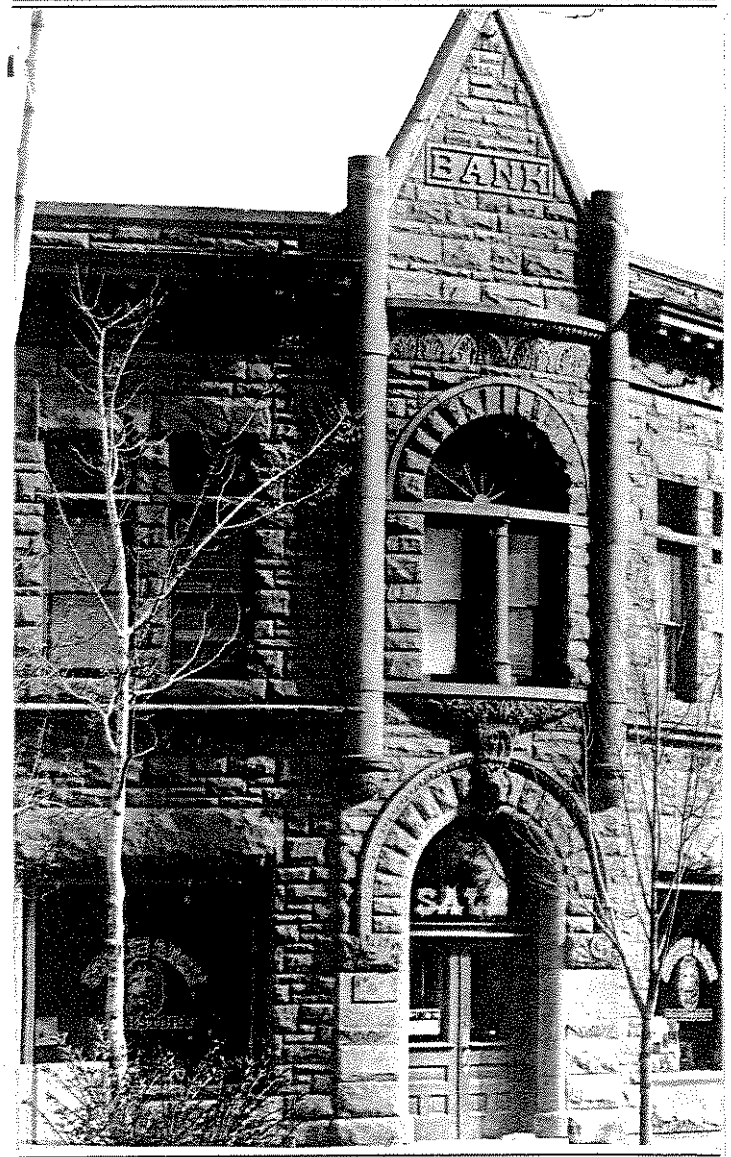
Historic Resources Preservation Program



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Approach

to Historic Preservation

On August 21, 1990, the City Council adopted Resolution #90-104, directing the Landmark Preservation Commission (LPC) and City staff to prepare for subsequent presentation to the City Council, a process and criteria for evaluating historic buildings in the City "to determine if the restoration and/or preservation of such buildings would serve a valid public purpose." The resolution also directed that the LPC and City staff present to City Council a procedural mechanism for effecting the preservation of these structures.

This necessitated a comprehensive appraisal of the Fort Collins program which has consisted primarily of regulation. During the preparation of the Historic Resources Preservation Program Plan, it became obvious that the scope of an effective preservation program is much broader than just regulations or public purchase of threatened structures. It must involve participation by the private sector through the coordination of a variety of techniques and incentives where the business community and individual property owners can be brought into a community-wide preservation effort. For these reasons, the Historic Resources Preservation Program (HRPP) will alter and broaden the approach of the existing program.

This Plan is intended to serve three basic functions. The first is to offer a process for identifying which resources should be eligible for protection and incentives. The second is to recommend what incentives and legal techniques would be appropriate in Fort Collins to accomplish historic preservation. Finally, the Plan documents and communicates the reasons for the choice of implementation strategies that have been recommended.

