

Coeur d'Alene Downtown Reconnaissance Survey Kickoff Meeting Summary

Community Library – Lower Level

March 18, 2025 12:00 -1:00

PRESENTERS:

Diana Painter, Painter Preservation
Hilary Patterson, City of Coeur d'Alene Planning Director
Dan Everhart, Idaho State Historical Society (SHPO)
Alexis Matrone, Idaho State Historical Society (SHPO)

Downtown Reconnaissance Survey

Chairman Burns of the Historic Preservation City of Coeur d'Alene welcomed the public and stated the Historic Preservation Commission received a grant last year from the State Historic Preservation office. With that grant we hired Diana Painter who is the consultant that will do the reconnaissance level survey of the built environment in Downtown Coeur d'Alene.

Diana Painter introduced herself and said she is from Spokane WA; she works throughout the west coast.

Ms. Painter stated that she did a drive around the Downtown on February 12 to get a sense of the survey area. She noted that this survey will not include the whole downtown area. There are time and budget limits. She showed a map of the survey area and said the most important intersection is Sherman and 4th Street.

Survey Area:



The first step in historic preservation is to identify and document. Without knowing what historic and cultural resources are present within the community, a historic preservation program will not be able to effectively advocate for historic preservation, work with stakeholders, and engage the public.

Ms. Painter said survey work is a key way to accomplish this goal for the built environment and cultural resources. But archaeological and traditional cultural resources—which are evaluated and considered in a different way than the built environment—also need to be considered, while protecting the locations of these resources.

What is a Reconnaissance-level survey?

- Is often the first step in implementing a historic preservation plan
- Records the physical appearance of a building
- Records changes over time to the extent known
- When conducted for a potential historic district, it is a comprehensive survey
- Allows for establishing area(s) of significance & period of significance
- Allows for establishing criteria for contributing & non-contributing
- Does not confer historic status

If the buildings are younger than 50 years of age they will be documented and will be non-contributing due to the age. In a general sense buildings are maybe considered historic if they are over fifty years of age. Between 1891 and 1903 there was quite a bit of growth in the City of Coeur d'Alene. Hotels were built down by the water. There will be more field work taking place this Summer. She will be walking around the downtown and taking photos and notes of the buildings.

Ms. Patterson commented that there had been a question as to why the Coeur d'Alene Resort and the Report Plaza Shops properties were not going to be surveyed. The reason for that after talking with SHPO, we decided that would be done as a separate survey in the future. It would have its own survey. It's not considered historic at this time; but it will be in about 10 years. Also, most of the properties on Front Avenue are high rises, which are not historic. The boundary does not include those buildings but does include a few of the properties on Front Avenue at 4th Street that are historic.

Rod Stach asked once the area becomes a designated an historic area he wonders if anything is done to the outside of the structure would that have to be approved? And would anything on the interior have to be approved as well?

Ms. Patterson replied currently the City of Coeur d'Alene Historic Preservation Code does not have the type of "teeth" in the ordinance that other communities have. A property, even if it is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, can be modified. We prefer it stays intact. Typically, the interior can be modified without any review. You would need to follow the Building Department permit requirements.

Mr. Everhardt stated this is a question we do get asked all of the time. Will documentation of this property or designation of this property result in some sort of control or review of change to the property? Nine times of 10, the answer is no. What we are starting here is the documentation. This is not designation. It is not listing of the property in the National Register, nor the creation of a local historic district overseen by the City of Coeur d'Alene. This is simply the first step in establishing the base line knowledge as the whether or not there is a concentration of historic buildings in the downtown and whether or not they form a potential district. Nothing related to this project has any bearing on what a property owner does or doesn't do. The City of Coeur d'Alene works with our office and the results from this survey will help inform if the City decides to pursue a National Register nomination for the Downtown or do a local district. That designation has no impact on a property owners decision making. The National Register program is occasionally misunderstood. It is simply a way to acknowledge the history and architecture of a place.

Chairman Burns stated the property rights are pretty much sacred here. We're not looking to make changes or do anything that would encumber anyone's property rights.

Mr. Everhart replied he agrees with that statement. There is no bearing on what people can do with their property.

Britt Thurman, Museum of North Idaho, asked if the commission has considered doing a survey of community members to see if they would support putting protections in place to protect the historic buildings?

Chairman Burns stated no. It would be a great idea going forward to find out if people are concerned.

Mr. Everhardt stated, what do you as a property owner or a citizen need to know about this process in the collecting of this information? To collect the data, it is the responsibility of the consultant, Diana Painter. She will be taking photos and writing notes. The role of the community to be engaged as a property owner, but you do not need to assist to Ms. Painter in the collection of this information. If there is a piece of history that is related to your building that you are proud of and want to share it, that is fine.

Ms. Patterson commented that Ms. Painter is only doing the exterior of the buildings. She also asked about Clark's Jeweler's and the clock out front and how she will be documenting that piece?

Ms. Painter replied that it is an object. It does fall in the category of a type of resource.

Mr. Everhardt stated if there is a documented history that connects the clock to a business or a building that it would likely be a feature of that particular thing. That will be recorded separately. There will be a certain amount of small information on the general character and appearance of the downtown district. It will be described as a commercial street with modest setbacks and street trees. This will establish the visual characteristic of this downtown commercial district, which sets it apart from the Garden District.

Britt Thurman stated if anyone is interested in obtaining detailed information about their property, the Museum's research library is free and open to the public or we do have researchers that can help you look up your property.

There were no addition questions and the meeting concluded.

Submitted by Traci Clark, Administrative Assistant