



## OFFICE OF HISTORIC RESOURCES INFO BRIEF

# HPOZ FAQs

### **What is an HPOZ and how does it work?**

A Historic Preservation Overlay Zone, or HPOZ, is an area of the city which is designated as containing structures, landscaping, natural features or sites having historic, architectural, cultural or aesthetic significance. To receive such designation, an area must be adopted as an HPOZ by the City Planning Commission and the City Council through a zone change procedure that includes notification of all affected and nearby property owners and public hearings. Once designated, areas have an HPOZ overlay added to their zoning, and are subject to special regulations under Section 12.20.3 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code. Each HPOZ area has a five member HPOZ Board to review and make recommendations on projects and promote historic preservation within the designated area. Some HPOZs share a seven member Board. Most types of exterior changes or improvements to properties in an HPOZ area require written approval from the Planning Department.

### **How do I apply for a project within an HPOZ?**

To apply for a project within an HPOZ follow these instructions: [How to Submit a Project Within an HPOZ](#).

### **How does the HPOZ office clear permits?**

If you have visited the Department of Building and Safety at 201 North Figueroa St, and they have directed you to the HPOZ Office, here's what you need to know. Depending on the scale of your project it will be subject to either a "Conforming Work" approval or a "Certificate" approval (Certificate of Appropriateness or Certificate of Compatibility). For more information on [project approval process](#) and requirements, click [here](#). After your project has been approved, the [City Staff](#) in charge of you HPOZ can clear the project





electronically, meaning there is no need to come into the HPOZ office. For a smoother permitting process, the HPOZ unit advises consulting the HPOZ planner before apply for permits at the [Department of Building and Safety](#). We recommend this, because of the specific project requirements and plan detail requirements the HPOZ units asks for.

### **How long will it take to get approval on a project within an HPOZ?**

The approval timeline varies depending on the type of project and processing procedures. For a timeline estimate consult the project type chart and the Review Procedures Chart found under the [HPOZ Review Process](#).

### **What is the best way to contact my HPOZ's Planner?**

The best way to contact an HPOZ Planner is by email. Staff contact information can be found [on each HPOZ page](#). To make sure communication is as efficient as possible it is best to send an email with the project address and HPOZ name in the subject, and a brief project description in the body of the email. If you have an existing permit, please specify the 15 digit number in your correspondence with your HPOZ planner.

For example:

Subject: 100 N Spring St.; Highland Park HPOZ;

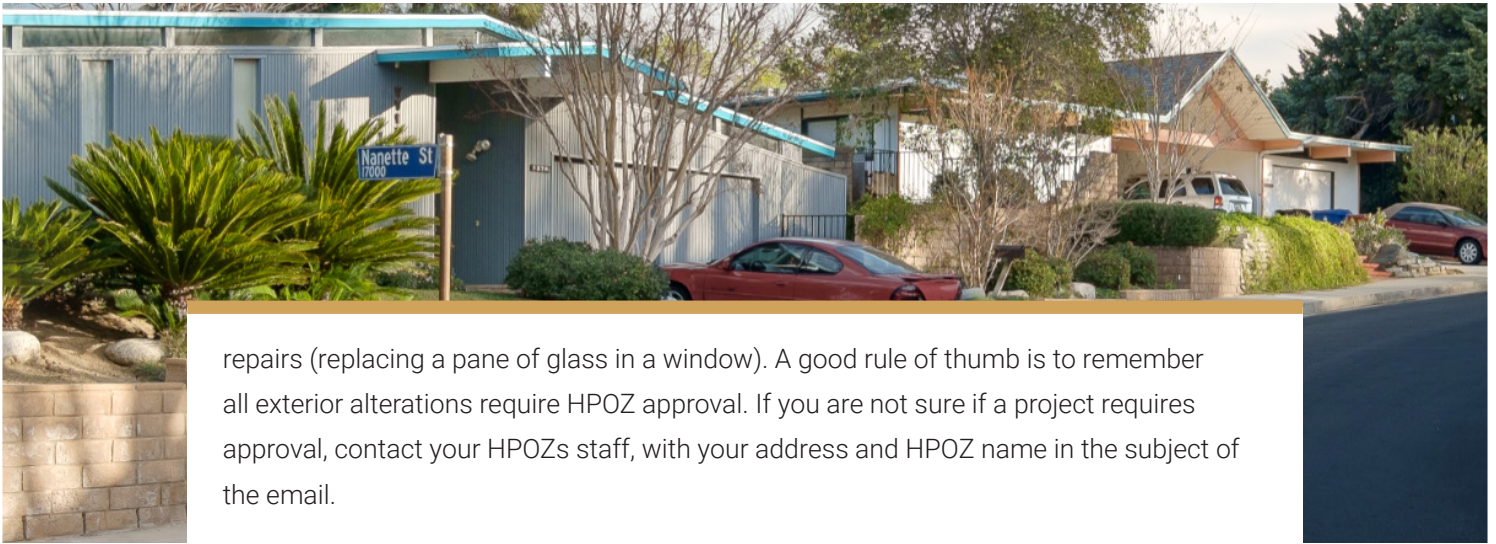
Body: In-kind reroofing of the structure; Permit XXXXX-XXXXX-XXXXX

### **Where can I get more information on restoration practices?**

Visit the Incentives and Resources section of our site for general restoration information, or visit your HPOZs page for HPOZ specific restoration requirements detailed in the Preservation Plan.

