Downtown Brighton Colorado

Working together to establish a Local Historic District

Downtown Brighton Historic Properties

Historic District Parcel Legend

Proposed District Boundary

Year Built

1882 - 1939 (Contributing)

1940 - 1959 (Non Contributing)

1:600

Data Courtesy of:
City of Brighton
GIS Division
May, 2015

NAD83-92 State Plane Coordinate System (US Feet)
Colorado Central Zone 502
GCS North American NAVD 1988 Datum

N
W E
S

175 87.5 0 175 Feet

Over the past several months, the Brighton Historic Preservation Commission has been approached by downtown businesses and business leaders interested in establishing a local historic district. In response to this request, the Historic Preservation Commission has partnered with the City of Brighton to develop this informational packet and assist downtown business owner Gary Plock to complete an application for the district nomination.

Included in this packet is a map of the proposed district boundary, several frequently asked questions related to the establishment of a local historic district, and example photographs of preservation projects in surrounding historic districts. If you are the owner of a building within the proposed district and would like to provide your consent to the district, please contact Mr. Gary Plock to sign the application. If you are a business owner within the district boundary, please contact your building owner and encourage them to contact Mr. Plock for this information. You may also feel free to contact Mr. Plock, or the city project planner, Aja Tibbs, if you have any additional questions, concerns or need additional information. Contact information has been provided below. **Our deadline for obtaining ownership consent (signatures) is June 30th, 2015**, so please don't delay!

Gary Plock

Pinnochio's Italian Eatery

Bus. Phone: (720) 878-4129

E-mail: transbuild@aol.com

Aja Tibbs

City of Brighton

Bus. Phone: (303) 655-2015

E-mail: atibbs@brightonco.gov

Historic District Frequently Asked Questions:

What is a local historic district?

A geographic area that is designated by Brighton's Historic Preservation Commission (BHPC or HPC) and City Council because of its historic significance and importance to the City. A historic district must be comprised of at least 50% of historically significant structures.

What is the HPC?

The HPC is the Historic Preservation Commission. The Historic Preservation Commission reviews all applications for historic designation, as well as all applications for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) should the owners of a designated structure request to make changes to their building.

How is a district designated?

An application is filed by at least 51% of the individual properties within the boundary of the proposed district. That application is then reviewed against certain criteria to determine the historic significance of the district. The review is performed at two public hearings; first with the HPC and secondly by the City Council.

Will the district be expanded to cover more properties?

The current boundary of the district is relatively small to keep the coordination work manageable. Once the district is established, the district may be expanded if another application is filed (with more than 51% of the owners consenting).

Historic District Frequently Asked Questions (Continued):

Why isn't zoning sufficient to protect historic properties?

Zoning addresses the use of the property and only offers design requirements geared towards newer development. A historic district protects the physical characteristics of the buildings and work to maintain the specific character unique to Brighton's downtown.

How does designation benefit my property?

A district designation works to protect and stabilize the area as a whole, provide additional marketing opportunities for tourism and increased pedestrian activity, and create eligibility for several state financial incentives which assist with the costs of caring for an older building.

What is the difference between a contributing and a non-contributing property?

A contributing property was constructed with certain architectural elements or involves a certain historic past that was significant within the district timeframe (1880-1930). A non-contributing property may have been constructed outside of that timeframe, or is so substantially altered that nothing remains on the property to "contribute" to the character of the district. Contributing and non-contributing structures will likely be held to different design guidelines established for the district.

What are design guidelines? How are they applied?

Design guidelines help property owners, city staff, and reviewing bodies to determine the appropriateness of changes and improvements to buildings within the district. The design guidelines provide a reasonable list of the ways that buildings may change or remain as they are today. At the request of downtown property and business owners, the City of Brighton and HPC are helping to draft design guidelines for the proposed district.

Am I required to make improvements to my property if a district is established?

The HPC cannot require the owner of a designated property to make any improvements to the building and/or its site. However, the Historic Preservation Ordinance does allow the Commission to require maintenance so that the district is not neglected.

Will designation prevent me from repairing, altering, renovating, or adding on to my property?

