

## Ravenna-Cowen North Historic District – FAQs

[www.friendsofravennacowen.org](http://www.friendsofravennacowen.org)

1. What is an Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places?
  - "A geographically definable area, urban or rural, possessing a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united by past events or aesthetically by plan or physical development. A district may also comprise individual elements separated geographically but linked by association or history"
  - National Historic Places may be buildings, structures, or objects that are over 50 years old.
2. Can I modify, remodel, renovate or demolish my home if it is on the Historic Register?
  - There are no restrictions placed on properties that are on the National Register.
3. Can I build any new home that I'd like in the National Historic District?
  - Yes, this is an honorary designation that doesn't burden the homeowner with any restrictions other than those imposed by city codes and zoning.
4. How will this affect the resale value of my home?
  - The National Register has studies that indicate that homes in an Historic District sell for more than comparable homes in other neighborhoods. There are no restrictions on resale.
5. Does the National Registry address affordable housing?
  - No, that is addressed by local zoning codes.
6. Will it cost me anything?
  - No. The Friends of Ravenna-Cowen will be fundraising and looking for grants to cover the costs of GIS mapping and the application. Grants are frequently tied to matching volunteer hours. We will be looking for both contributions and volunteer hours.
7. Does everyone in the neighborhood need to agree to do this?
  - The National Register nomination requires a 51% majority approval to be submitted to the National Parks Department for consideration. Dissent is required to be in the form of a notarized letter addressed to the Department of Archeology & Historic Preservation.
8. Do I have to open my home to public tours?
  - No. There is no requirement to participate in the Historic District or its events.
9. How long will this process take?
  - The application was submitted April 29, 2018. The Washington State Governor's Advisory Committee is scheduled to consider the application at its June 29, 2018 meeting. If approved, the application will be transmitted to the National Park

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Service for further review. The website ([friendsofravennacowen.org](http://friendsofravennacowen.org)) will be updated as the process proceeds.

### 10. What is the benefit for me or my neighborhood or the public?

- The neighborhood character will be strengthened, giving it an identity and recognition on a national level.
- The neighborhood should see a stabilizing effect (lower risk) on market values; studies show that there may be an increase of value over comparable properties in other neighborhoods.
- There may be grant support for historic restoration.
- Federal Historic Tax Credits are available for commercial properties only.

### 11. What is the benefit to the public?

- The history of the housing stock in the will be studied, recorded and publicly available in a GIS database. The history of contributing homes will be available for anyone (including future generations) to view.
- Opportunities to interpret history and development of Seattle through signage—specifically, ties to UW development, 1909 Alaska Yukon Pacific Exposition (AYPE), Olmsted plans/legacy, Ravenna and Cowen Parks, historic bridges across the ravine, and development of city subdivisions during the early 20th century boom years in Seattle. This early 20th century development produced two notable parks and many houses with distinguished architectural features.
- Opportunities to interpret residential architectural design and work of notable architects and designers.
- Preservation of a pedestrian/cycling environment and what we value about it. This applies to both architectural and landscape elements, and would include heritage trees. However, to fully appreciate the individual elements, the broader neighborhood context is essential.

### 12. Is the National Register the same as the City of Seattle Landmark designation?

- No, they are separate designations and have different purposes.