

# Little Rock Citywide Historic Preservation Plan

2009

City of Little Rock  
Planning and  
Development  
Department

Thomason and Associates  
The Walker Collaborative



## Table of Contents

Acknowledgments.....	ii
I. Executive Summary.....	1
II. Introduction.....	2
III. What Historic Preservation Means to Little Rock: An Essential Component of Community Economic Development.....	6
IV. How Historic Preservation Works in Little Rock.....	10
V. Previous Historic Preservation and Planning Efforts.....	18
VI. Historic Preservation Trends Today—What Works/Challenges.....	42
VII. Goal—Increase Identification and Recognition of Little Rock’s Historic Resources.....	54
VIII. Goal—Expand the Range of Incentives and Protection to Property Owners.....	71
IX. Goal—Increase Effectiveness of City Agencies and Organizations.....	90
X. Goal—Enhance Education Efforts on the Economic Benefits and Sustainability of Historic Preservation.....	105
XI. Implementation.....	110
Appendix A. Little Rock’s Proud Past—Historical and Architectural Development.....	A.1
Appendix B. Little Rock’s National Register-Listed Properties (April 2009).....	B.2
Appendix C. Zoning, Land Use and Historic Preservation.....	C.1

## Acknowledgments

The Little Rock Citywide Historic Preservation Plan was developed through the City of Little Rock's Planning & Development Department and funded in part by a Preserve America grant through the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program. This project was coordinated and assisted by Brian Minyard, Planner with the city. Thanks are due to the many Little Rock citizens who provided input and information during the course of this project. Assistance in the completion of this study was provided by the Little Rock Historic District Commission and the Citywide Historic Preservation Plan Steering Committee.



### Citywide Historic Preservation Plan

#### Steering Committee Members

Tony Bozynski	Director, Little Rock Planning and Development Department
Brian Minyard	Little Rock Planning and Development Department
Eve Gieringer	Little Rock Planning and Development Department
Boyd Maher	Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

Susan Bell  
Randy Jeffery  
Kwendeche  
Carolyn Newbern  
Cheri Nichols  
Marshall Peters  
Randy Ripley  
Julie Wiedower  
Roger Williams  
Robert Wood

## I. Executive Summary

Over the past two decades, communities across the country have found that an increased emphasis on the preservation of their architectural and historic resources results in economic growth, an enhanced quality of life, and vibrant downtowns and neighborhoods. To guide historic preservation efforts, many cities have completed plans to assist policy makers and community leaders with the complex issues involving historic resources.

The Little Rock Citywide Historic Preservation Plan builds on the city's renewed emphasis on downtown and neighborhood revitalization efforts. Over the past decade, Little Rock has initiated a number of programs to spur redevelopment downtown, improve the appearance of its major highways, increase recreational and cultural opportunities and encourage investment in inner city residential areas. The intent of the Little Rock Historic Preservation Plan is to outline additional goals and actions to preserve, maintain and enhance the city's large stock of historic buildings both downtown and in center-city neighborhoods. The plan also provides recommendations for increasing heritage tourism efforts as well as raising public awareness of the importance of historic preservation in the community.



*Little Rock has a rich architectural legacy reflected in its residential, public and commercial buildings (1300 E. 6<sup>th</sup> Street).*



*The Hillcrest Historic District is the largest National Register District in the city (205 N. Palm Street).*

## II. Introduction

### Overview

With a population of 193,000, Little Rock is Arkansas's most populous city, the state capital, and the county seat of Pulaski County. The cities of Little Rock, North Little Rock, Conway and Pine Bluff clustered in the center of the state comprise Arkansas's primary metropolitan corridor, with a total population of 850,000.



*This Second Empire style dwelling at 1321 Scott Street in MacArthur Park is the Villa Marre and reflects the rich legacy of the city's older neighborhoods.*



*Downtown Little Rock contains an impressive collection of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial buildings (212 Center Street).*

The heart of this metropolitan zone is Little Rock, platted in 1820. Little Rock became the Territorial Capitol in 1821. Little Rock derived its colorful name from a rock formation on the south bank of the Arkansas called *la Petite Roche* ("the little rock") by French explorers. A landmark for early river traffic, the site became a popular river crossing.

Little Rock has been identifying and protecting its historic resources for over 50 years. The city has a rich heritage which is displayed in its architecture and efforts to preserve and protect this legacy began in 1968 with the establishment of the Quapaw Quarter Association, the city's non-profit historic preservation advocacy organization. The Arkansas Legislature also made a strong commitment to historic preservation when it created the Capitol Zoning District in 1975 to protect residential areas around the Capitol and Governor's Mansion. In 1976, the Little Rock Historic District Commission was established. This was followed in 1981 with the creation of the city's historic preservation ordinance.

Little Rock is the center of the state's historic preservation efforts. On the state level, the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program is located downtown and provides assistance and outreach to citizens across the state. This office serves as the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and its responsibilities include carrying out federal programs under the requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act. The non-profit statewide organization, the Historic Preservation Alliance of Arkansas is also headquartered downtown. On the local level, the Quapaw Quarter Association continues to provide a valuable non-profit voice for preservation efforts and there are numerous neighborhood associations which play important roles in preserving older dwellings and improving the quality of life.

Like many cities across the country, Little Rock expanded rapidly after World War II and many residents moved to suburban neighborhoods on the west and southwest sides of the city. This led to a loss of retail stores downtown and a shift to suburban shopping areas and malls. Center-city neighborhoods also lost population and there was a change in demographics as residents increasingly moved out of downtown neighborhoods to new areas to the west and southwest. As a result, many of the city's older neighborhoods and downtown began to suffer from neglect and abandonment. This alarmed many citizens and revitalization efforts to counter these trends have been underway since the 1970s.

Little Rock's past revitalization and preservation efforts have had a number of positive results. The Governor's Mansion and MacArthur Park Historic Districts contain the largest number of protected historic dwellings in the state and rehabilitation and property values have both increased significantly. Central High School was listed as a National Historic Landmark and the adjacent Visitor's Center now attracts thousands of tourists annually. The Clinton Presidential Center has exceeded its original goals of visitation and spurred additional development along the river. The River Market District is thriving and downtown residential development is increasing. The City currently has nineteen historic districts listed on the National Register and additional districts are being proposed. Financial incentives for rehabilitation have been enhanced, especially through the passage in 2009 of the Arkansas Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit.

Despite these successes there remain many challenges to Little Rock's heritage. Many of the center-city neighborhoods continue to lose population, and this disinvestment results in abandonment and demolition. While the River Market area has developed into a thriving entertainment and tourism district, this success has not yet benefited Main Street which continues to have high vacancy rates. Historic neighborhoods such as Hillcrest and the Heights have become so attractive to builders and homebuyers that some houses are being razed or remodeled to make way for larger homes out of keeping with the area's overall character.

Buildings fifty years old or older now constitute over one-fourth of all buildings in the city and their repair and maintenance is important to a healthy city. In the year 2000, the US Census Bureau counted 84,888 housing



*The Old State Capitol was one of the early restoration projects undertaken in the city.*



*Central High School was named a National Historic Landmark for its role in the nation's Civil Rights struggle.*

units in the city of Little Rock. Of that number, 23,329 were built prior to 1960. This represents over 27 percent of the housing units that now exist. Of this number, 7,136 houses, or 8.4 percent, were built prior to 1940 while 16,193, or 19.1 percent, were built from 1940 to 1960. These properties are not only important to Little Rock by their sheer numbers, but they are also located in areas which have had millions of dollars expended in infrastructure and public works projects.



*Population loss in the center-city has led to abandoned houses and deteriorated conditions on some blocks such as the 1500 block of S. Pulaski Street....*

The Little Rock Citywide Historic Preservation Plan is intended to examine in a comprehensive fashion the role that historic preservation plays in the city. The plan is to assist in decisions by the city government, neighborhood organizations, non-profit groups and citizens as they move forward with goals and objectives expressed during this planning process. The plan will be a blueprint for future actions of the city as it addresses its historic resources.



*...while other neighborhoods have experienced renewed investment such as in Hanger Hill (1509 Welch Street).*

## The Planning Process – Steering Committee and Public Participation

This plan was developed following a variety of public meetings, input from Planning and Development Staff and recommendations from a designated Historic Preservation Steering Committee. Three public meetings were held during the course of this project; one at the beginning to introduce the goals and objectives of the project, one when the preliminary draft recommendations were presented, and the third when the final draft plan was submitted to the city. These meetings were attended by over seventy citizens, and their questions and comments were recorded and incorporated in the planning effort.

The Historic Preservation Steering Committee consists of ten residents of Little Rock who have been active in historic preservation efforts in the past. They represent members of the Historic District Commission, residents of historic neighborhoods, and non-profit organizations. The Steering Committee met on numerous occasions and provided valuable insight and “corporate memory” to the project.

The planning process also included a workshop with the Historic District Commission to discuss the effectiveness and policies of the city’s design guidelines. Interviews were also held with key stakeholders active in historic preservation and revitalization efforts.



## Goals and Actions for Historic Preservation

From the planning process, several key goals were voiced by participants, and these goals led to specific actions and objectives. The key goals for the future historic preservation efforts in the city are:

- Goal 1 - Increase Identification and Recognition of Historic Resources*
- Goal 2 - Expand the Range of Incentives and Protection Alternatives to Property Owners*
- Goal 3 - Increase Effectiveness of Preservation Agencies and Organizations*
- Goal 4 - Enhance Education Efforts on the Economic Benefits of Historic Preservation*



### III. What Historic Preservation Means to Little Rock: An Essential Component of Community Economic Development

#### Overview

In the past two decades, dozens of economic studies have tracked and tabulated the positive economic benefits historic preservation efforts provide cities such as Little Rock. The most relevant of these studies to the city was completed in 2006 by the Center for Urban Policy Research at Rutgers University. One of the conclusions of the study was that historic preservation and rehabilitation efforts generate billions of dollars annually to the state. This money is generated through rehabilitation of historic buildings, heritage tourism, downtown revitalization through the Main Street program, and other initiatives. In 2004, an estimated \$1.25 billion was spent on rehabilitation in the state. Of this total \$404.8 million was spent for residential properties, \$624 million was spent for commercial properties and \$228.4 million was spent on public properties. Heritage tourism spending accounted for an additional \$890.6 million dollars in revenue and supported over 20,000 jobs in the state. These numbers are significant and point to the increasingly high profile that rehabilitation and tourism has meant to Little Rock and Arkansas.



