

# THE NORWICH HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

## **CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS: INFORMATION**

### **Purpose of Commission**

The Norwich Historic District Commission was established by ordinance of the city council to ensure the protection and preservation of buildings and places of historic interest within the city. Two historic districts were recognized: the Norwichtown Historic District in 1967 and the Little Plains Historic District in 1969.

The Commission is empowered to review and approve plans for construction, reconstruction, or restoration of any building or structure within a designated historic district in order to determine the appropriateness of architectural details that are visible from a public street or way.

The role of the Commission does not include design, but we do wish to be helpful, and may well have suggestions related to a project. Please note that zoning and easement clearances must be obtained before filing an application.

### **Building Permits**

Building Permits are provided by the Building Department are legal requirements for many types of construction and improvements, including but not limited to new or replacement plumbing, septic systems, electrical work, mechanical work, roofing, siding, any new construction and structural changes.

### **What is a Certificate of Appropriateness?**

A Certificate of Appropriateness, or COA, is a letter from the Historic District Commission authorizing the Building Department to permit the property owner to proceed with the changes or improvements indicated in the COA application. The application is simple and short.

### **When Is a Certificate of Appropriateness Required?**

Any changes to a building requiring a Building Permit or described in the Property Modifications defined below must have an approved Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic District Commission.

Note that some items may not require a Building Permit but still meet the definitions listed below and require a COA.

The Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation has provided us with an extensive reference library concerning all phases of preservation and restoration of historic structures. This collection includes detailed information which is pertinent to any restoration or preservation project. That information is available to the public at the Otis Library reference desk.

### **Who May Apply for a Certificate?**

The property owner must apply for the property and project in question. The COA is issued to the named applicant only and is not transferable.

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### **Where Can I Obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness?**

A property owner who wishes to begin such a project must complete an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA), which can be obtained from the Building Department or from the Norwich Historic District Commission web page. A copy is attached herein as well. Once the COA is approved and a building permit is obtained, the project may proceed.

www.NorwichCT.org  
Resident Information  
Boards, Committees and Commissions  
Historic District Commission

### **For How Long is the Application Valid?**

The COA is valid for six months. That time period may be extended by action of the Historic District Commission. The Commission may request a follow-up inspection to insure compliance. The applicant is responsible for notifying the Historic District Commission at least one month prior to the expiration of a COA if an extension is requested. Extensions cannot be provided after a COA has expired.

### **Modifications, Changes & Additions to an Active COA**

Modifications, changes or additions to an active COA must be brought before the Historic District Commission during a regular meeting to approve the request. In cases where the modification, change or addition would require a separate Building Permit, we may request that you file a separate COA application. As stated above, projects may not be extended beyond the six month period without written approval and that approval must be obtained prior to the expiration of the COA.

### **Items to Include with Application**

Every project on a building within an established Historic District that involves changes to exterior architectural details requires a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA.) Your application should include a written description of the project, appropriate photographs and drawings. Your application will be presented at a public hearing. Following approval by the Norwich Historic District Commission, the application will be forwarded to the Building Official who may issue a building permit if one is required. This application is best supported by photographs, architectural drawings, and samples of construction materials.

### **Inspection & Review**

The Building Inspector will inspect construction related to a Building Permit.

The Historic District Commission may inspect and review construction or improvements related to a Certificate of Appropriateness. This oversight remains in force regardless of whether a building permit is required or not.

