

Do I need a Certificate of Appropriateness?

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) is a nine-member board appointed by the City Council to “promote, enhance and preserve the character of the Wilmington historic districts.” A Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) is required before any building or structure, significant landscape feature or above-ground utility structure can be erected, altered, relocated or demolished. These types of changes must be reviewed and approved by the Historic Preservation Commission in order to obtain a COA. The HPC hears and decides requests for Certificates of Appropriateness in accordance with the adopted Wilmington Design Guidelines for Historic Districts and Landmarks.

Major Works Requiring a Certificate of Appropriateness

- Decks and Swimming pools
- Lighting
- Roofs
- Windows and doors
- Painting masonry
- Exterior siding and decorative woodwork
- Porches and entrances
- Architectural metals
- New construction—residential and commercial
- Additions
- Storefronts
- Relocation of buildings and structures
- Demolitions
- Major landscaping
- Fences and walls
 - less than 3 feet high
 - 6 feet high or higher on corner lots
- Garages and other accessory structures
- New building and parking lots

Administrative Bypass (COAs for Minor Works)

The Administrative Bypass procedure allows the City's Historic Preservation Planning staff to approve minor changes to properties within the historic districts.

To use the Administrative Bypass procedure, the property owner submits an application to the Historic Preservation Planning staff. The application is approved if found to be consistent with the Design Guidelines. Any requests that cannot be approved by staff are submitted to the Historic Preservation Commission for consideration. The following minor works may be approved by staff as an Administrative Bypass procedure for a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Minor Works Requiring a COA Administrative Bypass

- Storm doors
- Storm windows
- Fences (except on corner lots)
- Shutters or blinds
- Temporary handicap facilities
- Primer/paint colors
- Garage doors
- Signs
- Roofing material
- Awnings
- Utilitarian garden sheds
- Minor exterior alterations
- Rear yard decks
- Brick walkways, paths, driveways and patios
- Removal of asbestos siding
- Restoration of original features
- Minor landscaping
- Extension of a Certificate of Appropriateness for
six months