



Tax Incentives for Historic Preservation: St. Petersburg's Ad Valorem Tax Exemption for Historic Properties



If you have any questions about the National Register program, please call St. Petersburg's Historic Preservation Division @ (727)893-7153 or write:

City of St. Petersburg
Urban Design and Historic Preservation Division
P.O. Box 2842
St. Petersburg, FL 33731

Frequently asked questions
about the effects and benefits of
historic designation



What is the Ad Valorem Tax Exemption for Historic Properties? The ad valorem tax exemption is an abatement for up to ten years on increases in St Petersburg and Pinellas County property taxes resulting from an approved renovation to a historic building. The exemption only applies to city and county taxes, it does not apply to library, water management district or public school taxes. Thus, the roughly 14 mil exemption means a renovation increasing the built value of a property by \$10,000 could save the owner \$140 a year in taxes for 10 years.

What historic properties are eligible for the exemption? Properties individually listed on the Local or National Register of Historic Places are eligible for the tax exemption as are properties considered contributing to Local and National Register historic districts. Properties proposed for National or Local Register designation are also eligible, provided a City landmark application or National Register nomination has been submitted to the City or a contractual agreement has been signed to prepare the local landmark application or National Register nomination.

How do I apply? Before starting your work project, you must complete a "Part I: Preconstruction Application" and receive approval from Urban Design and Historic Preservation staff. This application requires a description of the work you propose and the existing conditions and material to be altered, as well as existing and proposed architectural drawings and photographs.

How long is the tax exemption period? For how much? City Council and the Board of County Commissioners may grant the exemption for a period up to ten years and for an amount up to 100 percent of that portion of the tax each body levies. The City generally does not allow the exemption on the assessed value of an improvement exceeding \$100,000 for single-family residential properties and \$1,000,000 for other properties. However, City Council can waive this restriction if the property meets one of the following criteria: (1) the property is of great significance to the City and the assessed value of the improvement exceeds 25 percent of the assessed built value of the property; (2) the additional exemption is necessary to save the property from destruction and to ensure its renovation; or (3) the additional exemption is necessary to meet governmental building codes to ensure the rehabilitation of the property.

Can I apply for the exemption after completing work on my historic property? No, Your project will not be eligible for the exemption if you do not receive prior approval of your "Part I" application before commencing work.

Is there a time limit on how long construction can take place? After getting your "Part I" approval, you have two years to complete the project. Staff may grant a six-month extension if a request is made in advance of the expiration date. Otherwise, only the Historic Preservation Commission can grant an extension.

When will I get the tax exemption? To be eligible for the tax exemption in the year after completing your project, you must complete and return a "Part II: Request for Review of completed Work" and a signed tax exemption covenant to Urban Design and Historic Preservation staff by October 1st. This time frame will allow staff, City Council, the Pinellas Board of County Commissioners, and the Pinellas County Property Appraisers Office time to review and approve the tax exemption for the following year.

If approved for the exemption, what are my obligations? If you receive the tax exemption you must sign a covenant for the period granted by City Council binding you to maintain the improvements for which the exemption is approved. Failure to do so may result in revocation of the exemption and back payment of taxes plus interest.

How can nonprofits take advantage of the exemption program? The City may exempt 100 percent of the assessed improved value of the property used for non-profit or governmental purposes and regularly and frequently open for the public's use and benefit. This can be done only if the assessed value of the improvement is equal to at least 50 percent of the assessed built value of the property and if the qualifying improvements are made by or for the use of the existing property owner. The definitions for "non-profit or governmental purposes" and "open to the public" can be found in the City Code Section 16-536.

