



FAQ

Q: How long before I start my project should I contact my district planner?

A: This will vary by project, but you should always contact your planner in the earliest stage of the planning process.

Q: I can't start my project immediately but want to go ahead and get approved, how long do I have to complete my project?

A: CDA's are good for one year. After a CDA has expired, projects that were previously approved by the DDRC will need to return for approval.

Q: Why is/what makes my property historic?

A: Generally speaking, this refers to any house/building built more than 50 years ago and still has many of its character defining features; like original materials and features.

Other Historic House Resources:

National Parks Service Handouts

<https://bit.ly/PreservationBriefs>

State Historic Preservation Office

Publications

https://bit.ly/TechAssistPublications_SCS

More City Resources

<https://bit.ly/CoCHistoricResources>

<https://bit.ly/CoCPreservation>

Guide to Historic Preservation Review in the City of Columbia

This guide offers a look into the process in obtaining a Certificate of Design Approval for historic property owners.

How do I know if I need a Certificate of Design Approval?

Reach out to your planner! A CDA is required for any visible exterior repairs, alterations, additions, signage, demolition, or new construction when: The property is in one of the City's 15 local historic districts or the property is designated as a local historic landmark.

***It is best to refer to your district guidelines before starting any project, even those not listed above and then follow up by contacting your district's planner.**

What is a CDA?

A CDA is a document approving your project and shows that your project meets all the guidelines set in place for your historic district. If your property meets one of the criteria listed above, you must obtain a CDA prior to applying for a permit.

Did you know...

The City of Columbia has 15 Historic Districts and over 160 individual landmarks??

Check your specific historic district guidelines before planning any project

Each City of Columbia historic District has either their own set of guidelines or follows the City ordinance for historic properties. These are all available on our website: <https://www.columbiasc.net/planning-preservation/historic-districts>

Many projects are reviewed at staff level without further process. Larger scale projects, such as new construction or additions, will need to be reviewed by the Design/Development Review Commission.

Contact your friendly HP planner

It is always best to contact your District planner prior to starting any projects. You can find your assigned planner on our website: <https://www.columbiasc.net/planning-preservation/planning-staff>

Don't forget to ask about the Bailey Bill Tax abatement program, and other incentives regarding any historic property repairs!
<https://www.columbiasc.net/planning-preservation/historic-incentives>

Staff Level Approval:

Most projects are reviewed at staff level. All general maintenance projects, site improvements, minimally visible* alterations/additions, and others!

DDRC Level Approval:

Mostly larger scale projects, such as new construction and highly visible additions/alterations to an existing historic property, are reviewed by the DDRC. The DDRC is made up of credentialed volunteers and meets once a month.

**Level of visibility is determined by staff upon a site visit to the property seeking approval. This will need to be conducted as soon as possible so make sure to contact your planner as soon as possible.*

The calendar for all DDRC meetings is found at our website:

<https://www.columbiasc.net/planning-boards-commissions/ddrc>. *

*Since the commission only meets once a month, you need to plan your project with your district planner accordingly to keep your project on track.

