

Frequently Asked Questions concerning properties in an Historic District.

What changes to my property are reviewed by an Historic District Commission?

Changes to exterior architectural features which are visible from a public way are reviewed. It is important to note that the ONLY changes which are visible from the public right of way are of concern to the HDC.

I want to paint my house a different color or plant new shrubs around my property?

Paint colors, minor landscaping and maintenance are not reviewed.

What other things are not subject to review by the Commission?

Any work done to the interior of the property.

Installation of storm windows provided there is no alteration to existing windows or frames.

Removable air conditioners.

If the neighbors already maintain the historic character of their properties, why do we need an historic district?

By having an historic district, you can be assured that a NEW property owner will also maintain the historic character of your neighborhood.

If my house is included in the local historic district, does that mean that I have to restore it?

The maintenance guidelines are not retroactive and apply only to any future, proposed changes.

Can I meet with the HDC before I apply for my Certificate of Appropriateness?

Absolutely. In fact, the HDC encourages it. The Historic District Commission is made up of citizens like you who live locally and who care about the community. Their goal is to help you maintain the historic look and feel of your property so that it can be enjoyed by future generations. They can offer planning guidance and put you in touch with appropriate sources.

What if I cannot afford to do the work in the way that the HDC would like me to do it?

1. The HDC can issue a Certificate of Hardship which would exempt an applicant from compliance with the Specific Design guidelines.
2. The HDC can work with you to devise an alternative, historically sympathetic solution that is less costly.

What will happen to the value of my property if it is included in an Historic District?

Studies around the country suggest that property values stay the same or increase faster in a local historic district compared to similar, non-designated areas.