*River Market's mix of historic buildings and new development attracts thousands of tourists each month.*



*The Central High School Neighborhood is one area that has experienced significant rehabilitation efforts in recent years (1725 Park Street).*

#### Historic Districts Promote Quality of Life

Historic districts help promote a community's quality of life which is a key ingredient in economic development. Historic buildings are one of the primary ways a community differentiates itself from another. Historic buildings, the character and identity they provide, and the quality of their preservation say much about a community's self-image.

#### Historic Architecture Attracts Visitors

Historic architecture attracts visitors to cities. Heritage tourism, or tourism which focuses on historic areas and sites, is one of the rapidly growing segments of the tourism industry. The quality and quantity of the historic architecture in Little Rock and its history provide opportunities to further enhance tourism in the city.

## Historic Buildings Often Last Longer Than New Ones

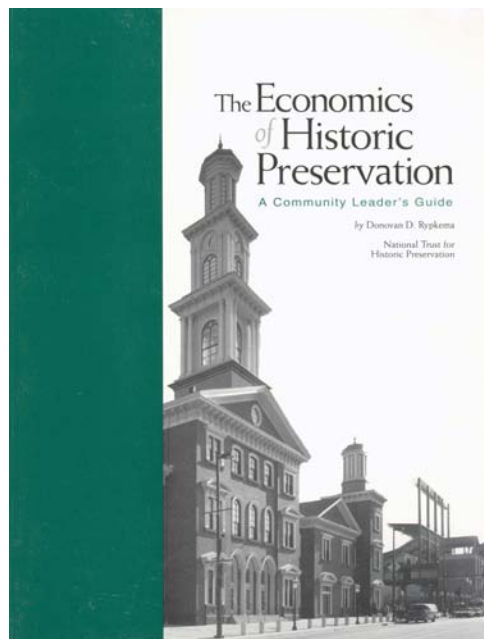
The life expectancy of rehabilitated historic buildings is almost always greater than that of new structures. Buildings from the 18th to the mid-20th century were constructed with better quality materials, now expensive or difficult to obtain. Historic buildings are often composed of old-growth lumber, long lasting masonry, and interior materials such as plaster and were built with quality craftsmanship. Materials used in buildings over the past fifty years were often of less quality and the life expectancy of pre-1960 buildings is generally greater than those built in more recent decades.

## Historic Preservation Supports Taxpayers' Investments

Preserving historic commercial areas and inner-city neighborhoods is one of the most fiscally responsible actions a community can take. Little Rock has spent millions of dollars investing in infrastructure such as sidewalks, lights, water and sewer lines, telephone and electrical lines, gutters and curbs, and roads and streets. If this infrastructure is underutilized it wastes taxpayers' dollars. Preserving historic buildings and districts supports existing public infrastructure and reduces the need to add more infrastructure elsewhere.

## Historic Preservation Benefits Property Owners

Real estate often represents our largest economic asset and property owners all want this asset to improve in value. Historic district designation and the use of design review guidelines help to ensure that investment in an historic area will be protected from inappropriate new construction, misguided remodeling, or inappropriate demolition. Locally designated districts also protect the composite or overall economic value of an historic area benefiting all property owners. Every building or parcel in an historic area is influenced by the actions of its neighbors and design guidelines provide a level playing field for all property owners because they apply equally to the properties in an historic area.



*The positive impact of historic preservation on a community is detailed in many state studies and the national overview "The Economics of Historic Preservation" by Don Rypkema.*

## Historic Preservation Creates Jobs



*Historic rehabilitation projects create more jobs than does comparable new construction.*

Rehabilitation and revitalization projects create thousands of construction jobs annually, and historic preservation creates proportionally more labor jobs than new construction. Rehabilitation projects are more labor intensive than new construction. In new construction generally half of all expenditures are for labor and half are for materials. In a typical historic rehabilitation project, between 60 and 70 percent of the total cost goes toward labor, which has a beneficial ripple effect throughout the local economy.

## Historic Preservation Increases Property Values

Studies across the country have shown that property and resale values in designated National Register or local historic districts at the least stabilize, but more often increase. Many times these increases are greater than surrounding neighborhoods which may have similar architecture but do not have protective overlays.



*Studies across the country all show property values go up – not down – in historic overlay districts.*

## Preserving Existing Buildings Reduces Sprawl

Preserving and reusing existing buildings revitalizes Little Rock's neighborhoods and downtown. This stabilizes and increases the population density in the center-city and lowers the pressure for development on the city's edge. The reduction of sprawl helps to preserve open space, farmland, and wildlife habitats. Reducing sprawl also lessens automobile use and the continued development of environmentally and economically costly infrastructure.



*Debris from demolished buildings makes up at least a fourth of all material in landfills.*

## Preserving Buildings Reduces Waste in Landfills

Construction debris accounts for 25% of the waste in municipal landfills each year. Demolishing sound historic buildings is wasteful of the building's inherent materials and strains the limited capacities of landfills. Demolishing a 2,000 square foot home results in an average of 230,000 lbs of waste.

## Retaining and Rehabilitating Buildings is More Environmentally Friendly than New Construction

When studying the environmental effects of buildings, life cycle assessments are utilized. Completing a life cycle assessment of a building means that you examine and determine the material and energy usage and environmental impacts at each stage including extracting the resources, construction, use and disposal. When completing a building assessment not only is the cost of construction examined but also the costs and energy required to operate the building during its life.

One of the key considerations in a life cycle assessment of a historic building is the quality of its materials. The materials in historic houses often can last indefinitely if properly cared for. Many homes in Little Rock have old-growth wood windows, brick and wood exteriors, and stone foundations that are a hundred years old or older. These materials can easily last another one hundred years because of their inherent quality. Contrast this with common materials today such as new-growth wood elements or vinyl windows that often require replacement after just ten to twenty years.

## Retaining Existing Buildings is Part of Overall Energy Conservation

Historic buildings are often as energy efficient as new ones. Data from the U.S. Energy Information Agency found that buildings constructed before 1920 are actually more energy-efficient than those built at any time until the past decade when home builders began a concerted effort of building more energy efficient buildings. Many historic buildings have tall ceilings that help to reduce heat in the summertime and brick and plaster walls that provide substantial insulation properties. Common upgrades to historic buildings include the addition of attic insulation, installation of storm windows, and more efficient heating and cooling systems. In particular, repairing and weatherstripping historic wood windows and adding storm windows often results in energy performance equal to new vinyl or aluminum windows and at much less cost. Historic buildings can also be adapted to benefit from new technology such as solar panels and solar roof tiles.



*Modest Craftsman style homes such as this 100-year old dwelling at 1515 S. Park Street contain valuable hardwoods, plaster and stucco materials. With proper maintenance it will last another 100 years.*



*Historic dwellings can be adapted to take advantage of modern energy technology such as solar panels on rear roof lines.*

## IV. How Historic Preservation Works in Little Rock

Participants in the city's historic preservation efforts include thousands of property owners of historic buildings, local, state and federal governmental agencies, neighborhood associations, non-profit organizations and other interested citizens. Despite the many players involved with historic preservation there is a basic organizational framework in place that provides financial and technical assistance to property owners and provides protection and oversight for designated historic resources.

### Federal Level - Government

#### National Park Service

At the top of the preservation pyramid is the National Park Service (NPS) within the U.S. Department of the Interior. The NPS is responsible for overseeing the National Register of Historic Places, federal tax credit programs for rehabilitation, and provides technical assistance. Of particular importance is the NPS administration of the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) which distributes money to the states. The money from this fund goes to states to assist in their efforts to protect and preserve the state's historic resources. Each State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), appointed by the Governor for each state, manages this annual appropriation to perform the Federal preservation responsibilities required by the National Historic Preservation Act. Funding is used by the states to pay for HPF eligible preservation projects including: survey and inventory, National Register nominations, preservation plans, and brick and mortar repair to buildings. The HPF allows each state the flexibility to shape a program according to its needs, as long as they are meeting the overall responsibilities outlined by the NHPA. Ten percent of each SHPO's allocation must be subgranted to assist Certified Local Governments, local governments certified by NPS and the state as having made a local commitment to historic preservation.



*The National Park Service is responsible for overseeing much of the nation's historic preservation programs and policies at the federal level.*

## State Level – Government

### The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

The money that comes from the Historic Preservation Fund is supplemented by state funds to operate the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program. The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program (AHPP) serves as the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) which is an agency of the Department of Arkansas Heritage. The AHPP utilizes their funding to administer federal programs such as Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit program, and preservation grants. The AHPP also administers programs such as technical assistance, survey and inventory, Main Street Arkansas, and the Arkansas Civil War Heritage Trail.

A new tool for historic preservation in Arkansas is the recent legislation for a state tax credit for the rehabilitation of historic buildings. The state historic tax credit is modeled after the federal tax credit; though, Arkansas's allows for a 25% credit on rehab work, while the federal tax credit allows for a 20% tax credit. Combined, these credits equip property owners with substantial financial incentives to rehabilitate existing historic buildings.

In fiscal year 2008, the AHPP awarded a total of \$2,598,690 in grants for historic preservation projects around the state. More than \$6.3 million were invested in the state's historic properties through federal historic preservation tax incentives. Main Street Arkansas expanded its Arkansas Downtown Network, which brings Main Street services to more Arkansas towns, and worked closely with the Rural Heritage Development Initiative. The agency's Section 106 staff reviewed thousands of federal undertakings and completed several long-standing negotiations.

Another activity of the AHPP is the use of GIS and GPS technology to further its historic preservation goals, including locating surviving sections of the Cherokee Trail of Tears. The agency is working with cities across Arkansas to list additional commercial areas on the National Register of Historic Places, making more properties eligible to take advantage of preservation tax credits. Additional cities are preparing to join the Certified Local Government program, and the AHPP's education programs for students and adults is expected to reach record numbers of Arkansans during FY09.