### **Do I need approval for projects that do not require a building permit?**

Yes, HPOZs require approval for many types of projects that do not require building permits; such as painting, concrete alterations, most landscaping, and some simple



repairs (replacing a pane of glass in a window). A good rule of thumb is to remember all exterior alterations require HPOZ approval. If you are not sure if a project requires approval, contact your HPOZs staff, with your address and HPOZ name in the subject of the email.

### **Where can I learn more about my structure's building permit history?**

Visit the Department of Building and Safety's public [Building Records System](#) to view the full permit history for your property.

### **What are the boundaries of an HPOZ?**

HPOZ boundary maps can be found on each HPOZ's page on the website.

### **What fees apply for HPOZ project review?**

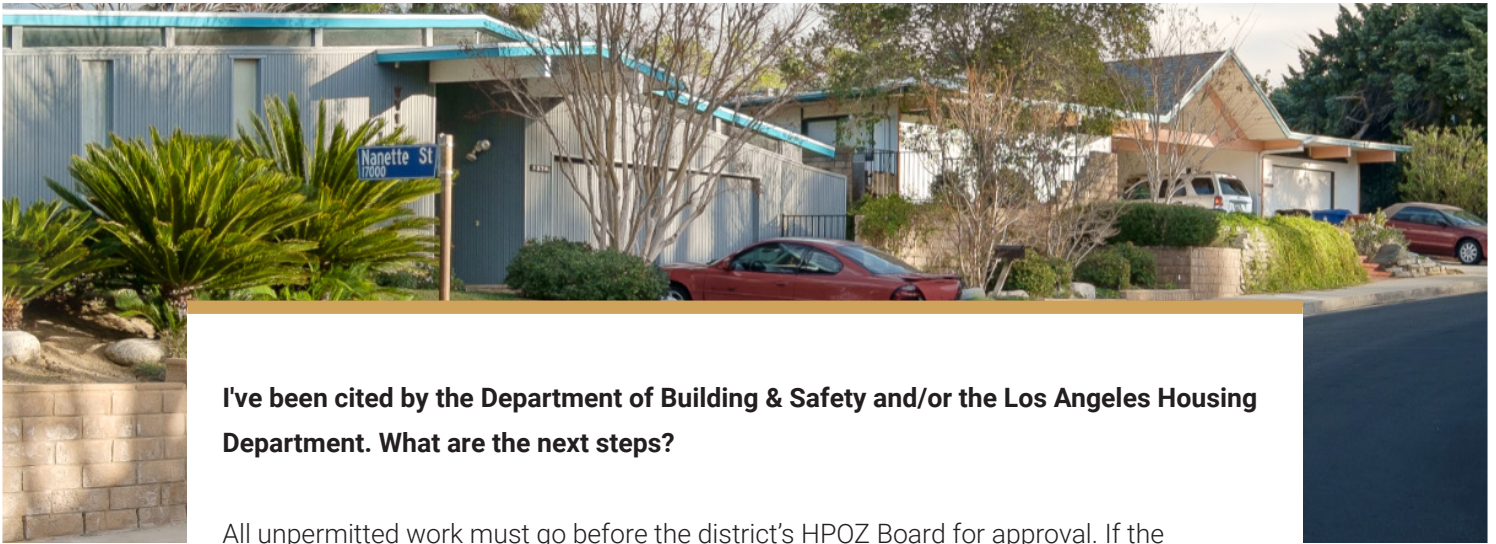
There is currently no fee for Minor Conforming Work applications (CWC and CWNC). The fees for Major Conforming Work requests and Certificate Cases (COA and CCMP) can be calculated with the Department of [City Planning's Fee Estimator Tool](#).

### **Are there funding options to help restore my home?**

The Mills Act, a tax incentive program, may be able to help reduce property taxes on Contributing historic properties to aid in rehabilitation. More information about the program can be found under the portion of the site. The HPOZ program does not offer any additional financial incentives.

### **When do HPOZ Boards meet?**

HPOZ Boards meet twice monthly, their meeting time and location is listed on the individual [HPOZ pages](#). Meeting times can also be found on the HPOZ Calendar found in the [Local Historic Districts \(HPOZs\) page](#).



