

HISTORIC DISTRICTS: NATIONAL REGISTER VS. LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICTS

On June 3, 2002, the City of Campbellsville established the Campbellsville Historic Design Ordinance that established a Historic District Commission and authorized the designation of landmarks and historic districts and the regulation of changes to landmarks and property in historic districts. On September 6, 2005, the City of Campbellsville amended the original ordinance and renamed it the Historic Preservation Ordinance to satisfy Certified Local Government requirements.

National Register District

In 1983, the Campbellsville Commercial Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register of Historic Places is a national listing of buildings, sites, districts, structures and objects of local, state and national significance. Listing in the National Register of Historic Places recognizes these historic resources for their importance but offers limited protection. Unless federally funded or licensed projects are involved, alterations, new construction, demolition or relocation are not prohibited or reviewed. Historic Rehabilitation tax credits are available for qualifying buildings in National Register districts.

Unlike the National Register of Historic Places, Local Historic Districts provide protection for the historic character of the site, building or district. The reason for creating a local historical district is to prevent unregulated and insensitive changes to the building's exterior appearance or the development on a vacant site. Property owners must apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Preservation Commission in order to receive approval on exterior alterations, new construction, demolition or relocation.

A Local Historic District is similar to a National Register District in many ways:

The two can be used independently or cooperatively to protect a community's resources. Like the National Register District, the Local Historic District identifies historically and architecturally significance buildings with recognition based on locally developed rather than national, criteria and policies. Local significance, attitudes and contemporary events affect what a community views as important. Because properties less than 50 years old are generally not eligible for National Register listing, the National Register many not serve as a good measure for identifying and evaluating more recent character defining development in a community. It is therefore, possible to include in a Local Historic District, religious institutions, moved buildings, and properties less than 50 years old, which are not ordinarily considered for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

The primary strength of a local historic district is that it is tailored to the specific community's needs and provides greater protection for local resources. The Historic Preservation Commission members have the means to assure that proposed changes are sympathetic to the character of the district through the design review process.

Local Historic Districts are:

1. Geographically definable areas with a significant concentration of buildings, structures, sites, spaces or objects unified by past events, physical development, design, setting, materials, workmanship, sense of cohesiveness or related historical and aesthetic associations; and
2. Overlay zoning districts designed to protect and preserve areas and structures that possess unique historic and architectural characteristics.

Local Historic Districts accomplish the following:

Protect investments of owners and residents of historic properties by encouraging the purchase and rehabilitation of properties because the investment is better protected over a longer period of time;

Encourage better quality design by using the Design Guidelines that have been specifically tailored to the district;

Help the environment by recycling old buildings;

Provide educational benefits since the existing buildings help explain the historical development of a place, and become a source of inspiration and technological advances;

Serve as a positive economic impact from tourism because a district that is cohesive and well promoted can be a community's most important attraction;

Enhance business recruitment potential since vibrant commercial cores attract new business and quality industry; and

Offer social and psychological benefits because people feel comfortable in human scale environments and desire to live and work in attractive surroundings.

Local historic districts require property owners to receive a Certificate of Appropriateness before undertaking exterior alterations, new construction, relocation or demolition.

Currently, Campbellsville does not have Local Historic District Design Guidelines, however, public meetings will be held in order to develop them as soon as funding becomes available. Once the Design Guidelines are established, members of the Campbellsville Historic Preservation Commission will review the proposed work and upon approval will issue a Certificate of Appropriateness. The purpose of the commission's review is to insure that the proposed work will help to maintain the historic character of the building, structure and/or site within the local historic district and to give property owners assistance and advice on appropriate methods and materials.