**Arkansas Historic  
Preservation Program**



*The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program administers many different heritage efforts and programs. Two of the most important are the Arkansas Main Street Program and Arkansas Civil War Heritage Trail.*

## Local Level – Government

### Little Rock Historic District Commission Capitol Zoning District Commission



*The Little Rock Historic District Commission is responsible for administering the city's historic preservation program and reviewing changes in local ordinance historic districts.*



*Trapnall Hall at 423 E. Capitol Avenue is one of the landmark houses in the MacArthur Park Historic District.*

Oversight of Little Rock's historic and architectural resources is the responsibility of both a local governmental body, the Historic District Commission (HDC), as well as a state governmental body, the Capitol Zoning District Commission (CZDC). This arrangement is unusual – in most communities the responsibility for local oversight is handled by the local commission – but in 1975 concern over the deterioration of the neighborhoods around the state capitol led to the legislature creating the CZD. As a result there are currently two different historic overlay districts governed by design review by two different review processes.

The Little Rock Historic District Commission (HDC) is composed of five members who have a wide variety of responsibilities. The HDC meets once a month, on the second Monday of the month and reviews cases within local ordinance historic districts. Currently the only local ordinance historic district under the jurisdiction of the HDC is the MacArthur Park Historic District. The HDC reviews requests to be allowed to make changes, additions, or alterations to the exterior of structures within MacArthur Park via a Certificate of Appropriateness. The MacArthur Park Design Review Guidelines provide information about the requirements that must be met prior to undertaking construction, demolition, and certain other changes to property located within the district.

The HDC is staffed by planners at the Department of Planning and Development. This office has published a variety of informational reports and handouts such as the Homeowners' and Investors' Handbook for Historic Properties which contains information pertinent to all properties within the National Register districts throughout the City as well as downtown and midtown neighborhoods. It contains information from various city departments and other organizations that is beneficial to property owners and potential investors. The HDC and staff also work on promoting historic preservation efforts such as sponsoring architectural surveys and specific historic reports and research.

The Capitol Zoning District Commission oversees the Capitol Zoning District (CDZ). This district was created in 1975 and consists of two areas: the Capitol Area and the Mansion Area. The Capitol Area is roughly triangular in shape bounded on the east by Cross Street, on the south by Interstate 630, and on the north and west by the Missouri Pacific Railroad tracks. The Mansion Area is roughly rectangular in shape with 13<sup>th</sup> Street being its northern boundary, and Roosevelt Road bordering the south. Its boundary follows along Cumberland and Scott Streets on the east, and along Gaines, State and Chester Streets on the west.

Within these two areas are 1,400 properties which are the largest protected historic districts in the state. A nine-member Commission regulates all land use and development in the CZD as well as providing oversight and design review for rehabilitation of historic buildings and new construction. Design review is performed by the staff of the Commission and by the Design Review Committee -a separate review body that makes recommendations to the Commission. Two advisory committees of neighborhood residents, one for the Mansion Area and one for the Capitol Area, also make recommendations on applications to the Commission. Prior to any rehabilitation or new construction within the CZD, property owners must obtain a permit before beginning any work on additions or alterations to existing structures, and before beginning work on a new structure or permanent site improvement.



*The Capitol Zoning District Commission reviews properties within the Governor's Mansion Area which is the largest protected district in the state (1722 Center Street).*



## National Level – Non-Profit

### The National Trust for Historic Preservation



*The National Trust is the nation's most prominent non-profit organization which advocates on behalf of historic preservation.*



*In 1996, the National Trust listed Central High School as one of its eleven most endangered properties. This helped to highlight deterioration at the school and led to President Bill Clinton working with local leaders to restoration efforts of the National Historic Landmark.*

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a private, nonprofit membership organization dedicated to saving historic places and revitalizing America's communities. The Trust was founded in 1949 and provides leadership, education, advocacy, and resources to protect the irreplaceable places that tell America's story. Staff at the Washington, DC, headquarters, six regional offices and 29 historic sites work with the Trust's 270,000 members and thousands of preservation groups in all 50 states.

The National Trust provides advocacy for historic preservation on the national level and works closely with its statewide partners such as the Historic Preservation Alliance of Arkansas. The Trust works with the federal government to promote legislation and funding in support of historic preservation efforts. It also provides technical assistance for downtown through its National Main Street Center and has many other initiatives such as preserving historic school buildings, combating urban sprawl, and saving historic sites and battlefields. Each year the Trust sponsors a national conference which attracts approximately 2,000 participants.

Though it received federal funds from 1966 to 1998, the Trust is a nonprofit organization funded mainly through membership dues, sales, and grants. It lobbies for specific legislation and policies at the federal, state, and local level and has undertaken litigation to ensure preservation laws are enforced. "Save America's Treasures," an outgrowth of the 1998 White House Millennium initiative to protect the nation's cultural heritage, has continued as a partnership of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the National Park Foundation, and has led to the designation of several hundred preservation projects throughout the nation. Since 1988, the trust has issued an annual list of "America's Most Endangered Historic Places," a leadership effort that has created a growing public consciousness. Arkansas is located in the Southwest Region of the National Trust and is served by the regional office staff located in Fort Worth, Texas.

## State Level – Non-Profit Organizations

### Historic Preservation Alliance of Arkansas

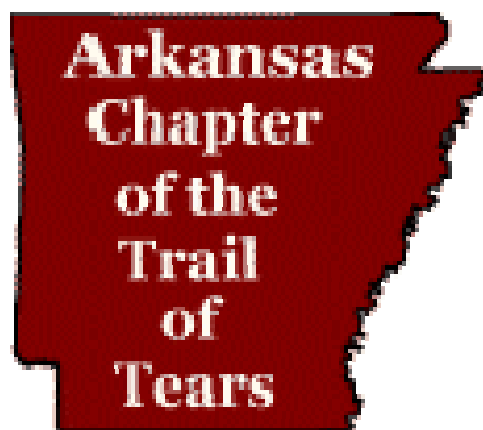
The primary non-profit voice for historic preservation on the state level is the Historic Preservation Alliance of Arkansas. This organization is the only statewide nonprofit group focused on preserving Arkansas's architectural and cultural resources. Founded in 1981, the Alliance's mission is to educate, advocate and assist preservation efforts across the state. Through educational programs centered on architectural heritage, advocating for preservation legislation in the halls of the State Capitol and at the local level, and assisting owners of historic properties with the means and expertise to preserve and restore historic structures, the Alliance has been a statewide voice for preservation in Arkansas for over twenty-five years. The Alliance co-sponsors a statewide historic preservation conference each year, has an annual awards program, and serves as an important voice for preservation advocacy for the state.

Other statewide organizations include the Arkansas Historical Association which promotes historic research, writing and scholarship. The Association publishes the Arkansas Historical Quarterly which features a wide range of historical articles and information. Of particular importance to Arkansas is the Trail of Tears Association and its statewide office. Located at the University of Arkansas Little Rock, the Sequoyah Research Center houses the national Trail of Tears Association, as well as the local chapter. The Association works to promote identification, research and promotion of the history and routes used by Native Americans during their forced migration in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Thousands of Native Americans traveled through Little Rock on their way to the Indian Territory in the 1820s and 1830s.



Historic  
Preservation  
Alliance of  
Arkansas

*The Historic Preservation Alliance of Arkansas serves as the primary statewide non-profit organization advocating for historic preservation.*



*The national organization and state chapter of the Trail of Tears Association are based in Little Rock.*

## Local Level – Non-Profit Organizations

### Quapaw Quarter Association



*The Quapaw Quarter Association sponsors home tours in Little Rock's historic districts every other year.*



*Curran Hall serves as the Little Rock Visitor's Center as well as the office of the Quapaw Quarter Association.*

The primary local non-profit organization for historic preservation in Little Rock is the Quapaw Quarter Association (QQA). This association is a non-profit historic preservation advocacy organization whose mission is to promote the preservation of the historic buildings and neighborhoods of Greater Little Rock. The QQA grew out of an effort to identify and protect significant historic structures in Little Rock during the "urban renewal" days of the early 1960s, making it one of the older preservation organizations in the nation.

Organized preservation efforts in Little Rock remained the Quapaw Quarter Committee's province until November 22, 1968, when committee members joined other preservation-minded individuals in the community to incorporate the Quapaw Quarter Association. The term "Quapaw Quarter" was defined in the articles of incorporation as a sixteen-square-block area—one quarter of a township—bounded by Capitol Avenue on the north, Scott Street on the west, 9<sup>th</sup> Street on the south, and Bond Avenue on the east. The present boundaries of the Quapaw Quarter, while not a legally defined area, follow the railroad tracks that encompass central Little Rock. Today, the mission of the association encompasses all of Central Arkansas.

Throughout its existence, the QQA has been a driving force behind historic preservation in Greater Little Rock. In 2007, the QQA entered into a contract with the City of Little Rock to manage the city's Visitor Information Center at Historic Curran Hall. The organization is also located on the grounds of Curran Hall.

## Local Level – Non-Profit Organizations

### Pulaski County Historical Society

The Pulaski County Historical Society plays an important role in promoting genealogical research, scholarly articles on the history of Little Rock and Pulaski County and gathering and storage of archival materials. Founded in the fall of 1951, the Pulaski County Historical Society (PCHS) is the second oldest county historical society in Arkansas. The first issue of the society's quarterly, the *Pulaski County Historical Review*, edited by Margaret Ross Smith, appeared in June 1953, and the journal has been published without interruption since. The PCHS aided in the county's project to restore the 1887 courthouse, annex, and clock tower; acquired portraits of past Pulaski County judges back to James C. Anthony (1840–1842), which are on display in the Quorum Court Room; and serves as co-sponsor with the county for Pulaski County Day, held each May. The society has also placed many markers commemorating important events and sites. In 2005, the PCHS established the Annual Peg Smith-Mary Worthen Award to be presented at the Pulaski County Day celebration for the most outstanding article in the previous year's *Review*.