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**CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS: APPLICATION**

COA # \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION I Property Owner**

Historic Property Owner: \_\_\_\_\_

Property Owner's Authorized Representative: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Property Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Owner Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Owner Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION II Property Modification Category**

Check one or more of the following:

|              |       |                |       |                        |
|--------------|-------|----------------|-------|------------------------|
| Demolition   | _____ | Restoration    | _____ |                        |
| Preservation | _____ | Reconstruction | _____ | New Construction _____ |

Check one or more of the following:

|         |       |           |       |          |       |
|---------|-------|-----------|-------|----------|-------|
| Roofing | _____ | Windows   | _____ | Other    | _____ |
| Masonry | _____ | Perimeter | _____ | Fixtures | _____ |
| Signage | _____ | Skylights | _____ | Chimney  | _____ |

**SECTION III Inclusions**

Please include photograph of the property from the street (regardless of the location of the actual work). Photograph of the specific work to be performed. Catalog sheets or descriptions of specific materials to be used, including but not limited to lumber material, metal materials, construction materials, finishes, fasteners (note that vinyl, plastic, fiberglass, aluminum or similar materials are not likely to be approved) If matching another approved feature in the neighborhood (for example, fencing), provide a photo of matching installation. You may add this information as an attachment or addendum to your COA application.

**SECTION VI Signature**

Applicant Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Submit:** hdc@cityofnorwich.org via email. The Commission checks this email account daily Monday-Friday. Please submit your COA by the first Monday of the month. The Commission normally meets the third Wednesday of the month.

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**CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS: APPLICATION**

**COA #** \_\_\_\_\_

**Section V Historic District Commission Use**

HDC Meeting Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Application Action:**

Approved as Submitted: \_\_\_\_\_

Denied: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved with Stipulations: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved with Modifications: \_\_\_\_\_

**Summary of stipulations, modifications or reason for denial:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

HDC Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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### **DEFINITIONS OF WORK REQUIRING A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS:**

**Demolition:** The physical removal of constructed elements from a property including, but not limited to, walls, floors, framing, foundations, roofing, siding, windows, doors, gutters, soffits, fascia, chimneys, decorative hardware, fencing, stone walls or any other feature. If something is physically removed from the building or property, it is demolition. The removal of temporary features such as furniture or temporary structures (such as a tent for an event) would not apply.

#### **Building Modifications:**

**Preservation** The treatment or refinishing of building elements to preserve and protect against elements. This would include staining, caulking, repointing and very minor repairs to surfaces or single, occasional replacements of individual elements such as a shingle.

**Restoration** This would include preservation but additionally require substantial repairs. An example would be the removal of antique windows and window frames to a shop for reconstruction. Additionally this might include the removal and replacement of framing from rot or termite damage, reconstruction of door frames, and substantial repairs of soffits, fascia, and gutters.

**Reconstruction** Reconstruction or replacement would include areas of a building that are so damaged, rotted or structurally unsound that they must be substantially demolished and rebuilt. A porch or staircase that is falling off of a building would be an example of reconstruction. Replacing a roof, siding, asphalt paving or a garage door would constitute examples of replacement.

**New Construction** New construction includes work that did not previously exist. The addition of a sunroom, porch, additional living space, garage, patio, driveway or any other feature to the building or property would constitute new construction.

#### **Building Fixtures & Features:**

**Windows** This includes window replacements, window changes, sash replacements or new window installations.

**Skylights** Including skylight or roof window replacements, changes, sash replacements or new window installations. Roof hatches would also fit into this category as do egress window or escape hatches required for fire safety and Code compliance.

**Chimneys** This includes chimney repair, reconstruction, replacements, changes or new chimney construction.

**Site Masonry** This includes sidewalks, bricks, pavers, stone or other impervious surface coverage repair, reconstruction, replacement, changes or new installations.

**Signage** Any signs, icons, illuminated directions or any other feature that provides direction, information or advertising.

**Perimeters** Any fencing, stone walls, wood walls, chain-link, picket fences, wood barriers, foliage screening or other feature that creates a barrier or perimeter to demarcate property, retain people or pets, exclude wild animals or any other means by which an area is partially or completely enclosed.

**Fixtures** This includes any equipment, fixtures or appurtenances that are added or attached to the building or property, such as lighting fixtures, satellite dishes, television antennae, surveillance cameras, large planters, fountains, statues or any permanent lawn ornaments.