

City of Visalia

Historic Recognition Program

I. Summary of HRP

The Historic Recognition Program (HRP) allows interested building owners an opportunity to be considered for a plaque to identify the building and its local historical significance to the community.

II. Program background

Founded in 1852, Visalia is the oldest town in the Valley between Los Angeles almost to Stockton. Visalia sprang up out of the middle of an oak forest and the earliest settlers built a log fort for security. Soon they abandoned the fortification and began building a community.

As one of the earliest inland communities, Visalia played a vital role in the growth and development of the Southern San Joaquin Valley and as a result became an important town in California history. The town's historic buildings are a reminder of the rich history of the land, people and events. The plaque would identify these structures as a visible, important link to our past.

III. Purpose of HRP

The purpose of HRP is to draw attention to the historic character of Visalia by identifying historic structures with plaques. Benefits include:

- Development and enhancement of community pride and charm;
- Education of the community about Visalia history.

IV. Plaque process

- The HPAC Committee will review 'qualified' structures nominated by either the owner of the building or members of the community, with the written consent of the building owner.
- By majority vote, the committee will determine the recipient of the plaque.
- Factors to be considered for buildings receiving a plaque are as follows:
 - Age;
 - Style;
 - Site of significant historical events;
 - Condition – including appearance, additions and alterations to the home;
 - Proper documentation on building history;
 - Other relevant information.
- Members of the HPAC committee may choose one or more buildings at a time to receive plaques.

- V. **Requirements for a structure to qualify for an interpretive marker are:**
- The building must be at least **75** years old.
 - The building must be researched for its authenticity, and at a minimum, the date of construction must be reasonably determined.
 - Research must be conducted by qualified historical research personnel approved by the City of Visalia Historic Preservation Advisory Committee (HPAC) and proper documentation must be provided to HPAC before a plaque can be placed on a building.
 - The building's exterior must be restored or properly maintained in accordance with its historical style and character.
 - In the event that a building has been moved from its original site, it must retain a sense of its historic architectural style and integrity.
 - The owner of the building must authorize the placement of the plaque on the building and assumes ownership of the plaque.
- VI. **Uniformity and standardization of markers**
- The plaques used in the HRP should be of the same size, design and material composition, unless an alternative is approved by the HPAC.
 - Mounting on commercial buildings - The plaque should be mounted between 5 and 6 feet above the ground level surface, in a conspicuous place, and the location must be agreed to by building owner.
 - Mounting on residential buildings – The plaque should be mounted in front of the residence, preferably not attached to the building. It should be located in an area readable from the sidewalk or other public right-of-way. Mounting should be done in accordance with approved method described by HPAC.
- VII. **Responsibility for the HRP plaques**
- Once mounted, all plaques become the property of the building owner.
- VIII. **Nomination of buildings for HRP**
- Individuals and/or organizations can nominate a building for the program, but only HPAC and the building owner can authorize a plaque for a building *through this program*.
 - Prior to HPAC consideration of a nomination, an "Application and Property Owner Authorization" form is required.
 - The signed agreement and confirmed site research meeting the intent of the requirements in Section V shall be considered a "qualified nomination."
 - Qualified nominations continue to be valid unless there has been a change of ownership of the structure, *of if alterations to the building have occurred since the nomination was determined to be 'Qualified'*.

IX. **Application to participate in HRP**

- Requests for consideration must be accompanied by a “Historic Recognition Program - Application and Property Owner Authorization” form. Participation in HRP is voluntary, with the Historic Preservation Advisory Committee making the final determination for the awarding of plaques.

X. These guidelines are subject to change by HPAC. There may be occasions which call for deviation from the guidelines, wherein HPAC will be the final determining body for consistency with the purpose and intent of the guidelines and requirements.

XI. The HRP program guidelines and requirements are in no way intended to limit the ability of a property owner to independently mount a historical plaque or marker on their building.

XII. This program is based upon independent funding through grants, donations or other means. The program may be suspended during times when adequate funding is not available.

XIII. Participation in this program does not confer any special “historic” status to a property or building.