*The Pulaski County Historical Society has erected a number of markers and interpretive signs at the Mt. Holly Cemetery.*

## Local Level – Neighborhood Associations/Citizens

Historic preservation is known for its grass roots origins. In many instances neighborhood organizations have formed in older areas in response to threats such as demolition or to utilize historic preservation as one of many tools to promote revitalization efforts. Little Rock has over one hundred separate neighborhood organizations and many of these are located in the older historic areas of the city. The Central High Neighborhood Inc., and the Oak Forest Neighborhood Association are representative of these organizations.

And finally, Little Rock's citizens and property owners provide the broad base of support for the maintenance, rehabilitation and restoration of historic dwellings, commercial buildings and other structures. Some residents have lived in their homes most of their lives and provide good stewardship to the best of their abilities. Others take on the challenge of rehabilitation because they appreciate the quality of the house or neighborhood. It is the citizens of Little Rock whose day to day actions form the foundation for other historic preservation efforts in the city.



*Fair Park is one of many neighborhoods made up of pre-1960 dwellings.*

## V. Previous Historic Preservation and Planning Efforts

### Overview



*The Rose Building was a tax rehabilitation project on Main Street in the mid-1980s.*



*In 1992, design guidelines were prepared for the Hillcrest Neighborhood as part of revitalization efforts (3504 Hill Road).*

Little Rock remained a compact city for many years. Streetcars allowed the city to expand to the west and south during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century resulting in the formation of neighborhoods such as the Heights, Hillcrest and South End. The Depression of the 1930s and World War II dampened residential expansion and it was not until the late 1940s that a renewed burst of building construction occurred. As the suburbs expanded, urban renewal programs did away with many of Little Rock's downtown commercial structures, replacing them with parking lots and high-rise buildings. The character and appearance of downtown changed rapidly. Buildings of 20 and 30 stories transformed the downtown area from a predominately retail center to a district dominated by office space. Commuters drove in for the day and retreated to the suburbs with the afternoon rush hour. Historic buildings were often seen as an impediment to "progress" and during these years some of the city's most significant buildings were lost.

In response, the Quapaw Quarter Historic Association was formed in 1968. Utilizing federal tax policies that encourage redevelopment of historically significant structures, the Association led a revival of reinvestment in Little Rock's "old town." Initially focused on preserving single structures, the Association expanded its mission to include preservation of entire neighborhoods. With the decline of the inner city neighborhoods, the state of Arkansas established the Capitol Zoning District Commission in 1975 to discourage demolition and provide protection for the area around the Capitol and the Governor's Mansion Historic District. In the 1970s and 1980s, numerous nominations were also prepared to list historic neighborhoods and structures on the National Register. In 1981, the city established the Historic District Commission with oversight over the MacArthur Park Historic District.

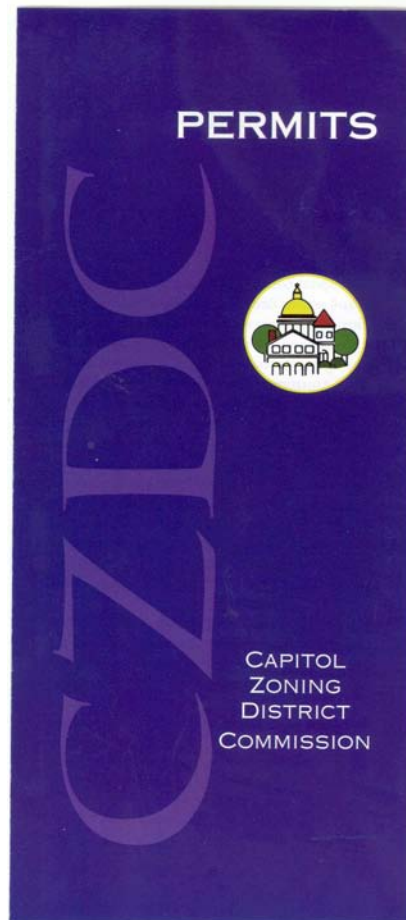
In the past two decades, preservation efforts have increased all across the city with many plans and studies focused on neighborhood and downtown revitalization. These efforts provide a strong basis for historic preservation in the city.

## Establishment of the Capitol Zoning District Commission

In the mid-1970's, the areas around the State Capitol and Governor's Mansion were in decline. To protect the area, the General Assembly created the Capitol Zoning District Commission (CDZC). The CZDC and its staff protect the special character of these neighborhoods by acting as a special planning and historic preservation commission. The CZDC reviews all proposals for construction work, demolition, or business uses in the district to make sure that they are appropriate and protect the special character of the neighborhoods. In this way, home and business owners know that their property values and quality of life will continue to improve. To insure appropriate development, the CZDC works closely with design and historic preservation professionals, and area residents and property owners, who sit on three advisory committees that make recommendations to the CZDC on proposals before it.

The CZDC conducts its review of work within the district independently of the city's Historic District Commission. The CZDC staff conducts most design reviews and approval, but some projects are also reviewed by the Commission's Design Committee.

The Capitol Zoning District includes the area around the State Capitol and the Governor's Mansion Historic District. The Governor's Mansion Historic District includes some of the city's most architecturally and historically significant dwellings as well as the home of the Arkansas Governor. This historic district was listed on the National Register in 1978 and the boundaries were expanded both in 1988 and 2001. The district includes 706 total structures, making it one of the largest National Register districts in the state. The Governor's Mansion Historic District is promoted through historic markers and walking tours. Private companies also offer driving tours of the historic district.



*The Capitol Zoning District requires permits for new construction and rehabilitation.*

## Creation of the Historic District Commission

The Little Rock Historic District Commission (HDC) plays an important role in the city's historic preservation movement. The HDC was created to promote and regulate preservation efforts in the city. The duties of the Commission are to preserve and protect sites and structures of historic and architectural interest and significance; to encourage private efforts to restore such sites, buildings, structures and their surroundings. Each of the Commission's five (5) members serve three (3)-year terms.



*The Little Rock Historic District Commission is responsible for overseeing the city's historic preservation program.*



*The Historic District Commission conducts design review of properties in the MacArthur Park Historic District (500 E. 9th Street).*

The HDC is responsible for surveying and inventorying Little Rock's historic properties and identifying those that have particular historic, cultural, or architectural significance. The HDC reports to the Planning and Development Department and makes recommendations on the adoption of historic preservation ordinances and on the designation of individual historic properties and districts.

Another important role of the HDC is to advise and assist owners of historic properties on aspects of preservation, renovation, rehabilitation, and reuse as well as on procedures for listing properties on the National Register of Historic Places. The HDC also reviews and makes decisions on applications for certificates of appropriateness, and it reviews proposed zoning amendments and applications that affect historic properties.

With Board of Directors' approval, the HDC has the power to acquire historic properties and preserve, restore, maintain and operate those properties. The HDC can apply for federal, state, and local funds to rehabilitate, preserve, improve, or stabilize properties within Little Rock's historic districts.

One of the major roles of the HDC is the review of projects proposed for the MacArthur Park Historic District and the issuance of Certificates of Appropriateness (COAs). The MacArthur Park Historic District is the only local ordinance district in Little Rock and the only area that is subject to design review by the HDC. The design guidelines were revised in 2006 and provide recommendations for rehabilitation, new construction and demolition. The HDC is authorized to adopt design review guidelines for each local ordinance historic district which is established.

## Creation and Operations of the Quapaw Quarter Association

All of Little Rock's history - from frontier days to the early years of the 20th century – is encompassed by the Quapaw Quarter, a nine-square mile area which includes Little Rock's central business district and adjacent residential neighborhoods. "Quapaw Quarter" is a special name that since 1962 has been used to identify this oldest and most historic portion of Little Rock. (The word "Quapaw" derives from the Quapaw Indians, who lived in central Arkansas before the arrival of white settlers in the early 19th century.) Although it actually encompasses a much wider area, the Quapaw Quarter is most closely associated with the neighborhoods surrounding MacArthur Park, the Governor's Mansion, and Central High School. It is in these three areas that Little Rock's historic preservation efforts have been concentrated for the past 40 years.

The majority of restored buildings in the Quapaw Quarter serve as private homes or businesses. Although they are not open to the public, they can be enjoyed from the street or sidewalk via driving or walking tours. In addition, the QQA arranges for several privately owned historic houses to be opened to the public during the first weekend in May for the Spring Tour of Historic Homes.

The QQA sponsors preservation workshops and offers technical advice to individuals interested in buying and restoring historic buildings. Since 2001, the association has been a Local Partner of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. This designation has enabled it to bring the National Trust's technical assistance, grants, and other programs to Little Rock. The association also works with city leaders to promote policies that will encourage preservation-based redevelopment of historic neighborhoods. In 2007, the QQA assumed the management of historic Curran Hall at 615 E. Capitol Avenue, which serves as the Little Rock Visitor Information Center.

