

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What Is A City Historic District?

A City Historic District is an area of the city designated on the official zoning map where additional regulations apply. The purpose of the regulations is to protect architecturally significant buildings and the neighborhood setting.

What Is A Certificate of Appropriateness?

A Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) is a required official document certifying that proposed exterior changes meet Historic District Guidelines. A Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) is required before making exterior changes to structures or to the property.

How Do I know If My Property Is In a City Historic District?

Visit the City's website www.greensboro-nc.gov/hdprogram to see maps of the districts and a list of addresses or call the City Planning Department at 336-373-2144.

Where Can I Get The COA Application Form And The Guidelines?

The COA application form, guidelines, and information about the program are available on the City's website at www.greensboro-nc.gov/hdprogram, or will be mailed upon request by calling the Planning Department at 336-373-2144.

Is There A Fee?

Currently there is not a fee for a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Is a COA Required for Interior Work?

No. A COA is required only for exterior work. However, some interior work like kitchen or bathroom remodeling can result in exterior changes that require a COA—like modifying a window or installing an air conditioning compressor.

Who Approves The COA?

City Planning Department staff approve COAs for minor projects like repairing a front porch, building a fence or deck, removing a dead or diseased tree, or installing a satellite dish.

The Greensboro Historic Preservation Commission approves major projects such as new construction, additions and significant alterations to buildings, parking lots and signs.

When And Where Does The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) Meet?

The HPC meets on the last Wednesday of each month at 4 pm in the Plaza Level Conference Room of the Melvin Municipal Office Building, 300 West Washington Street.

Do I Need a Building Permit If I Have A COA?

Yes. A Building Permit for exterior work will not be issued without a COA. Some projects require a COA even if a Building Permit is not required. Examples are fences and other site improvements, tree removal, and exterior repairs.

How Long Does It Take To Get A COA?

For minor projects it usually takes no more than 3-4 days from receipt of the application—sooner if it is an urgent situation. For COAs for major work: the Historic Preservation Commission meets on the last Wednesday of each month and there is a two week application deadline.

Do Utility Companies Have To Abide By Historic District Rules?

Yes. Duke Energy and other utility companies as well as the City of Greensboro must obtain a COA for projects such as constructing a new sidewalk, installing new streetlights, or trimming trees along power lines.

How Are The Historic District Rules Enforced?

The City's Zoning Enforcement Officers enforce Historic District rules. They issue Notices of Violation when work is begun without a COA. The property owner is given an opportunity to correct the violation by obtaining a COA. If not, then civil penalties are issued.

Can I Install Solar Panels Or A Satellite Dish On My Roof?

A COA is required for both. City Historic District guidelines recommend that these items be located where they are as inconspicuous as possible, ideally not visible from the street.

Do I Need A COA For Work At The Back Of My House?

Yes. A COA is required for exterior work anywhere on the property.

Are Pre-fabricated Storage Buildings Allowed Under The Guidelines?

Yes. A COA is required for accessory buildings. Pre-fabricated storage buildings are acceptable if their design is compatible with the house and the historic district.

Are Replacement Materials Such As Fiber-cement Siding or PVC Trim Allowed?

The guidelines recommend repair rather than replacement of original materials. The guidelines recommend selective replacement of rotted or missing siding and trim with "like kind" (wood for wood) materials. Fiber-cement, PVC or similar materials are not recommended. A COA is required for replacement of exterior materials.

Is Paving A Gravel Driveway With Concrete Allowed?

Yes. A COA is required. Concrete is considered an acceptable paving material for driveways.

Do I Need A COA For Landscape Changes?

A COA is not required for most landscaping projects like planting trees, shrubs, flower and vegetable gardens, clearing brush, removing over mature shrubs, etc. A COA is required for removing trees 4" dbf or larger.

Does Re-roofing Require A COA?

A COA is not required to replace old asphalt roofing shingles with new asphalt shingles. A COA is required to replace special roofing materials like slate or terra cotta tiles.