

City of Columbia
Downtown Historic Resource Survey
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. What is a Historic Resource Survey?

This is a documentation of historic resources through photographs and written descriptions. Historic resources can include buildings, cemeteries, bridges, and structures like parking garages. They typically need to be 50 years old or older to be “historic,” but this survey will include things built up through 1975. Surveys include historic research on the development of an area, the documentation of resources through field survey and photos, and the evaluation of the resources. This results in a report that includes a historic context, results from the field survey, and recommendations about the buildings surveyed.

2. Why is the City doing this survey?

Surveys are done from time to time to better understand the resources that have become “historic” since the previous survey. The City’s last major survey was in 1993, and many buildings have reached the 50-year mark since that last survey. These projects also help the City plan for the future and make decisions about their historic preservation focus. A lot of mid-century modern buildings are now eligible for survey for the first time. The City has estimated that about 750 resources are survey eligible for this project.

3. What area is being surveyed?

This survey will cover part of the original town limits, which is now downtown Columbia. The borders are Harden Street on the east, the river on the west, Elmwood Ave. to the north, and Blossom Street to the south. A map of the survey area is available on the City’s [website](#).

4. When will the survey take place?

The survey project includes three main components, which are taking place from April through September 2020. First, the consultants will conduct archival research to investigate the built history of Columbia and why certain trends or architectural styles became popular throughout the past century. They will write that information into a historic context. The second component is the field work, when the consultants visit every street in the survey area and document historic resources with photographs and a written description. The third component is a written series of recommendations. These recommendations are the result of both the historic context and the field work. The recommendations will include individual buildings or districts that appear to be historically or architecturally significant. The S.C. State Historic Preservation Office (S.C. SHPO) will make a determination on those sites that might be eligible or not eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Other recommendations will include resources that could be listed at the local level with the City of Columbia as a landmark or in a historic district. Finally, there will be recommendations for future survey or research for the ongoing efforts to document the City’s historic resources. Field work will be conducted through May 2020, research and writing of the historic context

will continue through July 2020, and a final report will be completed in September 2020 after review by the S.C. SHPO and the City.

5. Who is doing the survey?

The City of Columbia's Planning Division is overseeing the survey and Rachel Walling, Senior Preservation Planner, is the project manager. The City has contracted with the consulting company Access Preservation to do the project. The consultant was chosen after a competitive RFP process and has extensive experience with researching and documenting Columbia's historic buildings.

6. Will surveyors come onto my property or knock on my door?

No. Surveyors are taking photos and notes from the public right of way, which is generally along the sidewalk. They will not be knocking on your door. If you are already outside and have any questions, please feel free to discuss the project with the surveyor.

7. Does this survey put my building on the National Register of Historic Places? Does it put it on the City's landmark list?

No. This survey does not result in a listing of any kind, it only provides a recommendation for buildings that are eligible for the National Register or the City's list.

8. How is the survey project funded?

This project is funded in part by a grant from the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, and administered by the S.C. Department of Archives and History. The City of Columbia is providing matching funds.

9. How can the public be involved?

The City has a project manager, Rachel Walling, Senior Preservation Planner, who is the point of contact for the public. We encourage people to send in information about their historic buildings so that it can be included in the research. Her email is Rachel.Walling@columbiasc.gov. An introductory presentation for the project is included on the City's [website](#) and we plan to host a public meeting later in the summer of 2020 to reveal the results of the survey.

10. What are the final results of the survey and how can I access it?

The final results will be compiled into a written report, which should be complete by late September. This report will include a historic context of downtown Columbia, a summary of the field work results, and recommendations about historic resources. The field work will also be documented in individual survey forms for the 750 resources, as well as digital photographs of each resource. The survey results will be summarized in the report and individual buildings or districts highlighted in the recommendations section. This section will list which sites might be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and those that could be listed as landmarks or districts for the City of Columbia. This report will be on file with the City and the S.C. State Historic Preservation Office. A digital copy will be available on the City website or by contacting Rachel Walling with the City (please see email above).