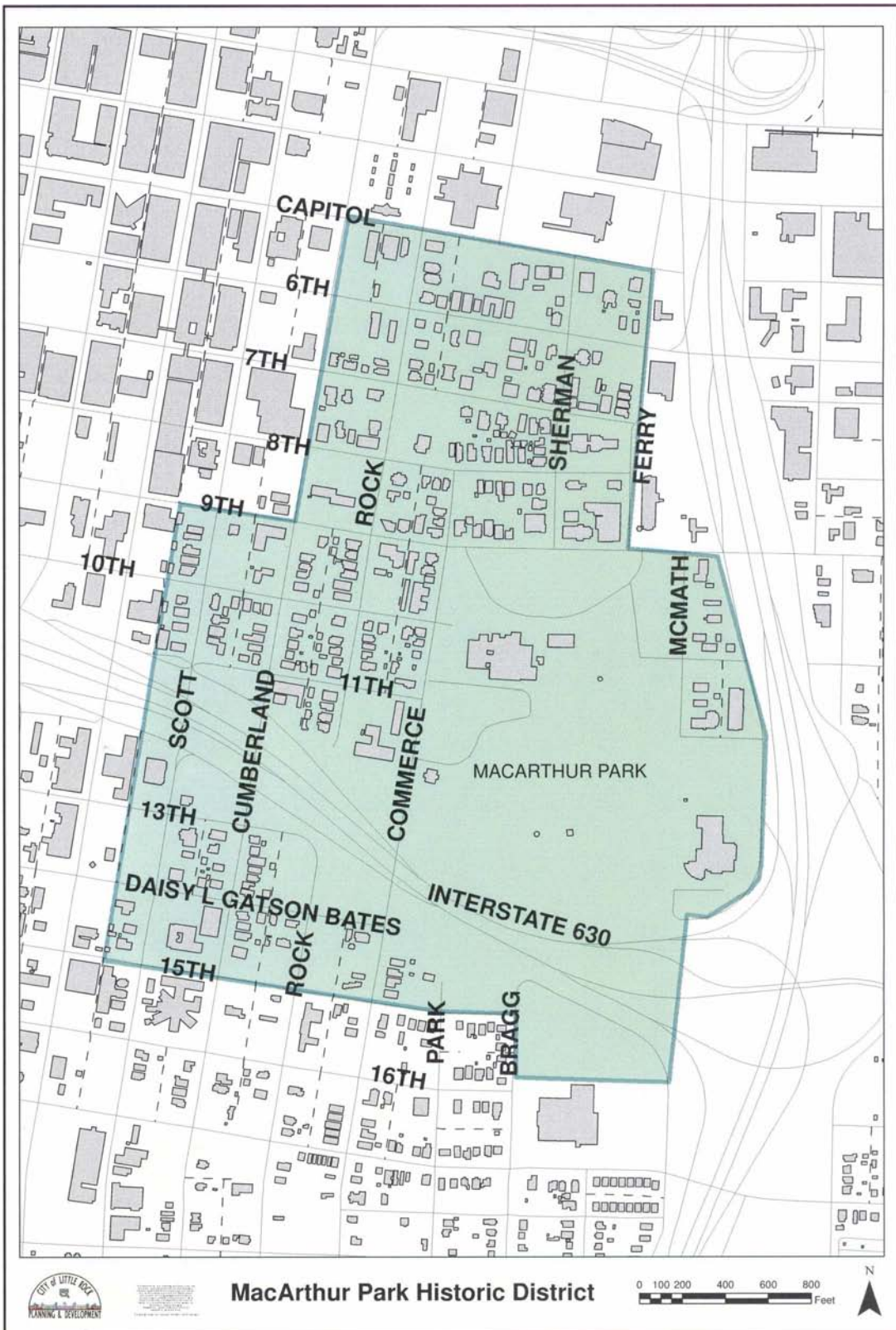


*Home tours sponsored by the QQA have been an important part of promoting Little Rock's historic districts.*



*The QQA office is located in the restored Curran Hall which also serves as the Little Rock Visitor Information Center. The rear of the building shown here also serves as the main entrance for visitors.*





*The MacArthur Park Historic District is currently the only local ordinance historic district in Little Rock.*

## Completion of Historic Resource Surveys

Historic resource surveys are a basic tool for the identification and recordation of historic properties. Historic resource surveys provide vital information on buildings such as date of construction and history, architectural style, condition, and changes and alterations. Surveys of historic resources are generally conducted within a specific geographical area to identify any individual properties or grouping of properties that may have particular significance in history and architecture. From this base line data, evaluations can then be made concerning a property or areas' significance and eligibility to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places.



*The historic resource survey of the Central High School Neighborhood included the inventory of this Queen Anne style house of concrete block construction at 1709 S. Park Street. This survey served as the basis for the Central High National Register nomination.*

In Little Rock, numerous historic resource surveys have been completed over the past several decades. The surveys have been conducted by both professionals and volunteers and have resulted in the listing of historic districts throughout the city. Surveys are generally funded by the city through matching grants from the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program. Historic resource surveys have been completed for downtown buildings as well as large neighborhoods such as Central High School and Governor's Mansion. In 2009, a survey of hundreds of dwellings was underway in the Dunbar Neighborhood.

In most cases in Little Rock, historic resource surveys have been completed to state standards. This "intensive" survey format includes filling out state inventory forms for each property, taking photographs, and identifying properties on tax maps. At the conclusion of the survey the forms are tabulated and copies provided to both the state office and the city. Properties are then evaluated for their significance and recommendations are made for further action such as the completion of National Register nominations.

Intensive survey methods provide valuable data and are the standard approach to historic resource surveys. However, they are also costly and time consuming. Little Rock has thousands of properties built before 1945 that have yet to be inventoried and many of these properties are within areas that meet National Register criteria. To facilitate the rapid assessment and identification of historic areas, alternative survey methods should be considered in the future. These methods are outlined in Chapter VII of this plan.

## Nominations to the National Register of Historic Places

The end result of intensive level surveys in Little Rock has often been the preparation of National Register nominations. The National Register of Historic Places is the nation's official list of properties that are important in the history, architectural history, archaeology, engineering, and culture of the United States. The National Register is maintained by the National Park Service, and expanded through nominations by individuals, organizations, state and local governments, and federal agencies. It includes individual buildings, structures, sites, and objects as well as historic districts. National Register listing recognizes the significance of properties and districts in a community.

The National Register is an honorary listing, but also provides important financial incentives for property owners. Properties that are listed individually, or are contributing to a historic district, may qualify for federal and state tax credits. Listing also provides opportunities for technical assistance and possible grants. Areas that are listed on the National Register generally see property values increase as homes are rehabilitated.

National Register listing generally does not provide any protection for historic buildings. Property owners may remodel buildings as they desire, or even raze them. Buildings do not have to be open to the public or be available for tours. Some protection for historic buildings does occur when federal funds are utilized. Federally funded projects must take into account their impacts to historic properties and assess whether or not those impacts are adverse or not.

Little Rock is fortunate in having over 200 properties listed on the National Register. Not only does this recognize many of the city's most historically and architecturally significant properties, but it also facilitates rehabilitation efforts, especially in light of the recent passage of the state rehabilitation tax credit.



*National Register-listed properties include the campus of Philander Smith College.*



*The Marshall Square Historic District was listed on the National Register in 1979.*



*The Hillcrest Historic District contains a fine collection of Craftsman dwellings and other architectural styles (500 block of Midland Street).*

Little Rock currently has 19 National Register Historic Districts:



*The Daisy Bates House at 1207 W. 28<sup>th</sup> Street is a National Historic Landmark for its association with the 1957 Civil Rights struggle in the city.*



*The Joe T. Robinson House at 2122 Broadway is a National Historic Landmark for its association with prominent Arkansas Governor and Senator Joe T. Robinson.*

1. Block 35, Cobblestone Alley
2. Boyle Park Historic District
3. Capitol View Historic District
4. Central High School Neighborhood Historic District
5. East Markham Street Historic District
6. Governor's Mansion Historic District
7. Hanger Hill Historic District
8. Hillcrest Historic District
9. MacArthur Park Historic District
10. Marshall Square Historic District
11. Philander Smith College Historic District
12. Railroad Call Historic District
13. South Main Street Apartments Historic District
14. South Main Street Commercial Historic District
15. South Main Street Residential Historic District
16. South Scott Street Historic District
17. Stiff Station Historic District
18. Tuf-Nut Historic Commercial District
19. West Seventh Street Historic District

In size, these districts range from two (2) resources to 1,460. In total, the historic districts of Little Rock collectively hold almost 4,000 resources, and approximately 65% are considered “contributing” resources.

In addition to these properties, Little Rock also has five National Historic Landmarks. These are properties that are considered to have significance on the national level and include:

1. The U.S. Arsenal Building, 503 East 9<sup>th</sup> Street
2. Daisy Bates House, 1207 West 28<sup>th</sup> Street
3. Old State House, 300 W. Markham Street
4. Central High School, 1500 S. Park Street
5. Joe T. Robinson House, 2122 Broadway

The first neighborhood designated as a National Register Historic District in Little Rock was MacArthur Park Historic District, listed in 1977. The park and district are named for General Douglas MacArthur, who was born in the U.S. Arsenal, or Tower Building, in 1880. The building itself is listed as a National Historic Landmark, an honor currently bestowed upon only three percent of National Register's 80,000 listed resources. The MacArthur Park Historic District contains approximately 275 residential, commercial, and institutional properties built between 1842 and 1935, including Federal, Greek Revival, Italianate, Second Empire, Queen Anne, Romanesque Revival, Colonial Revival, Neoclassical Revival, Craftsman, and nineteenth and twentieth century commercial styles.

MacArthur Park Historic District is also a local ordinance historic district under the jurisdiction of a local preservation review commission, the HDC. A local ordinance district protects the significant properties and historic character of the district, encouraging sensitive development in the district and discouraging unsympathetic changes or alterations to buildings. This happens through a process called *design review*, whereby the Little Rock Historic District Commission approves major changes that are planned for the district, ensuring that they respect important architectural, historical, and environmental characteristics. (See below for further details.)

Through the Capitol Zoning Commission, the State of Arkansas maintains similar jurisdiction over another of Little Rock's National Register historic districts, the Governor's Mansion Historic District and areas around the Arkansas Capitol Building. The Governor's Mansion Historic District was listed in the National Register in 1978. It contains primarily residential properties from 1880-1930 of Gothic Revival, Queen Anne, Romanesque Revival, Colonial Revival, Neoclassical Revival, Craftsman styles, in addition to the 1948-50 Jeffersonian-style Governor's Mansion. Thirty-eight of the district's 706 properties are individually listed in the National Register. One, the Joe T. Robinson House, is a National Historic Landmark for its association with this prominent Arkansas Governor.



*Curran Hall is located within the MacArthur Park Historic District.*



*The Governor's Mansion Historic District contains a wide variety of architectural styles such as this Craftsman dwelling at 1727 Center Street.*



*The Marshall Square Historic District contains identical plan Gabled Ell dwellings on E. 17<sup>th</sup> and E. 18<sup>th</sup> Streets.*



*This picnic shelter in Boyle Park is one of eight structures built by the CCC during the 1930s.*



*This dwelling is typical of those found on many blocks in the Central High Historic District (1518 Summit Street).*

The Marshall Square Historic District, listed in 1979, contains sixteen buildings that compose a solid block of vernacular rental houses from 1918. Little Rock's largest district, with 1,460 structures, is the Hillcrest Historic District, which was listed on the National Register in 1990. This district contains residential, commercial, and institutional properties from 1890-1940 and includes Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, English and Spanish Revival, American Foursquare, Craftsman, Art Deco, Moderne, and early twentieth century commercial styles.

