

preserveokc





Adopted by the Historic Preservation Commission 1/3/2020 |

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Allen Brown".

Allen Brown, Chair

Adopted by the Planning Commission 4/9/2020 |

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Janis Powers".

Janis Powers, Chair

Received by the City Council 7/7/2020 |

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Holt".

David Holt, Mayor

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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First National Bank and Trust Company Building,
constructed in 1930 and Listed in the National
Register of Historic Places in 2018.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	6	chapterthree: Our Plan	64
Official Position on Historic Preservation	11	Big Idea One: Strengthen Public Support.....	66
chapterone: Introduction: Why Preserve?	12	Big Idea Two: Practice Good Stewardship.....	76
Issues and Opportunities	16	Big Idea Three: Protect Historic Resources	
What is Historic Preservation?	18	Citywide	82
What are Historic Resources?.....	20	Big Idea Four: Develop Effective Tools	98
Preservation Tools.....	22	chapterfour: Implementation	110
Benefits of Historic Preservation	24	Appendix A: Additional Resources	142
Regulatory Basis for Historic Preservation	32		
chaptertwo: OKC's Historic Resources	36		
Historic Overview	37		
Oklahoma City's Historic Resources Today	51		
Formally Recognized Historic Resources	54		
Potential Historic Resources.....	56		
Completed Surveys of Historic Resources			
in Oklahoma City	58		
Priorities for Future Work	62		

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Oklahoma City is in the midst of a nationally-recognized renaissance, centered on the revitalization of historic places, building on the city's rich history and unique identity. From renewed interest in historic neighborhoods, to an explosion of revitalization in historic commercial districts, to the rejuvenation of long-vacant landmark buildings, the physical fabric of Oklahoma City's past is being brought back to life.

Continuing this success hinges on incorporating a preservation ethic into broader planning goals. The concepts of neighborhood revitalization, sustainable growth patterns, preserving open space and rural character, providing walkability and diverse uses in an urban setting, and attracting people with great places carry a common thread of appreciating and investing in the built resources that we already have.

Purpose

Adopted July 9, 2015, **planokc** established a long-term vision for the development and growth of Oklahoma City. Reaching beyond the building blocks of land use and public services, **planokc** acknowledges the importance of quality-of-life factors for the development of the city, from building a strong economy and diverse transportation system, to protecting the environment, to valuing the artistic, historic and cultural resources that make Oklahoma City great.

The preservation, appearance, and culture element, called “**enrichokc**” of **planokc** identifies goals and initiatives related to historic preservation; landscape; heritage, arts and culture; community appearance and urban design. The lead initiative of **enrichokc** is to develop and implement a historic preservation plan. This plan, **preserveokc**, establishes “a comprehensive strategy for the identification, retention, preservation, and revitalization of the city's historic, cultural, and architectural resources.”

Oklahoma City has devoted resources to the revitalization of key historic buildings and places. Neighborhoods and commercial districts have benefited from City programs to encourage revitalization, and from private sector investment in preservation, supported by state and federal tax credits for rehabilitation.

But Oklahoma City has also lost important historic resources, and has many more waiting to be brought back to life.

preserveokc uses public input in the form of survey responses, public meetings, and previous public outreach from the recent **planokc** process. **preserveokc** identifies ways to build upon the successes achieved through historic preservation, and to learn from recent preservation challenges. **preserveokc** seeks to fully integrate preservation principles into the goals established in **planokc**, and into the way we think about how our city grows.

WHAT THIS PLAN DOES:

- Long-range policy document
- Informs leaders, property owners, and community members about historic preservation concepts, tools, and priorities
- Articulates vision and goals for the City and community
- Recommends potential strategies
- Identifies roles and responsibilities

WHAT THIS PLAN DOES NOT DO:

- Change or override existing processes, procedures, policies, or codes
- Modify the purview, composition, or powers of decision-making bodies
- Create new historic districts or landmarks
- Impose new requirements
- Establish new programs

Implementation

preserve**okc** establishes four **Big Ideas** to address the way the City of Oklahoma City can influence preservation, rehabilitation, and revitalization of historic places. The plan outlines the rationale *behind* each idea and the attainable goals *within* them and recommends specific actions and policies to implement in order to reach the goals. The **Implementation Matrix** in Chapter 5 identifies stakeholders and key players to carry out the recommendations, and suggested time frames for implementation.

These concrete steps create the framework and the tools necessary for the City, community leaders, residents, and property owners to continue the revitalization of Oklahoma City's historic resources.

Historic Resources Inventory

In addition to the Implementation Matrix, preserve**okc** introduces the use of a Historic Resources Inventory. This Inventory will be a regularly-maintained database of historic resources, identified through sources including survey work, National Register nominations, and public input. The Inventory will be used to inform property owners and the general public, to identify priority areas for future preservation efforts, and to provide information for various review processes, though the Inventory itself is not a regularly tool.

Founders Tower, constructed in 1964 and listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2013.