The programs and actions recommended in this Plan are intended to encourage preservation by those with a stake in the resource -- the owner or tenant. The City's role, we believe, should be to offer information, technical assistance, guidance and incentives for those who wish to engage in historic preservation. In other situations, the application of the City's regulatory powers to protect historic resources may be appropriate -- for example, the designation of historic landmarks and districts. There may be other times when public sentiment endorses the public purchase, preservation and restoration of an important and threatened landmark, like the Avery House.

Appendix E -- Neighborhood Outcomes, describes some of the intended outcomes or results of the program, including but not limited to successful renovations, landmark designations, and implementation of the various neighborhood plans. Preserving and restoring important buildings and sites helps to build bridges between the past, the present, and the future. Saving our threatened buildings demonstrates that the City of Fort Collins places value in and respect for its roots and history.

The Historic Resources Preservation Program has been subjected to public scrutiny through public meetings, personal interviews, meetings with Boards and Commissions, and holding requisite public hearings. The elements of the Historic Resources Preservation Program, in order of priority are:

· ***Survey, Identification, and Prioritization of Historic Resources.*** Preservationists are often asked whether every old building must be saved. The answer is clearly no. However, which ones should be saved and which ones should not depends on an evaluation of how important a part of the community heritage each resource is. Because Fort Collins has come to realize that some of their most important historic buildings are not the recognizable landmark buildings everyone knows, there has been well-founded concern that important buildings will be lost because there is no knowledge of their historic value.

The National Park Service has established a preservation planning framework for determining priorities as they apply to historic resources. As a Certified Local Government, Fort Collins has adopted this framework, as outlined below.

Preservation Planning Process

Stage I. Develop Historic Contexts

IA. Create Historic Overview
IB. Identify Property Types
IC. Identify Historic Resource Base
ID. Identify Threats
IE. Determine Treatment Methods
IF. Establish Goals and Objectives

Stage II. Integrate Historic Contexts' goals and priorities into annual work program and Historic Preservation Plan

Stage III. Integrate goals into broader planning process

IIIA. Develop Implementation
IIIB. Communicate goals to planning entities

The basic premise of the Preservation Planning Process is that cultural resources -- as indicators of the societies which produced them -- have resulted not from a random series of isolated events but have followed discernible geographical and chronological trends which can be defined thematically in a "historic context". Parallelling this is the concept that material cultural remains -- Indian campsites, emigrant trails, or Victorian homes--are the physical means to acknowledge and interpret the cultural tenets, values, skills, lifestyles, and intentions of their creators. Material cultural resources, as inestimably important indicators of man's occupation of the land, are therefore worth preserving for the understanding of Fort Collins' heritage.

Stage I - Develop historic context. A historic context is a body of information about historic properties organized by theme, place, and time. A single historic context describes one or more important aspects of the historic development of an area relating to history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. A context may be based on:

1. One or a series of events or activities.

2. Patterns of community development.

3. Associations with the life of a person or group of persons that influenced the destiny and character of a region or a stage of physical development.

4. Evolution of a building form and architectural style.

5. Use of a material and method of construction that helped shape the historic identity of a community.

6. Research topic or site type that will expand our knowledge and understanding of an area's development, past cultural affiliations, and human activities and interpretation where written records are lacking.

The geographic area selected may relate to a pattern of historic development or political division, or it may relate to the present day division of planning jurisdictions. This information may occur within obvious chronological stages of development or just a specific time period.

All of the historic contexts together make up the history or prehistory of the area broken down into a series of historically meaningful segments, each segment being a single historic context. Grouped together as a set, the historic contexts form a comprehensive summary of all aspects of the community's history and prehistory.

Fort Collins' historic contexts are:

a. Euro-American Exploration and the Fur Trade c.a. 1540-1858

b. The Colorado Gold Rush, Early Settlement, and the Creation of Fort Collins, 1844-1864

c. Establishing the City: Old Town and New Town, 1867-1877

d. The Railroad Era, Colorado Agricultural College, and the Growth of the City, 1877-1900

e. Sugar Beets, Streetcar Suburbs, and the City Beautiful, 1900-1919

f. Post World War I Urban Growth, 1919-1941

g. Post World War II Urban Growth, 1942-Present

The following standardized approach for developing historic contexts will be used in Fort Collins:

Create a Historic Overview

A historic overview consists of researching and writing the historical background of a historic site or project area by describing broad trends in settlement, cultural change, economic life, technology, architecture, etc. as appropriate.

