

Chapel Hill Local Ordinance Historic Districts

What Is a Historic District?

Historic districts are zoning overlay districts created to protect and conserve the heritage and character of Chapel Hill. The three local historic districts are: Franklin/Rosemary, Cameron/McCauley and Gimghoul.

Owners of property in these districts are required to receive a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for many exterior changes to property. These regulations encourage design that is harmonious with the character of the district. This is intended to preserve areas that embody important elements of social, economic, political, or architectural history, and also to promote the stabilization and enhancement of property values.

About the Historic District Commission

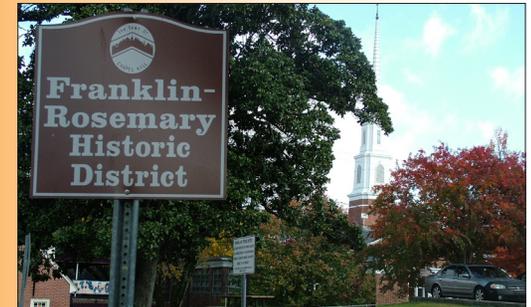
The Chapel Hill Historic District Commission guides physical change within the historic districts of Chapel Hill in such a way as to promote, enhance and preserve the character of the districts. For more information, visit tinyurl.com/mgb5h52.

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OWNING A HOME WITHIN CHAPEL HILL HISTORIC DISTRICTS



For Property Owners and Prospective Buyers of Properties within the Chapel Hill Historic Districts:

- Franklin/Rosemary
- Cameron/McCauley
- Gimghoul

NOTE: It is strongly recommended that real estate brokers or sellers of a piece of property within any officially designated historic district in Chapel Hill make this brochure available to the buyer preferably well before or at very least at the closing of said property.

HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Making External Changes to Properties in Historic Districts

In order to make external changes on historic district properties, the owner or buyer must secure a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) from the Chapel Hill Historic District Commission (HDC). The detailed requirements for securing a COA are contained in the Town's Land Use Management Ordinance (LUMO) at bit.ly/1csD0Ev. A COA approval must be obtained before creating or changing the exterior portion of a building and many hardscape features.

www.townofchapelhill.org/historicdistrict

The COA Process

1. Application Filing

Download the Certificate of Appropriateness form at bit.ly/1FQz3TC. Return the completed forms to the Permit Center on the third floor of Chapel Hill Town Hall, 405 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Incomplete applications will be returned to the applicant.

The HDC may specify criteria for situations in which the town manager may waive any of the application material requirements. For example: on the basis of preliminary sketches or drawings and other supporting data, the town manager may exempt from requirements for a COA those projects involving the ordinary maintenance or repair of any exterior architectural feature that does not involve a change in design, material, or outer appearance thereof. The town manager shall notify the commission of all such exemptions. Also included are constructions, reconstructions, alterations, restorations, and the moving or demolition of a feature that is certifiably deemed to be unsafe or in a dangerous condition by a building inspector or similar official.

The term "exterior architectural features" includes the architectural style, general design and general arrangement of the exterior of a building or hardscape features, the kind and texture of the building materials, the size and scale of the building, and the type and style of all windows, doors,

and other appurtenances, such as masonry walls, fences, light fixtures, steps and surfacing materials for walkways, driveways, parking areas, patios, etc., or any aboveground utility structure, or any type of outdoor advertising sign.

2. Application Review

The review of an application for a COA will take into account the historical and/or architectural significance of the structure under consideration as well as the exterior form and appearance of any proposed additions or modifications to that structure. Prior to approval or denial of a COA application by the HDC, the commission shall take such action as may reasonably be required to inform the owners of any property likely to be materially affected by the application and shall give the applicant and such owners an opportunity to be heard. In cases where the commission deems it necessary, it will hold a public hearing concerning the application.

The Historic District Commission reviews applications for a COA in order to determine the extent to which the application is or is not congruous with the historic aspects of the historic district according to the criteria listed here as A through J. These regulations encourage design, whether contemporary or traditional, that is harmonious with the character of the historic district.

- A. The height of the building in relation to the average height of the nearest adjacent and opposite buildings.
- B. The setback and placement on the lot of the building in relation to the average setback and placement of the nearest adjacent and opposite buildings.
- C. Exterior construction materials, including texture and pattern, but not color.
- D. Architectural detailing, such as lintels, cornices, brick bond, and foundation materials.
- E. Roof shapes, forms, and materials.
- F. Proportion, shape, positioning and location, pattern, and size of any elements of fenestration.
- G. General form and proportions of building and structures.
- H. Appurtenant fixtures and features such as lightning.
- I. Structural conditions and soundness.
- J. Architectural scale.



3. Application Approval

Within 180 days of the acceptance of an application, or within such time consented to by written notice from the applicant, the Town Manager or the HDC shall either approve the application, approve the application with conditions, or deny the application. Failure to take final action on an application within the prescribed time limit, or extensions thereof, shall result in approval of the application as submitted. The town manager or the commission may impose reasonable conditions on the approval of an application to ensure that the spirit and intent of this action is achieved.

The town manager shall notify the applicant of a decision in writing. If the application is denied, the notice shall include the reasons for denial. The decision may be appealed to the Board of Adjustment. A new application for the same property may be submitted only if substantive changes in plans are made for the proposed construction, reconstruction, alteration, restoration, or moving.

Demolition or Removal of a Structure

An application for a COA authorizing the demolition of a building or structure shall not be denied. However, the effective date of such a certificate may be delayed for up to 365 days from the date of approval.

The period of delay can be reduced by the HDC if it finds that the owner would suffer hardship or be deprived of beneficial use of or return from such property. During this period the commission may negotiate with the owner and other parties to find a means of preserving the building.

If the commission finds that the building has no particular significance or value toward maintaining the character of the historic district, it may authorize earlier removal.

