



E.H. Colgan House

The E.H. Colgan House at 2318 S. Summit Street and the Frederick A. Garrett House at 1400 S. Schiller Street, both featured on the 2018 Spring Tour of Homes, are part of the revitalization of Little Rock's Central High School Neighborhood Historic District.

Historic preservation as community and economic development

By Moriah Bruner and Ali Taylor

Historic resources—buildings, objects, neighborhoods, and cultural heritage—are vital community assets. Historic preservation, or the endeavor to preserve, restore, and rehabilitate these resources, is an important element of community development and serves as a catalyst for economic growth.

Across the state, numerous organizations are focusing attention on historic preservation initiatives.

The Quapaw Quarter Association, for example, is Little Rock's preservation nonprofit organization whose mission is to preserve greater Little Rock's historic places. The association recognizes its role extends beyond preserving historic structures.

“Historic preservation is more than just saving old buildings; it is a means of revitalizing neighborhoods, containing urban sprawl, and returning life to Main

Street,” Quapaw Quarter Association Executive Director Patricia Blick said.

Each year, the Quapaw Quarter Association hosts an annual Spring Tour of Homes, which regularly draws more than 1,000 participants. While the main purpose of the tour is to foster appreciation of historic buildings and neighborhoods and the need for preservation, it has proven to be one of the organization's most effective methods of changing negative perceptions about the Quapaw Quarter, encouraging continued investment, and recruiting new residents to the area. With such a large number of attendees each year, the event also showcases the remarkable economic impact of hosting heritage tourism experiences.

Little Rock Mayor Mark Stodola agrees that historic preservation efforts bring vast and unique economic benefits to Arkansas.



Frederick A. Garrett House

“A huge piece of Little Rock’s downtown renaissance is taking place in buildings and homes that the Quapaw Quarter Association and other groups have fought to save,” he said. “We know that historic properties provide unique tax credit opportunities for economic development that incentivize developers financially while preserving our historic character and shared culture.”

Other organizations across the state share the goal of preserving local historic resources with the ultimate goal to build stronger Arkansas communities. The Capitol Zoning District Commission, Preserve Arkansas, and the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, a state agency in the Department of Arkansas Heritage, are just a few examples.

Would your community benefit from historic preservation? A good way to start is to acquaint the public with historic buildings and the history and culture of your particular area. A few projects to consider include:

- Tours—Establish free or inexpensive guided or self-guided walking tours in historic districts or neighborhoods.
- Signage—Install visually appealing signs or plaques on historic buildings and sites that identify their history and significance.
- Publicity—Create educational brochures, posters, and other materials highlighting historic places of interest and make them readily available in the community so that residents and visitors will be enticed to visit them. Be sure to also make the information available online in a mobile-friendly format.
- Presentations to local organizations—Deliver educational programming describing the historic

resources in your community. These are opportunities to teach members of service clubs, faith-based groups, and other local organizations about the importance of historic preservation. These gatherings often include community leaders and influential citizens who will serve as advocates for historic preservation projects.

- Dramatizations—Host haunted history walks and driving tours, community theater celebrating culturally significant stories, and performances of period music to promote understanding and appreciation for local history.

Historic preservation is needed all across the state, in urban centers and smaller rural towns. Investment in historic resources not only makes Arkansas more attractive, it grows the local economy and makes our state a better place to live, work, play, and thrive for generations to come.



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