Identify Initial Property Types

Fort Collins' tangible historic resources are linked to a historic context through the concept of a property type. A property type is a grouping of individual properties based on a set of shared physical or associative characteristics. Physical characteristics may relate to structural forms, architectural styles, building materials, or site type. Associative characteristics may relate to the nature of associative events or activities, to associations with a specific individual or group of individuals, or to the category of information about which a property may yield information. Initially a list of property types associated with the historic theme are developed to assist in identifying the historic resource base. For example:

AGRICULTURE:	FARMING PROPERTY TYPES
Sites:	Farm Sites Cultural Landscapes
Structures:	Farm Houses Barns Corrals Outbuildings Stock Watering Facilities/Ponds Silos Fences Granaries
Artifacts:	Barbed Wire Tools, Equipment Machinery Parts Habitation Materials: Toys, Crockery, Bottles, etc.

Identify the Historic Resource Base

A survey of properties within the defined geographic area and historic context is performed to identify the associated historic properties. These properties are evaluated to determine their historic significance for Local Landmark Designation and for the State or National Register of Historic Places. The Secretary of Interior's "Standards for Identification and Evaluation" state two requirements for properties listed in the National Register:

1. Properties must possess significance based on one of the following National Register criteria:

   A. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or

   B. Associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or

   C. Embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or

   D. Have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

2. Properties must possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

These properties may be significant on the local, state, or national level. Properties that have achieved significance within the last 50 years are not eligible for the National Register unless they are determined exceptionally significant. For other criteria considerations and exceptions please refer to National Register Bulletin #16. Criteria for Local Landmark designation and the Colorado State Register of Historic Places are very similar to the National Register criteria. Copies of these designation criteria and National Register Bulletin #16 are available from the Fort Collins Planning Department Office.

After the survey and evaluation process is completed, the initial historic property types are reviewed and redefined according to the new resource information. Therefore through the development of historic contexts based on thematic historical research and defined property types, a more viable framework for decision-making is formed. Decisions can be made as to the relative importance and integrity of actual properties within the same theme, period, and geographic area.

Identify Threats to the Historic Resources and the Opportunities for Preservation

Historic resources are, for the most part, interwoven into our natural and built environment. They are not set apart or immune from the economic, social and political changes which affect all land and property. As these trends are identified and understood, Fort Collins' historic preservation program and policies can be better designed to respond to those trends.

Determine Appropriate Preservation Treatment

Specific actions can be taken to preserve a property which includes three existing mechanisms: physical treatment, regulatory measures, and preservation incentives.

Determine Goals and Priorities

Establish goals and priorities to provide the greatest possible protection for the properties within the historic context. These goals and priorities are divided into three categories: identification, evaluation and protection/treatment. The recommendations for these categories could include additional research and survey; individual or historic district designation as a local landmark, or to the State or National Register of Historic Places; neighborhood preservation; design guidelines for a commercial area; designation of open space protection to a historic farm property; or incentives such as grants for restoring properties, etc. Therefore the goals and priorities for various eligible properties will be different; and there will be various protection methods applied to each individual property or property type.

Stage II - Integrate historic context's goals and priorities into the annual work program and Historic Resources Preservation Program Plan. Historic contexts are similar to a background study used for a standard land use plan. After the data is collected for developing the historic contexts, possible effects to the properties are identified and preservation actions with respect to the significant resources are prioritized. These goals and objectives can be incorporated into the City's Historic Resources Preservation Program Plan and annual work program.

Stage III - Integrate the goals and priorities of historic contexts into broader planning processes. Implementation procedures are developed to achieve the goals and priorities of preservation planning. The planning process is continuous and there needs to be procedures for implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the Plan and its historic contexts. These procedures need to address the implementation of the Plan within the Planning Department, other departments within the City, heritage groups, etc. The core documents for implementation are the historic contexts, the annual work program and the Historic Resources Preservation Program.