If a district is established, all repairs alterations, renovations, additions, or demolitions would be reviewed by the HPC to determine compliance with the downtown design guidelines and approve or deny a COA. The level of compliance will depend on the existing condition of the building, the proposed improvements, and whether the building is a contributing structure.

How does the certificate of appropriateness (COA) process work?

The City schedules a public hearing with the HPC upon receiving an application request from the property owner. The HPC will review the request for improvements to determine if it meets the design guidelines and either approve, approve with specific changes, or deny the request. If the application is denied the applicant may appeal the decision to the City Council.

What projects need approval?

If a district is established, all permits for construction, reconstruction, remodeling, alteration, repair, restoration, rehabilitation, relocation or demolition of the properties within the district will require COA approval.

Will the HPC tell me what color to paint my building?

That will depend on the paint colors proposed and their compliance with the design standards for the district. The design guidelines are still in draft format, and property owners will have an opportunity to review them prior to adoption.

Will interiors be subject to review?

Designation review is primarily focused on exterior improvements. However, the design standards may be drafted to address extremely significant elements such as the pressed ceiling tiles iconic to Brighton's downtown.

What about demolition?

Any application for demolition would be required to file for a COA permit and would be reviewed by the HPC for compliance with the demolition criteria in the Historic Preservation Ordinance. Generally, an applicant would need to demonstrate that no other reasonable alternative exists to prevent the demolition of a contributing structure within the district.

What if the HPC denies my COA application? How do I appeal?

A property owner may file an application for an appeal with the Brighton City Council within 30 days after the HPC decision has been made.

How are HPC decisions enforced?

All building permits for historic buildings and districts are referred to historic preservation staff for review. This insures that a COA is approved prior to the issuance of a building permit, and to coordinate those improvements with the COA proposal.

Are there extra costs and fees associated with district designation?

There are no costs or fees to the property or business owner for either the district establishment or COA applications at this time.

How does designation affect my property values and taxes?

District designation has no effect on assessments for tax purposes. Property taxes are based on other factors that do not include landmark designation as a criterion. However, designation does make the property eligible for the state tax credit program, which currently allows up to 30% of improvement costs associated with historic structures.

Is there money available to help preserve old buildings?

If a district is established, the property is eligible for state financial incentives, which include the tax credit program, grant programs and below market loan programs from the state historic preservation office.

The Capitol Grill—Downtown Golden, Colorado

Top photo—Before Restoration
Bottom photo—After Restoration

OTHER TRANSFORMATION EXAMPLES

In this example from Downtown Golden, awning signs have been removed to reveal historic store fronts.

OTHER TRANSFORMATION EXAMPLES

BLEND THE OLD WITH THE NEW

This example from Downtown Golden shows how modern redevelopment can be integrated into historical districts. Non-contributing structures will not be held to the same design guidelines and will have more design freedom should they choose to redevelop.

The Sutor Building —Downtown Greeley, Colorado

Top photo—Before Restoration
Bottom photo—After Restoration

This example shows how unobtrusive Historic Design Guidelines can be. Here the business made very few tweaks to the façade but was asked to remove the awnings as they were a nonconforming element to the age of the structure. The extended glass store front, a modern twist on historic window displays, was permitted in the redevelopment process.

Historic Kress Theater—Downtown Greeley, Colorado

Top photo—Before Restoration
Bottom photo—After Restoration

Most of the renovations to the Kress Theater in Greeley were made to the interior of the facility. (Interior renovations will not be included in the proposed design standards.) The business owner did work, however, to update the historic theater sign. Though historic signs will not be required to be maintained in the proposed design standards, it is a good example of how "what was old made new" can create an attractive façade in the modern era.

