



The Politics of Historic Districts: A Primer for Grassroots Preservation

Bill Schmickle

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The worst thing in politics is to be right and to lose. This how-to guide will give citizens who are fighting to designate a local historic district the political know-how to win the support of fellow residents and city hall. Everything is here: learning to think politically, mastering the political process; planning and strategy; campaign organizing and leadership; framing a practical vision; anticipating and handling the opposition; conducting community meetings; skirmishing with property rightists; managing issues, petitions, and public opinion; dealing with public officials; strategizing for public hearings; and winning the vote for district designation. The Politics of Historic Districts is an indispensable resource whose practical, hands-on lessons are informed by extensive research and the author's own experiences in winning a district designation, chairing a historic preservation commission, and teaching political science. By showing how and why communities make political decisions to designate historic districts, Bill Schmickle encourages preservationists to ignore the traditional tensions between preservation and political action and points the way to a fuller understanding of the politics that shape local historic districts.

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