· *Education*. This element of the HRPP requires an outreach effort of the broadest scope designed to place preservation of Fort Collins' historic resources at the forefront of the community's attention. Outreach efforts will focus on: students; neighborhoods; heritage groups; developers; businessmen and women; architects and engineers; the media; City staff; elected and appointed officials; Poudre R-1 School District staff; Colorado State University; and any other groups that can be identified as having an interest in historic resources.

While identifying the resources is the critical first step in a preservation program, if only a few people are informed of the identified resources it will do little to instill a preservation ethic in the community. Many broad educational outreach programs are unsuccessful because the same general information is conveyed to everyone contacted. Outreach efforts to the various groups will require varied approaches to

tailor information to their particular focus on Fort Collins issues. For example, preservation information can be presented to neighborhood groups as an important element in quality of life and stability of neighborhoods, to developers and business interests as being economically advantageous and a marketable commodity, and eventually, to elected officials as the focus of significant community support and interest. In this way, disparate elements of the community can be encouraged to view preservation of historic resources as supporting their own special interests.

· *Incentives*. The HRPP recommends the development of a package of incentives recognizing the fact than an incentive for a residential property owner to preserve a residential building may be quite different from the type of incentive required by a commercial property owner. The most effective incentives are usually financial and take the form of low-interest loans, grants, tax credits, sales tax waivers and rebates, etc.. Another quantifiable financial incentive that has been used as an argument for preservation, is increased property value. Preservation interests have recently realized that more resources can be preserved by presenting persuasive economic arguments than by appealing to a developer's appreciation of heritage. A recent Critical Issues study for the National Trust for Historic Preservation developed a means to analyze the economic impacts of preservation and this can be a potent tool for encouraging preservation.

Conforming with requirements of the building, mechanical, plumbing, electrical, handicapped access, and fire and life safety codes places a financial burden on redevelopment of historic buildings. Various alternative methods of protecting the health and safety of the public have been developed in the last decade to allow preservation and renovation to support one another. In many cases, these have been codified to help building officials determine what waivers or alternatives are acceptable and which are not. Variations from building code requirements can be powerful incentives for preservation.

There are innovative land use regulations such as transfer of development rights, density bonuses, and special use review procedures for adaptive reuse of historic buildings which can act as incentives to a greater or lesser degree depending on such things as the real estate market, the degree of growth that is acceptable to the community, and the emphasis on economic development and/or downtown revitalization. A related incentive is providing technical information. Deteriorating buildings seem more threatening to those who are unfamiliar with its causes and mitigation measures. Many historic buildings are torn down because they are unwittingly viewed as too damaged to salvage. Rarely is this the case, but advice is necessary to convey this fact.

A permanent plaque system for designated landmarks and other types of community recognition can be incentives. However, these are more effective in a community that has established support for historic preservation.

· *Plans and Regulations.* Important historic resources should be legally recognized in public planning. Area plans should continue to address historic resources in a meaningful way. Since it is probably not practical to update existing plans, the Historic Resources Preservation Program Plan and any subsequent additions should serve as the more definitive policy guide. The Landmark Preservation Commission should be actively involved in the preparation, review, update and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan as it relates to historic preservation.

The development review process should involve the comments of the LPC during the conceptual plan stage when historic resources are nearby or within a proposed development. Developers should be encouraged to use the flexibility of the Land Development Guidance System to achieve the purposes of the HRPP. Consideration of historic resources should also be a factor in the initial zoning and development review processes. In addition, innovative land use controls should be explored, such as density bonuses. Finally, the City should consider adopting the Uniform Code for Building Conservation (UCBC).

With a real commitment to preservation of historic resources incorporated into all land use documents and development regulations, it may be possible to both institutionalize concern for historic resources and encourage more sensitive treatment of those resources in the development review process and in public projects undertaken by the City. However, this will only impact projects with some aspect that channels them into a special site plan review process. Only local landmark designation can insure complete protection. The identification, education, incentives, and regulations are all intended to create a climate of appreciation for historic preservation that will lead to increased designations of historic landmarks and historic districts.

· *Local landmark designations.* The culmination of education, incentives and regulatory refinements is increased designations of landmarks and historic districts. This is the best and most practical means by which Fort Collins can assure the ongoing preservation of the community's historic resources. The HRPP includes a recommendation to implement a new program known as the Historic Resources of Merit. This program is intended to expose the public to lesser known historic resources in the community and would attach no requirements. The program provides an opportunity to publicize preservation in a positive and interesting way.

