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When a neighborhood gets a historical  
designation, residents must adapt to the

restrictions that regulate how they can change their houses.

This is the case in Ashland Historical District, which initiated obtaining historical status in 1991, according to records from city hall.

Application documents cite the neighborhood's historic value as coming from architecture styles from the 1920s to early 1940s, and from the survival of some original lamp posts.

Lori Nitzche said that on her street, the east end of Ashland Avenue, the houses were all built by members of the LDS church.

Nitzche's house at 70 E Ashland Ave has changed hands at least twice since the original owners lived there. She says this is not uncommon for the neighborhood.

"As far as we know there's no one related to the original owners," Nitzche said.

Renovations and repairs are common for new owners, but historical designations mean complications.

Patrick Smith explained why no one will see the changes he's considering for his house, which may include extensions into the backyard.

"The rules basically say that you cannot change the way the house looks from the street," Smith said. "You can paint it, and you can redo the windows and trim, but you're supposed to keep it so that appearance is identical and consistent with its original appearance."

Preserving the original appearance of the buildings may not be the only effect of these rules.

"These are very modest homes and by protecting them you protect middle class neighborhoods," said Smith.

Residents like Nitzche have found unexpected value in their property's historical nature.

"We have interesting stuff in our garage," said Nitzche, her immediate response when

told that neighborhood stories are being collected.

The previous owners of her house, a couple named the Multers, left traces of their residency throughout the house.

There's a box shipped back from World War II in the garage, collectible plates mounted around the top of the kitchen, and original knobs on doors and cabinets.

The Nitzches have made few changes, but did renovate the kitchen and made a few other repairs.

"You're a year too late to see all of the originals, we got rid of the toilet and the sink," Nitzche said.

Smith's changes to 82 E Ashland Ave are mostly still in the planning stages.

One thing that Smith has started is converting the front lawn from sprinkler intensive grass back to more natural, arid climate plant life.

"The landscape you can change anyway you want to," said Smith.

