



Guidelines For Official United Methodist Church Historic Sites

Officially marked "Historic Sites" of The United Methodist Church are authorized by the 2008 *Discipline* of The United Methodist Church in ¶1712.1a which reads:

Historic Sites are buildings, locations, or structures which are specifically related to a significant event, development, or personality in the history of an Annual, Central, or Jurisdictional Conference (or its antecedents). Historic Sites are designated by formal action of the Annual, Central, or Jurisdictional Conference within whose regions the site is located. Such designation shall first be considered and reviewed by the respective Commission on Archives and History (or equivalent). After action by the Annual, Central, or Jurisdictional Conference to designate a building, structure, or location as an Historic Site, the president or chairperson of the Commission on Archives and History (or equivalent) shall advise the General Commission on Archives and History of the action taken and provide such documentation as may be required. The General Commission in turn shall provide an official Historic Site marker, keep a register of all Historic Sites, and maintain an ongoing file of pertinent information concerning them.

A United Methodist Historic Site is a site or structure associated with an event, development, or personality deemed of strong historical significance. Such a site must be within the territory of the Annual, Central, or Jurisdictional Conference creating it. **The decision to designate a United Methodist Historic Site is made by the Annual, Central, or Jurisdictional Conference**, upon recommendation of its Commission on Archives and History.

The effort to designate an Historic Site is not a casual one. The case for historicity, maintenance, and use must be well established. The designation should be bestowed sparingly, and then only after careful and validating investigation by persons trained in methods of historical research. Inquiry should be made into such pertinent factors as present ownership, maintenance, and accessibility for those who may wish to visit. A painstaking effort must be made to collect and preserve all substantive proof of the site's history, such as books, pamphlets, maps, pastoral and church records, journals, letters, periodicals, photographs, and personal memorabilia. Copies of these must be deposited with the Conference Commission on Archives and History.

The approved procedure for groups or individual United Methodists seeking the establishment of a registered United Methodist Historic Site is as follows:

Preparation: Request an application form for registering a United Methodist Historic Site from the Conference Commission on Archives and History. This form illustrates the purpose and methods of historical research used in establishing and marking sites of historic interest.

Research: Study each proposed site objectively, using the techniques of professional research scholars. This includes not only gathering data and material, but clearly articulating the site's significance to The United Methodist Church (including its antecedents or components) and various factors relating to its preservation, interpretation, and use.

Application: Present in duplicate a completed application form, supported by available evidence, to the Conference Commission on Archives and History. The Conference Commission shall be responsible for processing the application and returning it to the General Commission.

Referral, Action, and Registration: The Conference Commission on Archives and History, upon its careful review, approval, and acceptance (including the receipt of the registration fee of \$75.00) will recommend to the Annual, Central, or Jurisdictional Conference that the Site be approved as an Historic Site. Upon Conference approval it will be necessary for the Historic Site application with the required signatures be submitted to the General Commission on Archives and History for registration. When the General Commission receives the approved and completed application the Historic Site will be assigned a number and the official United Methodist Historic Site marker will be sent. The duplicate application form, annotated with the fact of registration and date, will be returned to the originating Commission.

Dedication: After formal registration of the Historic Site, there should be appropriate ceremonies, with representatives from the Commission on Archives and History and historical societies as well as church groups, to mark the dedication and public presentation.

For the Files: The Annual, Central, or Jurisdictional Conference Commission and the General Commission request continuing cooperation in the building of their files with additional descriptive materials pertaining to the dedication of the site and later events -- programs, clippings, photographs, historical information, and other memorabilia.

Heritage Landmark Status: Upon approval as a United Methodist Historic Site, an application and guidelines for a United Methodist Heritage Landmark may be requested from the Conference Commission on Archives and History. Only a location or structure that is Conference-approved can be considered by the General Commission as a potential Heritage Landmark.

GENERAL COMMISSION ON ARCHIVES AND HISTORY
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