

Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) and other Approval Procedures

Any ***exterior*** changes or improvements to buildings, landscaping, streetscapes, and archaeological resources, or new construction or additions or certain types of repairs to exteriors or demolition of buildings within the Elm City Municipal Historic District require a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) indicating that the proposed changes and/or improvements are compatible with the historic character of the district as determined by the Elm City Historic Preservation Commission. For an application form see the link below. Normal maintenance activities are exempt from approval requirements.

The following approval procedures apply to exterior changes, improvements or work, and a link below provides specific examples of the various approvals required for different types of exterior work or improvements within the District.

1. Major Works require approval of a COA from the Historic District Commission
2. A COA for Minor Works can be approved by the Commission's Design Review Sub-committee
3. Normal maintenance items do not require a Certificate of Appropriateness

Issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA)

A Certificate of Appropriateness is issued by the Historic Preservation Commission, when in the opinion of the Commission the proposed improvements are congruous with the historic character of the Elm City Municipal Historic District. Exterior portions of any building or structure on property within the Elm City Municipal Historic District cannot be materially altered, restored, moved, or demolished unless a Certificate of Appropriateness has been issued. A property owner within the Elm City Municipal Historic District who is considering changes to the exterior of his property should call the Town of Elm City at (252) 236-4917 or write to the Historic Properties Commission at Elm City Town Hall, 117 Railroad Street, Elm City, NC, to determine if a Certificate of Appropriateness is required for the proposed work.

A Certificate of Appropriateness may be issued by the Design Review Subcommittee of the Historic Preservation Commission for minor works, a link to examples of which is below.

Application for the COA

Typically the Elm City Historic Preservation Commission consider applications for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) at their regular meetings (third Monday of each month at 7:00 pm in the Elm City Town Hall Board of Commissioners meeting room). Also, the commission may meet in a special meeting at other times to consider applications for a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Applications for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) can be obtained from the Elm City Town Hall at 117 Railroad Street, Elm City, NC. The link also below provides the application form. An application

form for a COA must be filed with the City Clerk for the town in the Elm City Town Hall at least two (2) weeks prior to a Commission regular or special meeting. An application for a Certificate of Appropriateness is not considered complete until all illustrative material necessary to describe adequately the proposed project has been submitted to the Commission. The Historic Preservation Commission may refuse to consider an application for a COA if it judges that insufficient information has been provided by the applicant. Each hearing regarding consideration by the Historic Preservation Commission for the approval of a particular Certificate of Appropriateness requires that property owners within 100 feet of the property for which the COA is requested be notified of the meeting.

Application Details and Procedures

For major work projects, the property owner or agent shall provide accurate, detailed, and dimensioned drawings showing the existing and proposed changes to the property. Samples of exterior materials may be requested by the Commission, if necessary. Photographs, renderings, and/or line sketches of the property in question as well as neighboring structures which show scale and massing will assist the Historic Preservation Commission in making a timely decision.

Property owners who plan major work projects are urged to consult with the Historic Preservation Commission's Design Review Committee members on an informal basis before submitting an application for a COA. However, a Historic Preservation Commission member or members can only offer suggestions or concerns on an informal basis and shall not approve of any such work except at an official meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission.

The applicant for a COA is encouraged to be present during the meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission at which the application is to be considered. If the applicant cannot attend, a representative, who can speak for and legally bind the applicant, should be present. The applicant and any persons desiring to speak on the application will be given an opportunity at the Commission meeting to make comments and to ask questions of the Commission members.

Approval of the COA

When the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness has been approved by the Historic Preservation Commission, notification of the action in the form of a COA approval document, will be forwarded to the applicant. If an application for a COA is denied, the applicant may appeal the decision to the Elm City Board of Adjustments.