The Boyle Park Historic District was listed on the National Register in 1995. It contains eight structures built in 1935-37 by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the Rustic style. The South Main Street Apartments Historic District, also listed in 1995, consists of two 1941 Colonial Revival apartment buildings.

In 1996, the Central High Neighborhood Historic District was added to the National Register. Featuring the National Historic Landmark Central High School, the district contains 812 structures built from 1900-1930 in the Bungalow/Craftsman, Tudor Revival, Colonial Revival, and Gothic Revival styles. In 1997, the Railroad Call historic District was listed. It contains three structures from 1906 that were originally railroad workers housing. In 1999, three historic districts were listed. The East Markham Street Historic District includes three commercial buildings from 1870-1905. The Philander Smith College Historic District contains eight structures associated with the historically African-American college, founded in 1877 to provide educational opportunities to freed slaves. The South Scott Street Historic District contains 17 residential properties dating from 1885-1950 in Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Craftsman, and Ranch styles.

The Capitol View Neighborhood Historic District comprises 499 buildings from 1900-1950 in the Queen Anne, Craftsman, English and Spanish Revival, Colonial Revival, and Minimal Traditional styles. The district was listed on the National Register in 2000. The Tuf-Nut Historic Commercial District listed in 2003, contains two industrial commercial buildings from 1922-1927. The Stiff Station District was added to the National Register in 2006. The neighborhood was developed beginning in the early twentieth century as a streetcar suburb and features mixed use historic architecture.

In 2007, two other historic districts were listed on the National Register; the South Main Commercial and South Main Residential Historic Districts. The South Main Commercial Historic District includes several blocks of commercial buildings built primarily from 1900 to 1930 in the 1300 to 1600 blocks of South Main Street. The South Main Residential Historic District is located further south and includes residential properties between 19<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> Streets. This district contains a number of dwellings designed in the Queen Anne, Colonial Revival and Tudor Revival styles. The Hanger Hill Historic District was listed on the National Register in 2008. This small district includes residential properties in the 1500 block of Welch Street. This district is notable for the use of concrete block for many of the dwellings and they reflect the Colonial Revival and Craftsman styles. Two historic districts were listed in 2009. One is Block 35, Cobblestone Alley in the River Market area. The second is the West 7th Street Historic District, a small commercial district containing 13 buildings.

In 2009, an intensive architectural survey was underway in the Dunbar Neighborhood. This area is located between the Central High Neighborhood and Governor's Mansion Historic Districts. It is likely that one or more National Register Historic Districts will be identified as a result of this survey in the Dunbar Neighborhood. This survey is scheduled to be completed in 2010.

In addition to the 19 historic districts, Little Rock also has 204 individually listed properties on the National Register. This list is located in Appendix A.



*The Capitol View Historic District contains a wide variety of architectural styles such as this Tudor Revival dwelling at 133 Pearl Street.*



*The dwelling at 1500 Welch Street in the Hanger Hill Historic District is an interesting combination of Dutch and Colonial Revival details.*



*The South Scott Street Historic District includes the 2400 block containing Gabled Ell and Craftsman style dwellings.*



*This apartment building at 2209 S. Main Street is in the South Main Apartments Historic District.*

## Previous City Planning Efforts and Their Impact on Historic Preservation

During the 1970s, the City of Little Rock became aware of the need to initiate and actively steward efforts of historic preservation within the city. Conspicuous neglect of architectural resources in the vicinity of the State Capitol had a negative image for the city and the state. Since then, many programs have been developed to ensure the identification and preservation of the buildings and sites that embody the city's history. These include plans for the entire community, the downtown area, specific highway corridors, and particular neighborhoods. In some of these plans, issues surrounding historic preservation efforts are examined in detail while in others historic preservation is more of a related or peripheral issue. The most relevant planning efforts of the past twenty years are presented in this section along with summaries of their impact on historic preservation.



*The master plan for the Central High School National Historic Site included a memorial garden and exhibits dedicated to the desegregation struggle of the 1950s.*

### **FUTURE Little Rock – A New Focus for Change, 1991**

In 1991, a comprehensive community planning effort was initiated by the City of Little Rock to identify key issues and concerns, develop strategic goals and identify resources and actions to implement an overall vision for the future of the city. A steering committee was appointed by the Board of Directors and the results of the effort were published in a report later that year. This was a broad community-wide effort with hundreds of citizens participating.

Although historic preservation was not a primary focus of this effort, a number of the recommendations dealt with downtown revitalization and tourism. Among the proposed strategies were:

- Develop and implement the master plan for downtown revitalization.
- Develop a master plan for the Central High Museum and revitalization of the Mosaic Templars of America Building as an African-American Cultural Center.
- Expand the role of City Beautiful Commission to improve the visual appearance of gateways and entrances to the city.



- Develop a tourism strategy that focuses on historic and cultural resources.
- Develop a walking trail and trolley as part of the initial Downtown Revitalization strategy.
- Create a Land Bank Authority to receive or buy decaying property and put it back in the hands of a neighborhood group, individual or developer.

Most of these goals have been achieved over the past two decades. Heritage tourism has been an important focus of the city and the walking trail connects many of downtown's historic sites and districts. The trolley provides transportation along Markham Street and adjacent areas. Central High School is now a National Historic Site, and the Visitor's Center opened in 2007. The Mosaic Templars Building was rebuilt and now houses an African-American museum. The planning effort of 1991 is also credited with spurring the city's promotion of the River Market District which is a center for restaurants, entertainment and tourism. Finally, a Land Bank was recently authorized and is now undertaking property acquisition and development.

In 2000, former Mayor Jim Dailey and the Little Rock City Board of Directors determined that the City would benefit from a follow-up evaluation of FUTURE Little Rock, which was implemented in 1992. A sixty-member Vision Team was appointed and a diverse group of citizens were appointed to 13 workgroups and charged with setting the direction of Little Rock's future for the next ten years. From this process 33 broad goals were presented and adopted by the Little Rock Board of Directors in January 2002. These goals included recommendations for historic preservation efforts downtown and in inner-city neighborhoods.



*Little Rock's downtown trolley contributes to tourism and the vibrancy of downtown.*



*The Farmer's Market in the River Market District is an important downtown attraction and draws large crowds on weekends.*

**VISION**  
LITTLE ROCK



**Focusing on Our Future**

*Vision Little Rock adopted goals encouraging downtown revitalization and inner city neighborhood preservation and restoration.*

## Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan Draft, 1996

In 1996, the Mayor appointed a Historic Preservation Task Force to examine how the city government dealt with historic preservation issues. The Task Force issued nine broad goals containing various objectives for completion. A primary component of the goals was the creation of a “Little Rock History Commission” which was to determine the significance of historic resources within the city. Among its duties, the History Commission was to have review over demolition requests made by the city and assess their impact to historic resources. In addition to the creation of the History Commission, the goals of the Task Force included having the City of Little Rock:

- Develop policies supportive of historic preservation.
- Establish and promote incentives that encourage preservation of historic resources.
- Provide historic resources with any and all benefits which may be associated with official recognition of their historic status.
- Preserve historic resources that reflect the City’s racial, cultural, social and economic diversity.
- Educate the public about the importance and benefits of the City’s historic resources.
- Generate support from Little Rock’s business community to invest in the protection and sensitive use of historic resources.
- Provide sufficient money to implement all worthy historic preservation activities.
- Work with the state on policies to support local preservation efforts.



*The Historic Preservation Task Force of 1996 stressed the need for completion of survey and National Register efforts for areas such as south of Roosevelt Road (2723 S. Ringo Street).*

An argument for the creation of the Little Rock History Commission was the perception that some of the responsibilities for promoting historic preservation were outside the scope of the Historic District Commission. There was also the concern that advocacy of preservation needed be within another City government body rather than left to private or non-profit groups. Despite the recommendations of the Task Force, a History Commission was never put in place, and there does not appear to be sufficient public or governmental support for such an entity today. However, the Task Force goals are consistent with future actions recommended in this plan for the HDC and Quapaw Quarter Association.

## Historic District Infill Development Plan, 2000

In January of 1999, a tornado struck several of the older neighborhoods in Little Rock. As a result dozens of dwellings were destroyed or damaged so badly that they were later razed. This resulted in gaps in the streetscape and a local architectural firm was hired to prepare infill standards for these areas. The *Historic District Infill Development Plan* was completed in 2000 and provides six examples of residential infill that meet the general guidelines used by the Historic District Commission and the Capitol Zoning District Commission.

These infill designs are typical of those used in similar historic districts across the country. The designs include floor plans such as a one-bedroom dwelling to a four-plex multi-family unit. The dwellings are designed to be compatible in roof shape, massing, setback, materials and overall form and plan to be compatible with adjacent historic dwellings. These designs are appropriate for many of the National Register historic districts in the city and developers and builders are encouraged to use these as prototypes when they construct new buildings in the districts.

## The Downtown Neighborhood Plan for the Future 2006

One of the most important plans produced by the City is the *Downtown Neighborhood Plan for the Future*. Prepared by a 12-member committee and the City Planning and Development Department, this report focused on the inner-city neighborhoods bounded by Interstate 630 on the north, Interstate 30 on the east, Dr. Martin Luther King Drive on the west and Roosevelt Road on the south. Within this boundary is the Governor's Mansion Historic District, the Philander Smith Historic District, the South Main Commercial District, the South Main Residential District, the South Scott Historic District and Marshall Square Historic District. The area also includes a section of the MacArthur Park Historic District and the potentially eligible Dunbar Historic District.

The plan details a number of challenges that affect not only the study area but also adjacent historic neighborhoods. These challenges include a low rate of owner-occupied dwellings and a large number of vacant and abandoned houses. Within the study area over 68 percent of the households were identified as having low to moderate incomes. In housing, 29 percent were owner-occupied, 49 percent were rental dwellings and 22 percent were vacant.