Greeley, CO

OTHER EXAMPLES

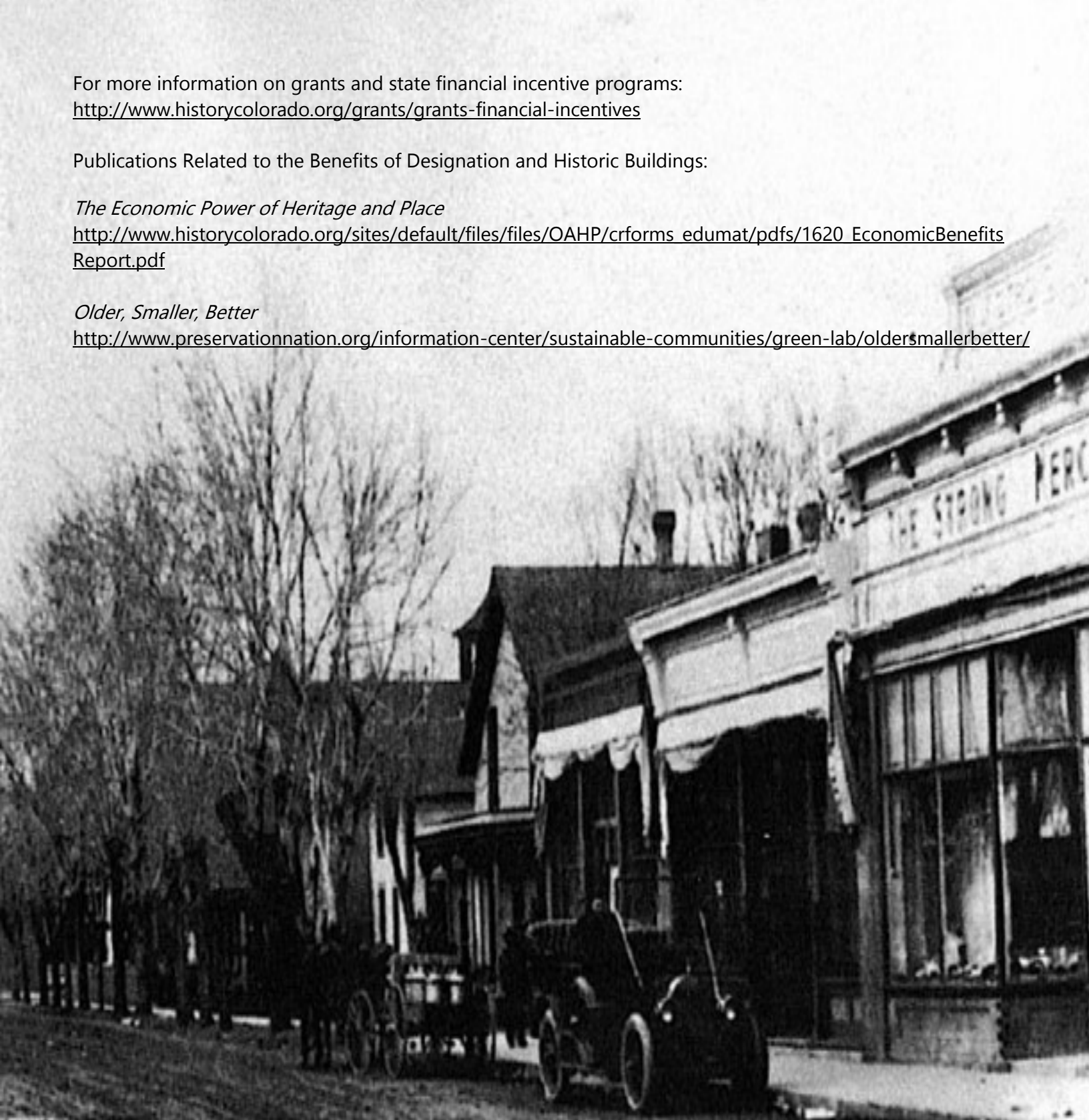
Louisville, CO

For more information on grants and state financial incentive programs:
http://www.historycolorado.org/grants/grants-financial-incentives

Publications Related to the Benefits of Designation and Historic Buildings:

The Economic Power of Heritage and Place
http://www.historycolorado.org/sites/default/files/files/OAHP/crforms_edumat/pdfs/1620_EconomicBenefitsReport.pdf

Older, Smaller, Better
http://www.preservationnation.org/information-center/sustainable-communities/green-lab/oldersmallerbetter/



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Additional Photos provided by the City of Greeley Museum Archives and the City of Golden Department of Community Development, and the City of Brighton Historic Preservation Commission.