

When is a COA Required?

In determining appropriateness, the HDC will consider all architectural details visible from a public way as well as neighborhood compatibility and historic interest. A COA is required for, but not limited to, any of the following exterior work:

- Construction of a new building or structure or relocation of an existing one.
- Alteration, removal, or addition to exterior architectural features.
- Any proposed demolition, whole or part of existing structures.
- Any change in materials.
- Replacement, addition or modification of windows, doors, storm windows or doors, shutters, skylights.
- Replacement of roofing using different materials or change in pitch.
- Installation or replacement of permanent outdoor signs.
- Installation or replacement of fences, walls, curb cuts, driveways, exterior lighting and other fixed structures such as: utility meters, fuel tanks, air conditioners, antennae, satellite dishes, and solar heating units.

When is a COA NOT required?

The following work does NOT require a Certificate of Appropriateness:

- Any alteration not visible from a public street, way or place
- Routine maintenance that does not involve a change in materials, design, or texture
- Painting (with no change of material) and paint color
- Interior alterations

COA Applications can be found on our webpage: <https://www.norwichct.org/144/Historic-District-Commission>

How to Submit a COA Application

COAs must be received in a timely fashion to allow for required public notification. Any COA received less than 7 business days prior to a scheduled meeting will automatically be added to the next month's meeting agenda. Please submit your COA application to hdc@cityofnorwich.org.

Your COA application should also include a written description of the project, scope of work, proposed materials, and appropriate photographs, quotes, plans, and drawings as additional attachments. A COA application is valid for 6 months.

Your application will be presented at a public hearing. Applicants are encouraged to attend the public hearing to present their application. After an application has been voted on, the application will be forwarded to the Building Department who may issue a building permit if one is required.

The Norwich Historic District Commission

AN INFORMATIONAL BROCHURE

Norwich, CT



Brochure created in 2020

Sketch of Norwichtown Green. John Warner Barber c.1836

About The Norwich Historic District Commission

The Norwich Historic District Commission (HDC) is comprised of volunteers appointed by the city council. It was established by ordinance of the city council to ensure the protection and preservation of buildings and places of historic interest within the city. The enabling state statute that established Historic District Commissions is G.S. 7-147 a-y.

Under the statute, Historic District Commissions may promote the educational, cultural, and economic and general welfare of the public through the preservation and protection of significant historic resources.

The Historic District Commission and the Norwich Historical Society are **not** the same entity; they are two separate organizations.

The Norwich Historic District Commission regulates Norwich's two local historic districts: Little Plain and Norwichtown.

Local Historic Districts

A Local Historic District (LHD) consists of a contiguous area of buildings and structures that represents either a distinct period of significance in the community's history or the evolution of the community over time.

CGS, Section 7-147b defines the historic district as "an area, or a cluster of related buildings, or objects and structures, in a compatible setting which, taken as a whole, visually expresses styles and modes of living representative of various periods in American History."

The LHD is different from a National Register or State Register historic district in that it provides for the local review of any exterior work that is visible from a public street, place or way.

Properties within the LHD are subject to review, regardless of the age or condition of the specific building or structure. There are exceptions which include properties owned by higher education institutions and state-owned properties.

Norwich's Local Historic Districts

Norwich has two local historic districts; the Norwichtown Historic District established in 1967 and the Little Plain Historic District established in 1969.

Any physical alterations to the exterior of a historic structure, construction of a new structure, or demolition of an existing structure that is visible from a public way in the two local historic districts are reviewed by the Norwich Historic District Commission.

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 in the local historic district(s) to proceed with the changes or improvements indicated in the COA application.

No building or structure shall be erected or altered within a local historic district until after an application for a certificate of appropriateness has been submitted and approved by the historic district commission.

Per statute (7-147d (b)), no demolition permit for demolition or removal of a building or structure within a local historic district shall be issued by a municipality or any department, agency or official thereof until a certificate of appropriateness has been issued.



Twentieth century postcard of Little Plain Historic District