BIG IDEAS

Historic preservation is well-established in Oklahoma City as a priority for government, and a beneficial and rewarding endeavor for the private sector. The city's most consistent development trends and nearly all of plan**okc**'s Big Ideas align closely with the goals of historic preservation. This alignment is demonstrated by ongoing market interest in established, existing neighborhoods and commercial districts; in demands for districts with walkability, high quality of life amenities and a strong sense of identity and place, and in increasing demand for development that is both economically and environmentally sustainable. Yet many challenges remain for historic preservation to be recognized as the community's first response. The following key issues encapsulate the city's challenges and opportunities identified in the development of preserve**okc**.



BIG IDEA ONE

Strengthen Public Support for Historic Preservation

We will build a culture of appreciation for Oklahoma City's history and historic resources through accessible information, effective public outreach, and the formation of productive partnerships that recognize and celebrate the roots of Oklahoma City's unique identity.

*People gather at the **Freedom Center**, a Historic Landmark to the Civil Rights Movement, to silently march in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.*



BIG IDEA TWO

Practice Good Stewardship of City Owned Historic Resources

The City of Oklahoma City will continue to lead by example, and act as a good steward of City-owned and -controlled historic resources through maintenance and preservation of City facilities and through decision making processes about City projects affecting historic resources.

Oklahoma City's **Municipal Auditorium**, now known as the Civic Center, was completed in 1937 and listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2017.



BIG IDEA THREE

Protect Historic Resources Citywide

We will use existing, regulatory tools, and develop and implement new tools to proactively identify, evaluate, and protect historic resources throughout Oklahoma City.

The **C.C. Cooke Building**, located in downtown Oklahoma City, is eligible for the National Register, but has no local historic designation.



BIG IDEA FOUR

Develop Effective City Tools and Policies to Promote Preservation

We will use existing, financial and procedural incentives, and develop and implement new ones, to promote the preservation of Oklahoma City's historic resources.

Buildings like the **Yale Theater** in Capitol Hill have benefited from programs like the City's Commercial District Revitalization Program, as well as being listed in the National Register of Historic Places with access to state and federal tax incentives for rehabilitation.



OFFICIAL POSITION ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The City of Oklahoma City values the identification, recognition, retention and revitalization of historic resources as a significant benefit to our economy, our environment, and to our sense of place and identity for residents and visitors. The City of Oklahoma City will promote and encourage historic preservation through such means as:

- Strengthening public support for historic preservation through outreach to and education of the general public and community leaders;
- Leading by example as a good steward of City-owned and City-controlled historic resources;
- Protecting historic resources citywide through the use of existing and new processes for identification, recognition, consideration, and regulation; and
- Encouraging historic preservation through the enhanced use of existing and development of new financial or procedural incentives for rehabilitation and adaptive reuse.



The Marion Hotel - Before

Constructed in 1904 and designed by architect Edward Coady, the Marion is one of Oklahoma City's earliest apartment buildings. After decades of use, it fell into decline and closed its doors in 1985. The building remained vacant for 30 years, even as the surrounding Automobile Alley was revitalized.

Why Plan Now?

planokc recognizes this moment in history as a turning point for Oklahoma City. Undeniable change has occurred during the past 25 years, with more eagerly anticipated in the next 25. Without question, anticipated change includes historic preservation. Once-abandoned neighborhoods are seeing new generations move in, with property values on the rise. From the downtown core to neighborhood commercial corridors, long-abandoned buildings and landmarks have been rediscovered and reactivated, often with historic tax credits.

As Oklahoma City's revitalization continues, the need for a comprehensive approach to historic preservation is clear. Thriving historic resources deserve recognition and may warrant additional protection, as they attract new interest. Other historic areas are at a reinvestment tipping point and could benefit from incentives to ensure their potential is not lost. Still others wait to be discovered and appreciated, in need of identification and increased community awareness of their inherent value.

preserveokc seeks to integrate a multi-faceted approach to historic preservation into the larger context of Oklahoma City's ongoing revitalization. As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act, as well as the 50th anniversary of Oklahoma City's Historic Preservation Commission, preserveokc seeks to build on Oklahoma City's legacy of preservation successes, to learn from recent challenges and losses, and to address emerging needs.

Why Preserve?

Oklahoma City's historic places tell the story of how our city was built; they are the genetic code of Oklahoma City's identity: from the tie rods on the Rock Island Plow building, to the parlors of grand homes in Heritage Hills, to the alignment of city streets with the curvature of a trolley line, the physical fabric of **place** informs how we came to be who we are today.

Place creates our identity: a sense of pride for residents, a memorable destination for visitors, and a desirable quality of life for those looking to live or work here. **Places** define our city and set us apart from our peers.

Place guides efficient, sustainable development. Appreciating **place** allows us to build upon the contributions of past generations while anchoring new growth in the existing built environment.

Oklahoma City's historic resources, individually and collectively, are our most tangible expressions of place. Without them, we lose the invaluable qualities that **place** encompasses.

Historic Preservation is the most powerful tool we have to harness **place**, to understand and appreciate the forces that have created our unique city, and to shape what our city can become in the future.



The Marion Hotel - After

In 2015, with the help of historic tax credits and other financial incentives, the building was rehabilitated and reopened as an apartment building. The Marion is now listed in the National Register and is designated as an Oklahoma City Historic Landmark.