*This infill design was for blocks comprised mainly of Craftsman and Bungalow style dwellings.*



*This infill project produced designs compatible with various types of historic architecture. This design is similar to American Foursquare plan houses of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.*



*The 2006 Downtown Plan addressed the need to increase rehabilitation and home ownership in neighborhoods such as Dunbar (2321 S. Ringo Street).*



*The 1300 block of S. Main Street is part of the Southside Main Street project.*

One of the six major goals of the plan was to “Rehabilitate decayed structures and overgrown vacant lots, residential and commercial.” As part of this effort were the objectives to “Improve protections for historic structures,” “Increase home ownership to at least 60 percent of our housing units,” and “Reverse the negative image of the Downtown Neighborhoods by publicizing our safe and desirable quality of life and attracting people to occupy our vacant houses and lots.” These goals were intertwined with other objectives such as reducing crime, promoting affordable health care, and increasing jobs and job training.

Many of the goals contained within the *Downtown Neighborhood Plan* are those also recommended within this report. These goals included:

- completing historic surveys of the area
- listing eligible neighborhoods and buildings on the National Register
- protecting buildings from demolition or inappropriate alterations
- promoting compatible infill
- spurring rehabilitation through incentive programs and enforcement of maintenance codes

### **Southside Main Street Project, 2006**

The Southside Main Street Project is a nonprofit organization dedicated to developing a positive image of the area between I-630 and Roosevelt Road. As a pilot program of Main Street Arkansas, the project is committed to bringing vitality and business to the area by using the very successful “Main Street” model which uses historic preservation and rehabilitation as the core for identifying and developing the south Main Street area.

The Main Street model encompasses:

- Design
- Organization
- Promotion
- Economic restructuring

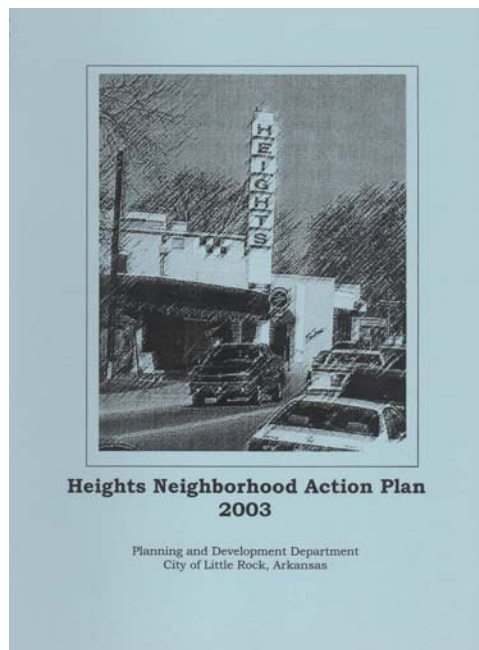
These principles focus on incremental, comprehensive change that emphasizes quality and the cooperation of public and private sectors. According to the National Main Street Center, for every dollar invested in a local Main Street program, \$35.17 is invested in the community. This positive turn of investment preserves significant

## Neighborhood Plans, ca. 1990 - 2008

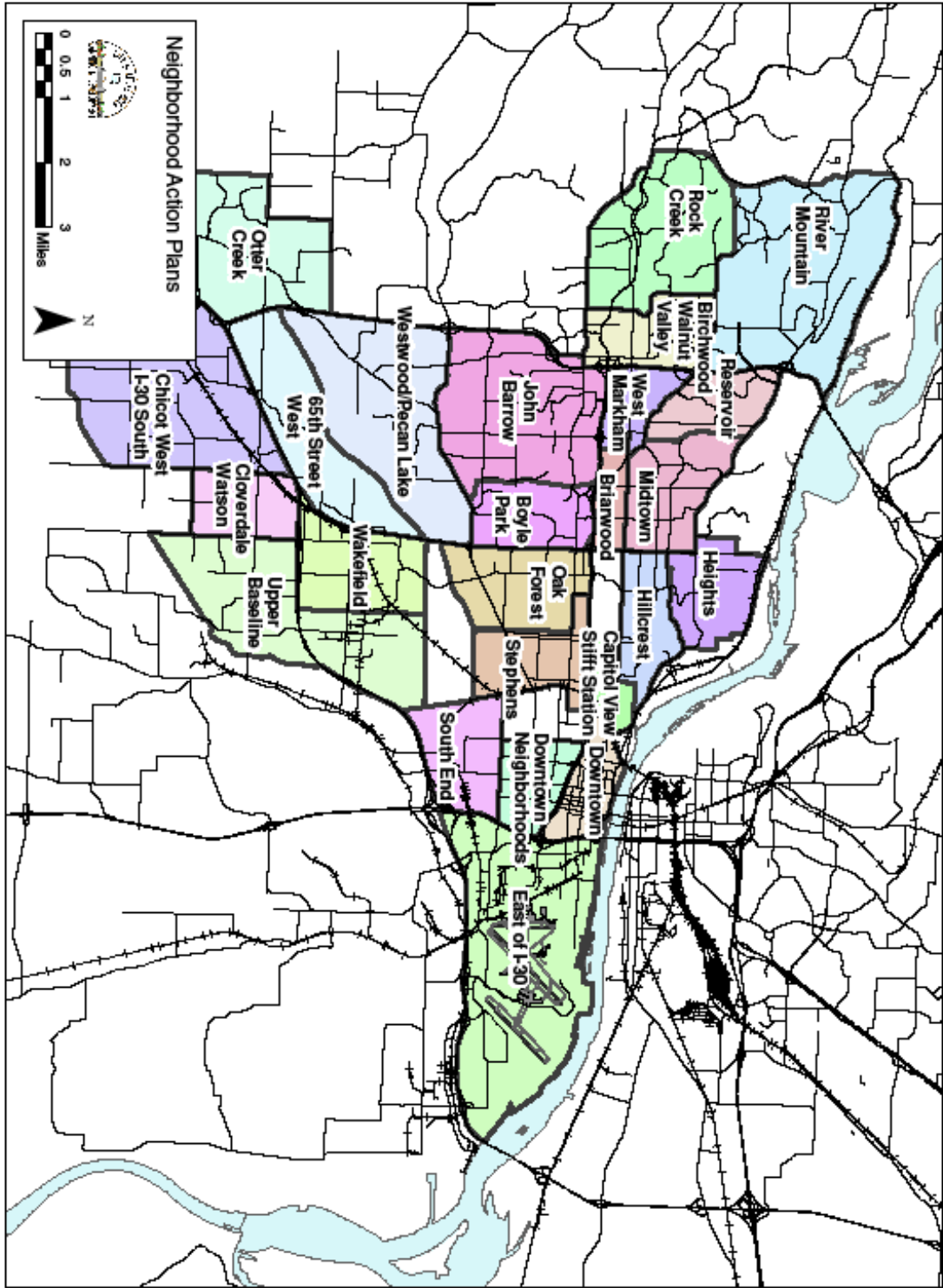
Neighborhood plans are a cooperative effort between the City and residents in different sections of Little Rock. The impetus for a neighborhood plan is a collective interest by residents of a neighborhood seeking specific improvements in their neighborhood. These citizens organize a committee that develops a list of goals, objectives and action statements to address needs or desires. The committee presents a plan document to the Little Rock Planning Commission and Board of Directors, whose staff helps facilitate the process.

As an example from 2001, residents of the Boyle Park neighborhood sought to reduce the amount and speed of through traffic they noticed in the area. The Boyle Park Action Plan committee was organized out of a concern not only for the safety of neighborhood pedestrians and drivers, but also that the increased volume and speed of traffic was diminishing the attractiveness of the neighborhood. The goal as presented in the Plan document was to “ensure safe and efficient movement of traffic in, around, and through the neighborhood,” through clearly stated objectives: “alter the traffic pattern to reduce or eliminate cut-through traffic” and “reduce the volume and speed of all traffic” in the area. To achieve the stated goal, the plan enumerated a multi-point list of specific actions, which included physical changes to existing infrastructure, recommendations for traffic studies, and re-classification by the city of local bike plans to reduce dependence on vehicles for accessing Boyle Park.

Currently in Little Rock there are more than two dozen active neighborhood plans. Goals include drainage improvement, parking restrictions, and general appearance of yards. A neighborhood plan is a vehicle for residents outside of a local ordinance district to guide the appearance and upkeep of their neighborhood. In fact, the Hillcrest Neighborhood Plan sought to establish design guidelines to preserve the eclectic collection of architecture that characterizes the growth of the Hillcrest Historic Neighborhood as a suburb of Little Rock.



*The Heights is one of many Neighborhood Action Plans completed for historic areas of the city.*



*Neighborhoods with Neighborhood Action Plans in Little Rock.*

## Other Planning Efforts

### The Central High and Capitol Hill Neighborhoods Design Overlay District, 2009

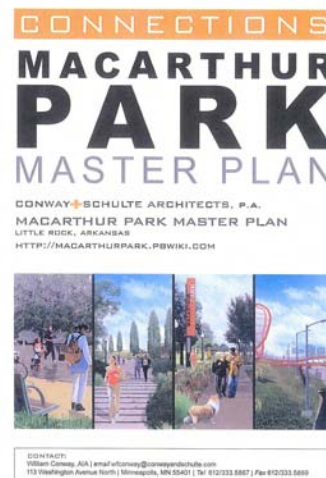
The area residents worked toward the development of a sustainable community in which the livability of the neighborhoods will be considered in all decisions made with regard to their short-term and long-term social and economic development. The neighborhoods will also consider, as a top priority, the efficiency of the neighborhoods and their various systems as they begin to redevelop a community that will be able to compete more effectively in global markets. Additionally, the neighborhoods intend to focus on the development of increased incomes for their citizens as well as on the development of multiple initiatives geared toward attracting others to live, work and play within the area.

The plan is part zoning tool (design overlay district) and part guidelines for the implementation of a local ordinance historic district. The consideration of a Design Overlay District in part of the geographic area that this plan addresses is the first step in implementing the long-term strategic plan for the neighborhood.

### Connections MacArthur Park Master Plan, 2009

This plan is unique because it is made up of two significant and related components: a Master Plan of proposed improvements to MacArthur Park, and recommendations for improving connections between the Park and surrounding districts. While each of these components requires a distinct approach and expertise, the success of the Master Plan relies on their reciprocal and productive relationship.

