



Certificate of Appropriateness for Historic Property

Milwaukee's historic preservation ordinance preserves the city's heritage through the designation of buildings, sites, objects, and districts that reflect elements of Milwaukee's cultural, social, economic, political and architectural history. Special design review procedures protect such properties.

If you own a designated local historic site or a property in a local historic district and plan to alter its exterior, you must receive a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) from the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). The Commission reviews the application at a public meeting, and then exercises its best judgment as to whether the proposed alteration is consistent with the historic character of the property. Favorable judgments result in the issuance of a COA.

Obtaining a Certificate of Appropriateness is not difficult but does require some time. It's smart to begin the process early, since procedural regulations and the requirements of the ordinance do not permit hasty action on the part of the Commission.

When you apply for building permits for your project, you'll receive an **application** for a COA or be asked to see the HPC staff at the Department of City Development. Fill out the application, including sketches, photos, and plans that will help the CPC understand the alterations you wish to make. These materials will be retained by the CPC, so keep copies.

Mail or deliver the application and accompanying materials to the HPC staff at 809 North Broadway. The staff will schedule your project for a hearing at the next HPC meeting, if the application is received at least 10 days

before the meeting. HPC meetings are held every four weeks. Applicants are encouraged to attend the hearing in order to answer questions. If you have an architect or professional consultant, it may help if he or she attends.

If the HPC grants the COA, you may apply for building permits. Any changes made during construction that affect the exterior must be brought to the HPC for approval.

If the HPC determines the proposed alteration is not consistent with the historic character of the site, structure, or district, and no compromise can be reached immediately, it will refuse to issue a COA. Without a COA, building or demolition permits cannot be issued.

If the HPC refuses to grant a COA, a public hearing is scheduled within 30 days. At that time, the owner may explain why it's infeasible to comply with the historic preservation ordinance, or present other relevant information. The CPC will issue a final decision on granting a COA within 15 days of the public hearing. Property owners who are denied a COA may appeal the decision to the Common Council if they appeal within 20 days of the public hearing.

QUICK FACTS

Application fee: None
Approval by: Historic Preservation Commission
Fees: None
Review and approval time: Varies
For more information: 286-5722
