be happy to help you. We can interpret code, suggest solutions to problems, explain your part in the review process, and assist you in filling out your application. We can also make on-site consultations concerning your project and provide technical assistance in solving problems common to older buildings. In addition, WHPC has a number of resources you may consult.