Strengthening MacArthur Park's role as a neighborhood park is the goal of the Master Plan, a stronger more vital park can serve as a catalyst for improved connections between the park and surrounding districts; The River Market, South Main (SOMA), Governor's Mansion area, etc. Different from event parks or theme parks designed to draw regional visitors for visits of limited duration, MacArthur Park is a focal point for a broad spectrum of community activities that define everyday life. It is a green room for gathering, front door for park institutions, and site of arts and educational opportunities. With robust use by friendly faces and watchful eyes of neighborhood residents, safety and security can be enhanced.



*The Connections MacArthur Park Master Plan was recently completed and provides guidance for future use of the park and improving park access to adjacent neighborhoods.*

## Heritage Tourism Efforts and Historic Preservation

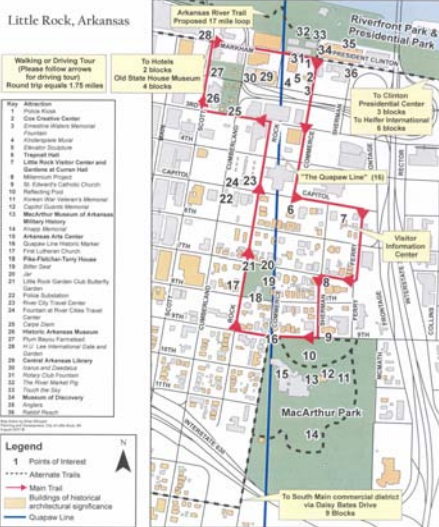
Historic buildings and neighborhoods form the basis for much of the city's promotion of heritage tourism. Heritage tourists are those who come to the city to visit historic sites and tour older neighborhoods and downtown areas. These types of tourists typically stay longer and spend more money than others. Little Rock has a rich collection of heritage tourism resources, including structures from the city's frontier period, historically black colleges, distinctive residential areas and the nation's largest presidential library. During the past five years, several of these sites have been completed, restored or opened for the first time. This wide array of new attractions and Little Rock's location near the center of the U.S. make the city a destination with tremendous heritage tourism potential. The City of Little Rock's website provides a heritage tourism link to help visitors locate museums, lodging, and sites of interest.

Within the Quapaw Quarter, a nine-square mile area that includes the oldest portions of the city, visitors to Little Rock can experience a wide range of historic sites, buildings, museums and streetscapes. These resources are complemented by the lively River Market District, with many shops and restaurants attractive to tourists. The following represents some of the major efforts now underway in the city.

### Museum, Art & Heritage Trail

The MacArthur Park Group, the Keep Little Rock Beautiful Committee and the HDC staff has developed a 1.75 mile driving/walking tour that incorporates sites of interest relating to the city's history. The north end of the trail is on Markham Street, along Riverfront Park; the south end of the trail touches MacArthur Park. The trail passes through several blocks of the MacArthur Park Historic District, with some of the city's oldest residences, history museums, and public art, and outdoor sculpture. Within MacArthur Park, one may continue on footpaths and visit the Arkansas Arts Center, the MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History, and two war memorial sites. Likewise, at the north end of the trail are additional sites including the River Market District, a pedestrian-oriented area offering a mix of commercial, residential, cultural, and entertainment uses, as well as the Museum of Discovery and the Clinton Presidential Library and Museum.

### MUSEUM, ART & HERITAGE TRAIL



*The Museum, Art and Heritage Trail provides visitors with an excellent walking tour for downtown and MacArthur Park.*



## The Quapaw Quarter and Area Historic Districts

The Quapaw Quarter is most closely associated with the neighborhoods surrounding MacArthur Park, the Arkansas Governor's Mansion, and Central High School. Most of the city's oldest buildings, including those from before the Civil War, are found within the boundaries of the MacArthur Park Historic District. Homes in the Governor's Mansion Historic District generally date from about 1880 to 1920, including an outstanding collection of Queen Anne, Colonial Revival and Craftsman architecture. The Central High neighborhood was established as a National Register Historic District in 1996. Most buildings in the district date from 1890 to 1930, with exceptional examples of a wide variety of architectural styles including Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, American Four-square, and Craftsman. At the heart of the district are Little Rock Central High School and the Central High National Historic Site and Museum. West of the downtown area traditionally considered the Quapaw District is the Hillcrest Historic District. This National Register of Historic Places collection features homes and cottages dating back to the early part of the 20th century.



*The Governor's Mansion, built in 1950, is one of the focal points of the Governor's Mansion Historic District.*

## Historic Arkansas Museum

The Historic Arkansas Museum, formerly known as the Arkansas Territorial Restoration, is comprised of Little Rock's oldest buildings on their original sites: the Hinderliter Grog Shop, the McVicar and Brownlee Houses, and the *Arkansas Gazette* print shop. The state's primary interpreter of frontier Arkansas, the museum provides education programs, outreach and exhibits that reach more than 90,000 schoolchildren, local citizens and tourists each year.

The Historic Arkansas Museum also houses one of the state's premier collections of items representing frontier Arkansas. The museum produced the first comprehensive study of Arkansas's early artists and artisans, which now guides the museum's collection policy. Holdings include nineteenth-century Arkansas-made and -used pieces such as quilts, bowie knives, clothing, dolls, furniture and paintings.



*The Historic Arkansas Museum includes many exhibits related to early state history.*



### **Curran Hall**

A Greek Revival home built in 1842, Curran Hall has housed the Little Rock Visitor's Center since 2002. The City of Little Rock and the Little Rock Advertising and Promotion Commission acquired Curran Hall in 1996, saving it from demolition. Only six blocks off the river and within the MacArthur Park Historic District, the Visitor's Center is a natural orientation point for tourists to Little Rock. The home's well-known garden attracts tour groups and visitors from around the world.

*The Old State House Museum is one of five National Historic Landmarks in Little Rock.*



### **Old State House Museum**

The Old State House Museum is housed in the oldest surviving state capitol west of the Mississippi River, designated a National Historic Landmark. Overlooking the Arkansas River, the Old State House Museum houses always-changing exhibits on varied topics such as architecture, Arkansas women in history and the state's governors. Period rooms reflect interior decor from the state's history. The Museum holdings include nationally recognized collections of Civil War battle flags, pottery, African-American quilts and artifacts from Arkansas's musical heritage.

*The MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History is located in the U.S. Arsenal Building in MacArthur Park.*

### **MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History**

The MacArthur Museum interprets Arkansas military heritage from its territorial period to the present. Located in the historic Tower Building of the Little Rock Arsenal--the birthplace of General Douglas MacArthur--the museum preserves the contributions of Arkansas men and women who served in the armed forces. Exhibits feature artifacts, photographs, weapons, documents, uniforms and other military items to vividly portray Arkansas's military history at home and abroad.



### **Arkansas State Capitol**

Free scheduled tours of the Capitol Building are available for visitors who want to learn more about the century-old structure. Located on the grounds are several monuments including monuments to veterans, police, Confederate soldiers, Confederate women, and Civil War prisoners, as well as the Little Rock Nine statue.

*The Arkansas State Capitol exemplifies the Neoclassical style popular in the early 20th century.*

## Mosaic Templars Cultural Center and Museum

The Mosaic Templars Cultural Center focuses on interpreting and celebrating African-American history, culture and community in Arkansas from 1870 to the present. For nearly forty years, the Mosaic Templars' Headquarters Building was the anchor of Little Rock's thriving African-American Ninth Street social and economic district. The original Mosaic Templars headquarters burned in March 2005, but in September of 2008 a new building opened on the site as a state-of-the-art facility with more than 8,000 square feet of interactive exhibit and education space.



*The Mosaic Templars Cultural Center is located at 501 W. 9<sup>th</sup> Street.*

## Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site Visitor Center

Open since 2007, the Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site Visitor Center contains interactive exhibits on the 1957 desegregation crisis at Little Rock Central High School. Visitors to the center can experience the history and significance of the conflict in which the U.S. resolved to establish African-American civil rights in the face of southern defiance. The center also displays changing exhibits related to civil rights.



*The Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site Visitor Center provides displays and information related to the city's Civil Rights struggle.*

## Clinton Presidential Center

Opened in 2004, the Clinton Presidential Library and Museum cantilevers over the Arkansas River, echoing President Bill Clinton's campaign promise to "build a bridge to the 21<sup>st</sup> century." Holdings at the Clinton Presidential Library and Museum are the largest within the presidential library system, including 76.8 million pages of documents, 1.85 million photographs and over 84,600 museum artifacts.



*The Clinton Presidential Center has increased tourism in the downtown area.*

In addition to the archival collection and research facilities, the Clinton Presidential Library and Museum features exhibits, special events, and educational programs. The museum includes replicas of the Oval Office and the Cabinet Room.

A leading example of urban renewal, the park was built on the site of abandoned railroad tracks, and the Clinton School of Public Service is housed in a former passenger train terminal—the Choctaw Station. A railroad bridge across the Arkansas River, leading to North Little Rock is being converted into a pedestrian bridge.



*The Museum of Black Arkansans and Performing Arts Center is located in the historic First Baptist Church on Louisiana Street.*

## **The Museum of Black Arkansans and Performing Arts Center**

Originally known as Ernie's Museum on Black Arkansans, or EMOBA, the center's mission is to educate all Arkansans about the significant role African-Americans have played in the cultural development of the state. Still under development, EMOBA plans to showcase the achievements of past generations of Black Arkansans, thereby keeping Black heritage alive and inspiring pride and unity in communities throughout Arkansas.

EMOBA's goals are to create a Black hall of fame, a performing arts theater, exhibits of African-American culture and facilities for educating youth and adults in the arts.

## **Civil War Heritage Sites in Little Rock**

Little Rock was a strategic center for the Confederacy during the Civil War. The Little Rock Campaign in the summer of 1863 led to several engagements between Confederate and Union forces north and east of the city. The Battle of Reed's Bridge at Jacksonville was one of the most significant of the campaign and a battlefield park has been established at this site. Other historic markers and exhibits detail the location of the Marmaduke-Walker duel between two Confederate generals and the importance of the U.S. Arsenal in the city. The state has created several driving tours and other informational brochures on Civil War sites in Arkansas and Little Rock.



*Civil War sites in Little Rock are detailed in the Arkansas Civil War Heritage Trail brochure.*



*In the vicinity of Little Rock are several sites associated with the Little Rock Campaign of 1863.*