

A PROPOSED DRAFT ORDINANCE CONCERNING HISTORIC PRESERVATION A SUMMARY

The Hartford Court of Common Council has requested the City Administration to draft an ordinance concerning historic preservation. The Chief Operating Officer convened a working group which researched the topic and has produced a first draft of such an ordinance. Input is being sought by the working group from anyone with an interest in this subject. Below is a summary of the contents of the draft for your review. Complete drafts can be obtained by calling Hartford 2000 at 509-3710 or on-line at Hartford2000.org. Comments may be forwarded to Htfd2000@aol.com, by calling 509-3710, or by faxing to 509-3711.

Purpose

There are, in Hartford, many structures, parks, neighborhoods and other areas that have had historic, architectural, and economic significance in the past and which can continue to contribute to a healthy and thriving future for the city. This ordinance is intended to help the City protect, preserve, and effectively utilize its architectural and historical heritage and character for aesthetic and economic recovery.

Policy

It shall be the policy of the City of Hartford and its agencies to give priority to the preservation of Hartford's historic architecture and character. The City shall consider historic and architectural significance and preservation when making decisions on property disposition, rehabilitation, mothballing, and demolition. Demolition shall be treated as an alternative of last resort, to be used only when other reasonable alternatives do not exist.

Protected Properties

Properties protected by this ordinance are those that are:

- Individually listed on the National Register of Historic Properties,
- Individually listed on the State Register of Historic Properties,
- Listed as a Historic District on the National Register or State Register, and
- Under consideration for designation as an individual listing or historic district on the State, National, or local registers.

Note: Properties that are within local historic districts are not covered by this ordinance. They are covered by a separate existing ordinance.

Activities Subject to the Ordinance

1. Demolition of a protected property,
2. Alteration, of a protected property, that is visible from a public street or way, and
3. Any construction in a historic district.

Process

Individuals seeking to undertake any of the activities listed above must obtain the approval of the Historic Properties Commission before applying for a building or demolition permit.

The Historic Properties Commission shall establish and implement standards and procedures for rehabilitation, new construction, and demolition for use in approving or denying requests. Standards for rehabilitation and construction shall be applied in a reasonable and flexible manner so as to prevent unnecessary loss of historical features and ensure compatible design in historic districts, while not stifling change and development or forcing modern re-creations of historic styles. Demolition of a protected property shall be approved only if there is no feasible and prudent alternative or if the property, through no fault of the owner, does not contribute to the historic or architectural character of the district and its demolition will not detract from the character of the district. This process does not apply to emergency demolitions for health and safety.