



The Economic Benefits of Historic Designation

There are many benefits of historic designation for property and business owners. The expense of responsible preservation efforts can be offset through various available programs if the property is on either the State or National Register of Historic Places. For instance, structures noted as “contributing” within a historic district can qualify for specific incentives even without going through the process of being individually designated. No incentives exist for properties with only local landmark status.

Heritage Trust Fund

A State grant program that helps to offset the costs of preservation related projects. Only properties that are listed on the state or National Register of Historic Places are eligible. These grants are highly competitive, but the Kansas State Historical Society hosts workshops to support applicants in the submission of their applications. More information can be found at <https://www.kshs.org/14617>

Matching funds up to
\$90,000
for professional and construction expenses

Source: Kansas Historical Society

Tax Credits

More readily available are Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits that can reduce your federal and state income tax bills. Twenty percent of qualifying expenditures can be returned to you through federal tax credits. An additional 25% of a project's qualifying expenditures is offered through the State. For example, if you spend \$100,000 on a rehabilitation project, you can have \$20,000 reduced from your federal income tax bill and \$25,000 reduced from your state income tax bill. Non-profit entities have the ability to sell certain tax credits to tax-paying enterprises, and thereby take advantage of the tax credit program as well. More information for both programs can be found at <https://www.kshs.org/14666>

25% of project cost reduced from state income tax

20% of project cost reduced from federal income tax

Source: Kansas Historical Society

“...if you’re not using historic tax credits and you own a historic building, you’re leaving money on the table.”

- Jan Miller, owner of the Orville Huntress Building in downtown Manhattan, KS

Economic Success

Studies of historic districts across the country have shown that protecting historic resources is good for business. Measures such as property value, tenant demand, and resident populations have seen sustained, positive growth within historic districts. Additionally, historic districts have shown greater resiliency when faced with tough economic times; often retaining more value and recovering more quickly than non-historically designated areas. A Downtown Historic District could help drive prosperity to the UG’s central business area.

Chesnut Street Historic District - Hays, Kansas

Number of Projects	11 commercial rehabs
Appraised Values	+122.5%
New Investments	+\$5 million (since 2002)
New Businesses	+25 (net)
New Jobs	+130 full time, 186 part time
Sale Tax Collection	+135%

Source: Kansas Preservation Alliance, 2010

https://www.kshs.org/preserve/pdfs/kansas_40_page_report.pdf



Historic Designation in the Unified Government

Historic designation is the official recognition of a building, site or neighborhood for its significant value to a community. These designations may occur at the local, state, and/or national level and are accompanied by regulations designed to preserve the historic integrity of a place. In Wyandotte County, proposed designations are considered by the City Landmarks Commission. This body hears cases regarding historic preservation and makes recommendations to the Unified Government (UG) Board of Commissioners.

Districts + Landmarks

Through the Historic District and Landmarks designation process, the UG Board of Commissioners can provide local protections that require review and notification for any proposed change or demolition of a building or its character defining features that have particular historic, cultural and/or architectural significance. Landmarks are a single site, building, structure, or object that meet that criteria. Historic Districts are geographically definable and contiguous areas possessing a substantial concentration, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united by historic events or by historic plan, design, or development. A property must be designated on the State and/or Federal Historic register to gain access to the economic benefits listed on the reverse of this page.

Environs

Any action requiring a building permit within 500 feet of a property or district with local historic designation is required to undergo an administrative review. This ensures that character-defining features or spatial relationships near the historically designated property or district are not destroyed. While anything within a historic environs goes through an administrative review, **there are no benefits for properties without landmark status.**

The map below shows existing Local Historic Designations (green) along with their corresponding environs boundaries (purple shading) in downtown KCK. Properties within these boundaries must abide by environs requirements but are unable to access the resources associated with an official historic designation. If the proposed Downtown Historic District (yellow line) is adopted, properties within the boundary will have access to critical tax incentives.