The Plan also recommends that the LPC and City staff be more active in pursuing local landmark designation of important structures and sites. A list of targeted sites and districts is provided in this Plan. And finally, the Plan recommends that the City provide direct financial support to owners of historic properties who wish to pursue local landmark designation.

· *Administration.* The successful implementation of the Historic Resources Preservation Program Plan will require an ongoing commitment on the part of the City. A fundamental challenge of the Historic Resources Preservation Program will be to secure the necessary resources to fund the program. The Plan proposes a 7-year program of implementation. Overall coordination will be achieved through the City's Planning Department but will require the coordinated effort among City departments, various boards and commissions, Poudre R-1, Colorado State University, local heritage groups, and volunteers.

The strategy for implementation includes developing every year, an annual work program and budget to determine which program elements are to be undertaken, financial resources and support personnel needed, planning studies necessary, etc. for presentation to City Council as part of the City's annual budget preparation process. State and federal grants for historic preservation will be an important source of revenue for implementation of the program. Interdepartmental coordination will require continuous communication and education among the many City departments and the boards and commissions with responsibilities that may impact historic resources in order to integrate historic preservation into community decision-making processes. Lastly, the Landmark Preservation Commission should undertake to expand their knowledge of historic preservation and their ongoing training should be part of the City's commitment to a more effective historic preservation program.

There are many detailed steps recommended to carry out these efforts, as well as others. These steps are described in detail in the next chapter of this Plan and in Appendix D -- Action Charts.

Benefits

of the Historic Resources Preservation Program

Chapter 14, Landmark Preservation, of the Fort Collins' City Code states:

> **"It is hereby declared as a matter of public policy that the protection, enhancement and perpetuation of sites, structures, and districts of historical, architectural or geographic significance, located within the city, are a public necessity and are required in the interest of the prosperity, civic pride and general welfare of the people.**
>
> **It is the opinion of the City Council that the economic, cultural, and aesthetic standing of this city cannot be maintained or enhanced by disregarding the historical, architectural and geographic heritage of the city and by ignoring the destruction or defacement of such cultural assets."**

This statement is the declaration of policy for the preservation of historic landmarks and, except for local landmark designation, leaves unspecified the broad range of activities that precede the ability to protect a historic resource. The purpose of the Historic Resources Preservation Program is to bring the protection of as many historic resources as possible under the City code. It also recognizes that preservation is best accomplished by those with a stake in the resource, such as the owner or renter.

In general terms, the Program is based on the identification of historic resources and their significance to Fort Collins. Many of the most important sites and buildings are well-known to most residents. While the lesser-known resources are being surveyed and identified, education, incentives and regulations target better known landmark buildings and the most recognizable historic districts. Further identification will involve historic resources whose value and significance will require more extensive education of the public and whose preservation will require means other than designation such as incentives and land use regulations.

This approach extends protection to more resources as they are identified and depends on education and incentives to encourage participation in the program. It is likely that there will be resources that will not be protected in any real way through the program. However, the intent is to initially effect the greatest control over the most important and most threatened buildings and sites, and later to work to extend protection as broadly as possible.

The adoption of the Historic Resources Preservation Program Plan allows the community to agree on what is important and how it should be protected so there will be no unexpected demolition. Crisis situations may be avoided. As a result, public and private resources can be targeted to the most important problems and opportunities.

Through the Plan, the community presents a unified vision. The Plan enables the public and private interests engaged in development to anticipate decisions of the City. It can help to persuade both private developers and the public by suggesting specific objectives and actions.

The process of preparing the HRPP has provided the opportunity for the City to receive the advice from many different people and groups interested in the future of the community. The planning process enabled them to offer their suggestions in a studied, comprehensive form rather than on a piecemeal, ad hoc basis. The Plan can be of great educational value for decision-makers and anyone who reads and uses it. It can create interest in historic preservation and offer factual information on present conditions and trends as well as draw attention to possibilities for the future. The interest and discussions generated from the HRPP can create needed momentum. Other benefits to the community are the preservation of the community's heritage and achievement of community goals, such as enhancement of the downtown as a vital center of economic activity, and increased property values and quality of life in the older areas of Fort Collins.