

Historic Review for City Historic Landmarks



Ordinary Repair and Maintenance Work

Historic Landmark Commission review is usually not required for ordinary repair and maintenance work to the exterior of historic landmarks – such as re-painting with existing colors or performing other repairs. Please check with the City Historic Preservation Office if you are uncertain whether a historic review is required.



Non-Routine Maintenance and Repairs

Non-routine exterior work – including alterations that remove historic materials or change the visual appearance of a site or building facade – require a **Certificate of Appropriateness** from the Historic Landmark Commission. Non-routine work items include (but are not limited to): re-painting of exteriors with new color scheme, window and door changes, building additions, façade alterations, fencing, major landscape work, changes in sidewalks and driveways, and alterations to roofing shape, color or materials.



Work Requiring City Building Permits

Many projects will require a City Building Permit in addition to a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Landmark Commission. You must provide the building permit staff with a copy of your Certificate of Appropriateness approval and plans/drawings stamped approved by the City Historic Preservation Office prior to receiving the permit. If you are uncertain if a Building Permit is required, please contact the City Permit Center.



Sign Review and Permit Process

A **Certificate of Appropriateness** from the Historic Landmark Commission is required for any sign proposed on the exterior or site of a designated city historic landmark. This review covers all types of signs – flush mounted, projecting, awning and freestanding, as well as interior signage displayed to the exterior. Historic sign guidelines are available from the City Historic Preservation Office.

Many signs, including those that are electric or more than 32 square feet in size, will also require a City Sign Permit. You will need to provide the sign permit staff with a copy of your **Certificate of Appropriateness** prior to receiving permit approval.



Standards for Certificates of Appropriateness Reviews

Use of a Building

1. Every reasonable effort shall be made to provide a compatible use for a property that requires minimal alteration of the building, structure, or site and its environment, or to use the property for its originally intended purpose.

Alterations, Removals and Additions

2. The distinguishing original qualities or character of a building, structure, or site and its environment shall not be destroyed. The removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive architectural features should be avoided.
3. All buildings, structures, and sites shall be recognized as products of their own time. Alterations which have no historical basis and which seek to create an earlier appearance shall be discouraged.
4. Changes which may have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history and development of a building, structure, or site and its environment. These changes may have acquired significance in their own right, and this significance shall be recognized and respected.
5. Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship which characterize a building, structure, or site shall be treated with sensitivity.

6. Deteriorated architectural features shall be repaired rather than replaced, wherever possible.
 - In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should match the material being replaced in composition, design, color, texture, and other visual qualities.
 - Repair or replacement of missing architectural features should be based on accurate duplications of features, substantiated by historical, physical, or pictorial evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different architectural elements from other buildings or structures.
7. The surface cleaning of structures shall be undertaken with the gentlest means possible. Sandblasting and other cleaning methods that will damage the historic building materials shall not be undertaken.
8. Contemporary design for alterations and additions to existing properties are appropriate when such alterations and additions do not destroy significant historic, architectural, or cultural material and such design is compatible with the size, scale, color, material, and character of the property, neighborhood, or environment.
9. Whenever possible, new additions or alterations to structures shall be done in such a manner that if such additions or alterations were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the structure would be unimpaired.

Mechanical Systems

10. The installation of protective or code required mechanical systems shall be concealed whenever possible so as not to intrude upon or detract from the property's aesthetic and historical qualities, except where concealment would result in the alteration or destruction of historically significant materials or spaces.

Reconstruction of Building Features

11. Reconstruction of part or all of a property shall be undertaken only when such work is essential to reproduce a significant missing feature in a historic district or scene, and:
 - (a) the reconstruction is essential for understanding the value of a historic district,
 - (b) documentation exists to insure an accurate reproduction of the original, and
 - (c) a contemporary design solution is not acceptable.
12. Reconstruction of part or all of a property shall be undertaken only when such work is essential to reproduce a significant missing feature in a historic district or scene.



Frequently Asked Questions About the Certificate Of Appropriateness Process

What is the process for obtaining a Certificate of Appropriateness?

Contact the City Historic Preservation Office to obtain an application form for a **Certificate of Appropriateness** or download the form at www.ci.austin.tx.us/development/packets.htm (packet 04 – historic review). Required submittal materials include application form, pictures or slides of the site, drawings/plans of the proposed changes, and material samples. Once an application is received, the City Historic Preservation Office will schedule your case on the next agenda of the Historic Landmark Commission and notify you of the hearing date. The City Historic Preservation Office will send you a **Certificate of Appropriateness** verification letter in the mail once the Commission has approved your application, along with stamped copies of your approved plans/drawings

What are the time deadlines and hearing schedule for Certificate of Appropriateness cases?

The Historic Landmark Commission reviews Certificates of Appropriateness applications at its monthly meetings (usually held the fourth Monday of each month). The completed application and required submittal materials are due to the City Historic Preservation Office at least 10 days in advance of the meeting. Once the application is received, the city sends each applicant information on the meeting time and location.

Do I need to attend the Historic Landmark Commission Hearing to consider a Certificate of Appropriateness for my property?

Yes. You or a representative needs to be present at the meeting in order to answer any questions that may arise about your proposal.

What is the process for obtaining a Certificate of Appropriateness when a City Building Permit or Sign Permit is required?

You must provide evidence of receiving a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Landmark Commission (approval letter and approved drawings/plans) at the time you apply for a City Building Permit or Sign Permit. This documentation is needed to substantiate that the Historic Landmark Commission review process is complete.



Information and Permit Applications available at the
City Historic Preservation Office, 505 Barton Springs Road, Fourth Floor, 499-2890

Other Contacts:

Building Permit Center
499-2747

Sign Review Office
499-2680

Development Assistance Center
499-6370