

## **Frequently Asked Questions Crown Hill Local Historic District**

**Purpose:** This document is intended to provide additional information to the public regarding frequently asked questions related to Local Historic Districts in general and the Crown Hill Local Historic District specifically. Please note that this document will be updated throughout the process and posted on the City's website.

**Question: What is a Local Historic District and what does it provide?**

**Answer:**

- A Local Historic District is a specific area recognized for its historical and architectural significance. It is intended to preserve architecturally and historically significant buildings, structures and places through a design review process that considers the element, features, as well as, overall setting of properties within a district.
- A Local Historic District provides for the thoughtful management of changes made to building exteriors and/or properties that are viewable from a public way (the street). This management occurs through a public design review process by which the local Historical Commission considers changes for approval prior to the issuance of any building permit.

**Question: Who proposed that a local historic district be created for Crown Hill?**

**Answer:**

- The Crown Hill Neighborhood Association petitioned City Council to create a Local Historic District. The City Council referred that petition to the Worcester Historical Commission for a recommendation. The Historical Commission held public meetings, researched the history of the area and prepared the preliminary study report that contains its recommendation to create a Crown Hill Local Historic District. The report is available for public comment. A formal public hearing will be held before the Worcester Historical Commission makes its final recommendation to City Council for adoption of the associated ordinance. The City Council will hold a public hearing on the matter as well before making its final decision.

**Question: If my house is included in the local historic district, does that mean I have to make it look more historic?**

**Answer:**

- No, you can maintain the current look of your house as long as you would like.
- Future proposed changes to exterior architectural features would be reviewed by the Worcester Historical Commission. Routine maintenance of your house is exempt from the Commission's review.

**Question: What kinds of changes to my property would be reviewed by the Worcester Historical Commission?**

**Answer:**

- Only exterior changes to architectural features visible from a public way are reviewed.
- Interior changes, landscaping, routine maintenance and changes to exterior features not visible from a public way are not reviewed by the Historical Commission.

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### **Question: Who are members of the Historical Commission?**

#### **Answer:**

- By City ordinance, the City Manager appoints residents from the City to serve on the Historical Commission. The Crown Hill proposal recommends that an additional member be added to the Commission who lives in the proposed Crown Hill Local Historic District.
- The Historical Commission includes members with diverse backgrounds, education and experience including architects, historians, lawyers and business people that all live in the City of Worcester.

### **Question: If my building is located in a local historic district and I want to make an exterior change, what would I have to do?**

#### **Answer:**

- Before obtaining a building permit, you would be required to file an application to the Historical Commission for review and approval. The Commission would hold a public hearing and review the changes you propose and issue a certificate of appropriateness. You would then present that certificate to the Dept. of Inspectional Services as part of your building permit application. If the change was not found appropriate, then the Commission would explain to you how the project could be modified to obtain its approval.

### **Question: Is the design review process difficult?**

#### **Answer:**

- No, but it does require that you plan out the specific details of your project ahead of time and present them to the Commission. Although an additional step is needed, the benefits of protecting the rich architectural / historical heritage found in Crown Hill outweigh the effort involved to undertake this additional step. In addition, the Commission's staff is available to provide assistance with the application and review process.

### **Question: If property owners already maintain the historic character of their properties, why do we need an historic district?**

#### **Answer:**

- By having a local historic district, you can be assured that a NEW property owner across the street from your house will also maintain the historic character of their property and contribute to preserving the architectural and historical significance of Crown Hill.

### **Question: Isn't my property already in a historic district?**

#### **Answer:**

- Yes, many of the properties in the Crown Hill area were already included in the National Register of Historic Places as a National Register District in 1976 and 1980. The National Register, however, is primarily an honorary designation. Therefore, Crown Hill is not fully protected. By adopting a local historic district, the historic character of Crown Hill will be much better protected.