

To the Mayor and Members of the City Council

February 14, 2012

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**SUBJECT: LOCAL HISTORIC DESIGNATION PROCESS**

At the January 31st Pre -Council meeting, the City Council requested information on the process for providing a local historic designation for all or portions of the Will Rogers Memorial Center. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the processes that are used to designate and preserve City-owned historic properties.

(1) Internal Review of City-Owned Historic Resources: Administrative Regulation A10

In 2005, Administrative Regulation A10 (AR-A10) established a review process for City-sponsored projects affecting City-owned historic resources. Historic resources are defined as any physical features, sites, structures, and neighborhoods that are 45 years old or older. AR-A10 requires review of both exterior and interior changes to structures. Renovations, improvements or changes to historic resources are required to be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Officer prior to any action that might impact those resources.

(2) Local Historic Designation

An application for designation may be submitted by the owner of a property, or their duly authorized agent, or by the City Manager. In lieu of an application, the Historic and Cultural Landmarks Commission (HCLC) or the City Council may adopt a resolution calling for the Historic Preservation Officer to submit a nomination to the HCLC for consideration. When the resolution is adopted, the nomination will be considered at the next regularly scheduled HCLC meeting. Any property nominated for local designation shall be considered in public hearings by the HCLC, Zoning Commission, and the City Council. Upon designation of a site, structure, or area, the designation is recorded on the official zoning maps of the City. Designation is recorded in the official property record of the county where the property is located. The HCLC reviews changes to all locally designated properties. The HCLC only reviews significant exterior changes to structures.

(3) State Designation

Over 400 structures in the State of Texas are Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks (RTHL). Examples in the City of Fort Worth include the Blackstone Hotel, Thistle Hill, and the Texas and Pacific Terminal Building. An application for designation as an RTHL must be submitted to the Texas Historic Commission for review and determination of eligibility. Owners of structures designated RTHL are required to purchase and display a historic marker. The property owner is required to notify the State 60 days before any changes. Failure to notify the State of changes and/or any unsympathetic changes may result in the loss of designation, and a civil penalty not to exceed \$1,000 may be assessed for each day of violation.

(4) Federal Designation

Upon request, the federal government can nominate a property as a National Register Historic District, National Register Property, or a National Landmark. Examples in Fort Worth include the Flatiron Building, the Fort Worth Botanic Garden, and the Fort Worth Club Building.

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Examples of significant properties in the region similar to Will Rogers Memorial Center that have been designated as historic resources include Cowtown Coliseum in Fort Worth (national and state) and Fair Park in Dallas (national, state and local).

Master Plan Underway

On January 10, 2012, the City Council authorized an agreement with Hahnfeld Hoffer Stanford to complete a comprehensive Will Rogers Memorial Center Master Plan in partnership with Event Facilities Fort Worth, Inc. The scope of the project includes a campus wide evaluation as well as the review and conceptual design of recommended upgrades to existing facilities, offices and on-site storage and logistics. The scope will consider the historical nature of the facilities. The study is in progress with project completion anticipated in early Summer 2012. Staff recommends waiting until the completion of the master plan activities prior to initiating specific historic designations on the property.

If you have any questions about these levels of historic designation and review, please contact Randle Harwood, Director of Planning and Development, at 817-392-6101.

Tom Higgins
City Manager