

Historic District Modifications

Before You Begin

Before beginning work, the first step is to determine if your proposed changes will require review for a Certificate of Appropriateness issued by the Historic Preservation Commission and if additional approvals, permits, or certificates might be required. The Division of Planning & Zoning can help you determine the requirements for the changes proposed. Minor actions such as painting and routine maintenance require no design review. These types of projects, however, may require a building permit depending on the scope of work.

Exterior Changes

Significant exterior changes, alterations, additions, new construction, demolitions, moving of buildings or changes to sites such as adding fences, walls, driveways, parking areas, or new outbuildings likely require a Certificate of Appropriateness before construction can begin. A Certificate of Appropriateness is obtained through a review process by the Historic Preservation Commission. A Certificate of Appropriateness may be required even in cases where a building permit may not be needed. The Historic Preservation Commission bases their decisions to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness on the recommendations included in 1996 Residential Historic District Design Guidelines and in The Secretary of the Interior Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings.

Approval Process

If approval by the Historic Preservation Commission is needed, applications are first reviewed by City Zoning, Building, and Historic Preservation staff, and City staff provides their recommendations to the Historic Preservation Commission. The Historic Preservation Commission meets once a month to review requests for changes by property owners, making the final decision for issuing a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Review of proposals and decisions for issuing a Certificate of Appropriateness are based on the standards included in the Staunton City Code, 1996 Residential Historic District Design Guidelines and The Secretary of Interior Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings. The Historic Preservation Commission meeting gives the property owner the opportunity to explain plans, answer questions or address concerns.

The Commission must approve or reject an application at the meeting when the item is heard so that property owners will be able to proceed with construction in a timely fashion. Once plans are approved, the Commission will issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work. Certificates are valid for a 12-month period and may be extended if necessary.

The Commission also monitors the condition of historic properties, structures and sites within the historic districts to ensure that they are being maintained and are not being allowed to deteriorate by neglect. In such cases of detrimental neglect, property owners will be notified of the steps necessary for repair and be required to remedy the situation.