**I've been cited by the Department of Building & Safety and/or the Los Angeles Housing Department. What are the next steps?**

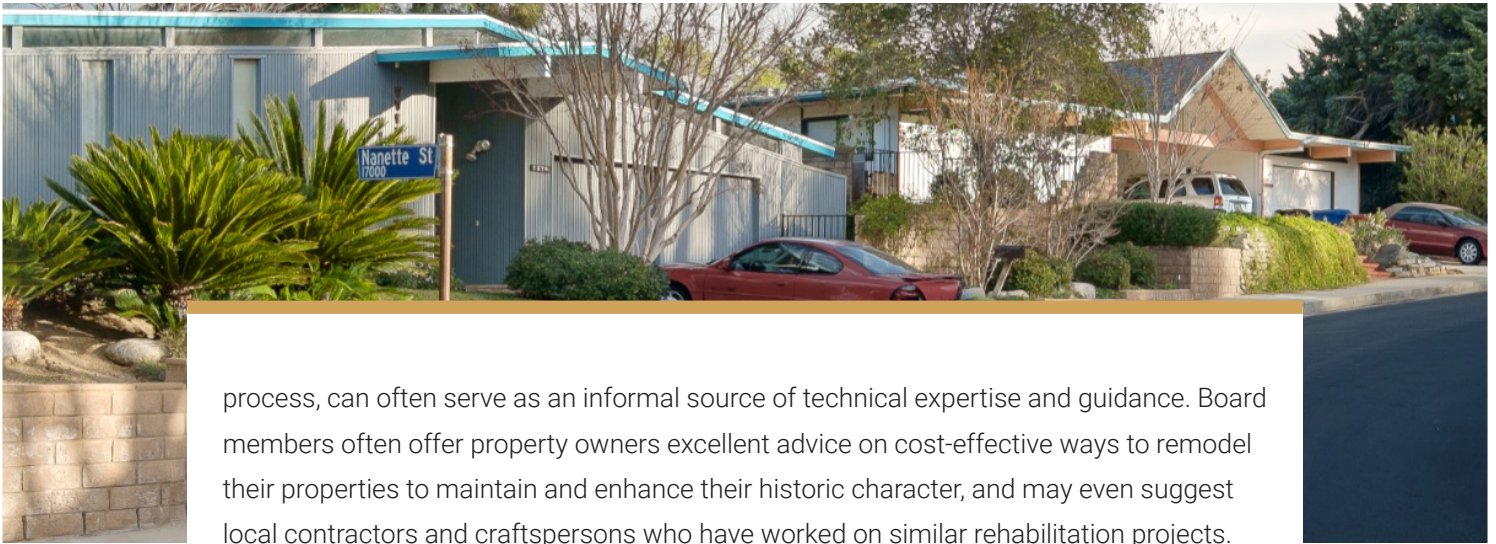
All unpermitted work must go before the district's HPOZ Board for approval. If the unpermitted construction does not comply with the Preservation Plan, the homeowner will be asked to restore the property to its original condition. If the work can be altered to comply, the HPOZ Board will recommend options to make the structure compatible. If you are unsure whether work done on your property was permitted or will require permitting, contact the [Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety](#) and [HPOZ Planning Staff](#).

**What are the possible advantages of living in an HPOZ?**

Control over inappropriate alterations: HPOZs offer one of the most effective tools to protect the unique historic exterior architectural character of neighborhoods. The HPOZ process ensures that proposals for exterior alterations, additions, and new construction in historic neighborhoods receive appropriate review and scrutiny. Designation as an HPOZ helps to ensure that the most distinctive, historic, and charming qualities of the neighborhood will be preserved. Increase in property values: Numerous studies nationally have found that homes within historic districts such as HPOZs tend to appreciate in value at a higher rate than similar homes outside designated historic districts. Many homebuyers specifically seek out homes in unique historic neighborhoods and welcome the assurance that the qualities which attracted them to the neighborhood are more likely to endure over time. Residential homeowners also find that property values increase when historic preservation standards are used in rehabilitating their homes.

Eligibility for property tax reductions: Under the [Mills Act program](#), owners of "contributing structures" (those structures that were built during the predominant period of development in the neighborhood and that have retained most of their historic architectural features) are eligible to enter into a contract with the City that can result in substantial property tax savings.

Preservation expertise: The HPOZ Board, in addition to its formal role in reviewing



process, can often serve as an informal source of technical expertise and guidance. Board members often offer property owners excellent advice on cost-effective ways to remodel their properties to maintain and enhance their historic character, and may even suggest local contractors and craftsmen who have worked on similar rehabilitation projects.

Enhanced sense of community: The HPOZ approval process can often bring a neighborhood together around a common source of pride: a neighborhood's history and architectural character. The designation itself can help create a sense of identity among neighborhood residents and greater awareness of the neighborhood throughout the city.

### **What are the possible disadvantages of HPOZs?**

Property owners should be aware that properties located within an HPOZ are subject to additional review processes. A property owner may need to make a presentation to their local HPOZ Board. Most types of exterior changes or improvements must be approved by the Department of City Planning: minor modifications may be approved very quickly, but more significant changes may be under review for up to 75 days. Projects that would degrade the historic character of the building or the neighborhood may not be allowed.

An HPOZ is also not the right tool for every neighborhood. Sometimes, neighborhoods become interested in achieving HPOZ status largely to stop out-of-scale new development. An HPOZ should not be seen as an "anti-mansionization" tool: other zoning tools may better shape the scale and character of new construction. An HPOZ is best utilized when a neighborhood has a cohesive historic character and community members have reached a consensus that they wish to preserve those historic architectural features.

