

OFFICE OF HISTORIC RESOURCES INFO BRIEF

# Historic-Cultural Monument Process FAQs

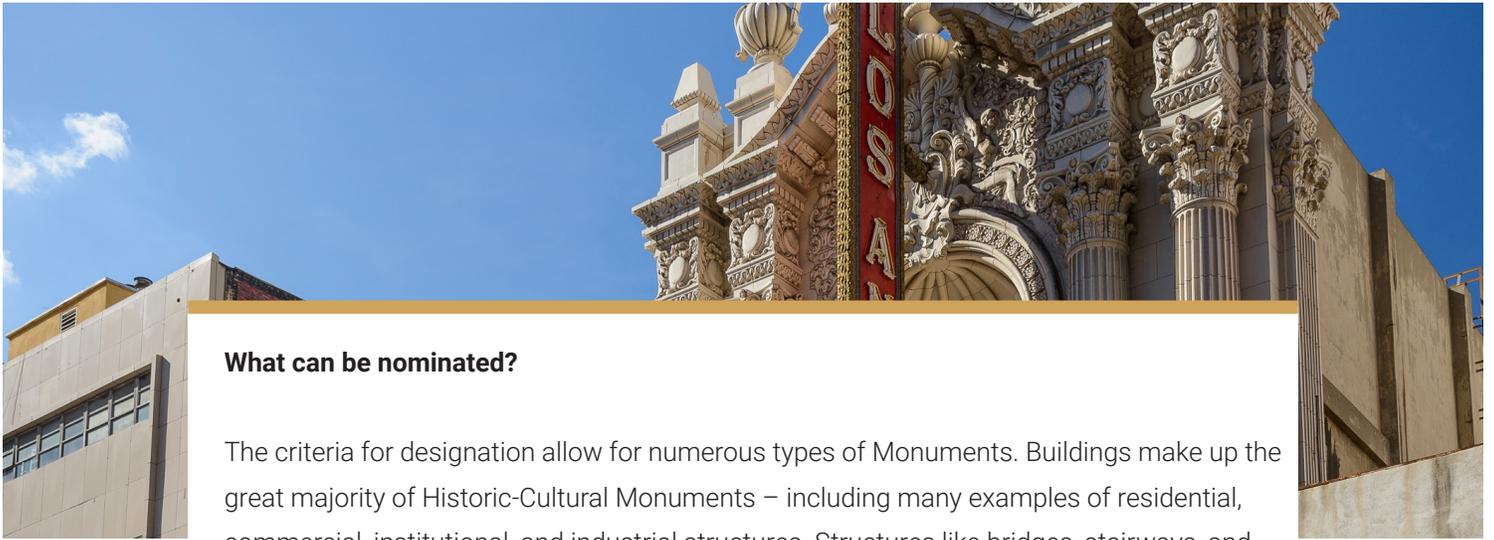
## **Who may submit a Monument nomination?**

A nomination for City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument status may be submitted by any person or organization. The City Council may also nominate a resource for Monument status, typically through the introduction of a motion by an individual Councilmember. The Cultural Heritage Commission itself may also initiate a nomination.

The application requires considerable research to determine the age of buildings and structures, property ownership history, former inhabitants, past uses, and other known facts about the resource. Many applicants choose to retain historic preservation consultants to prepare nominations, but it is also possible for non-professionals to research and prepare successful nominations. The Los Angeles Conservancy has prepared a helpful [guide](#) to researching and preparing Historic-Cultural Monument applications.

## **Is there an age requirement?**

In the City of Los Angeles, there is no requirement that a resource be a certain age before it can be designated. In general, enough time needs to have passed since the resource's completion to provide sufficient perspective that would allow an evaluation of its significance within a historical context. The youngest structure to be designated in Los Angeles was built in 1989 – it is Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen's Binoculars at the Chiat/Day Building in Venice (the rest of the building, designed by Frank Gehry, is not yet designated).



### **What can be nominated?**

The criteria for designation allow for numerous types of Monuments. Buildings make up the great majority of Historic-Cultural Monuments – including many examples of residential, commercial, institutional, and industrial structures. Structures like bridges, stairways, and median strips have also become Monuments. Open spaces such as Echo Park and Banning Park (which, in these cases, also feature historic structures) have been declared Monuments, as have individual trees or groups of trees, and natural features such as Eagle Rock.

### **What makes a resource historically significant?**

See the Info Brief on what makes a resource significant for information on the criteria for Historic-Cultural Monument status and for the types of questions that help staff and the Cultural Heritage Commission evaluate a nomination for Historic-Cultural Monument status.

### **Must the property owner be notified about the nomination?**

Yes, under a revision to City of Los Angeles' Cultural Heritage Ordinance that went into effect in April 2018, a property owner is notified when an Historic-Cultural Monument application has been deemed complete. At this time, a temporary stay is put in place on all permits for demolition or significant alterations. Even if a demolition permit has already been issued when the application is deemed complete, no actual demolition may occur while the nomination is being considered by the Commission and City Council.

### **Is property owner support of the nomination required?**

No, the property owner is not required to support the nomination, but the owner typically does participate in the designation process.

### **What happens when a building is designated? Is it protected forever?**

In Los Angeles, designation as a Historic-Cultural Monument does not guarantee that the



building cannot be demolished, but it does allow the Commission to delay demolition in order to create opportunities for preservation solutions to emerge. The ordinance allows the Cultural Heritage Commission to object formally to the issuance of a demolition permit, delaying the demolition for up to 180 days, plus another possible 180-day extension if approved by the City Council, to allow for time to preserve the monument.

Designation also ensures that Office of Historic Resources staff trained in preservation and architecture reviews and approves proposals for work on HCMs before any permits for alteration are issued. A Monument is also presumed to be a significant historical resource under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), triggering the requirement to perform an environmental review (that could lead to the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report [EIR]) before demolition can occur.

### **What are some of the other benefits or implications of designation?**

Designation as a Historic-Cultural Monument:

- Recognizes the building, structure, site, or plant life as important to the history of the city, state, or nation;
- Provides eligibility for the [Mills Act program](#), providing a Historical Property Contract that can result in a property tax reduction;
- Permits use of the [California Historical Building Code](#), which provides a more flexible, performance-based means of achieving building code compliance while protecting significant architectural features
- Allows property owners to purchase and display a plaque showing that the property has Historic-Cultural Monument status;
- Requires Cultural Heritage Commission review for proposed exterior and interior alterations in accordance with the [Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation](#), the nationally accepted criteria for evaluating change to historic properties;
- Entitles Historic-Cultural Monument owners to technical assistance in complying with the [Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties](#);
- Fosters civic pride in neighborhoods and business districts and helps develop a sense of place and time.

