



## Rock Hill Board of Historic Review

COA applications are reviewed monthly by the Board. In its judgment, the Board can approve, approve with conditions, or deny the application as presented. The Board may also delay action on an application if it feels further information is needed, or if the applicant fails to appear before the Board.

### What is Normally Required?

Each COA application shall be considered individually as its effect to the historical and architectural character of the property and its surroundings. Many of the guidelines are flexible in nature and are applied on a case-by-case basis. However, some applications may be denied. Denial will normally occur in the following situations:

- ◆ Demolition.
- ◆ Removal of original features.
- ◆ Installation of vinyl, aluminum or other artificial siding.
- ◆ Installation of satellite dishes or antennas on primary or readily visible facades.
- ◆ Construction of staircases on primary facades.
- ◆ Abrasive cleaning methods such as sand or waterblasting.

Exceptions to normal requirements may be granted, such as:

- ◆ In cases of proven economic hardship.
- ◆ For buildings considered non-contributing within an historic district.
- ◆ Where the public welfare requires this exception.

### Changes Without Board Approval

If a property owner initiates work without obtaining a Building Permit and prior approval of a COA application, a Stop Work Order may be issued. If these requirements are not met, the owner may face fines or an order to restore the original condition of the property.

### What Other Regulations Are There?

In addition to meeting the Design Review Guidelines in an historic district, properties are also subject to the regulations of Rock Hill's Zoning Ordinance and Building Codes. The City's Zoning Ordinance governs the use of properties and has standards for height, setback, lot coverage, landscaping, open space, parking and other requirements. The Zoning Ordinance also has specific standards for signs in residential and commercial areas. Property owners must follow Zoning Ordinances in addition to the Design Review Guidelines in historic districts.

Renovations and new construction must also follow regulations set forth in the Building Code. This code addresses such issues as requirements for electrical work, fire exits, building construction techniques and other aspects of renovation and construction. Most contractors and builders should be familiar with the Building Code. Property owners doing work themselves must also meet these regulations before being issued a Certificate of Occupancy. A Certificate of Occupancy is issued upon satisfactory completion of items in a Building Permit.

### Who Can Help Me With Questions?

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Janice Miller at 803/817-5129 or by email, jemiller@ci.rock-hill.sc.us.

### Did You Know?

Homeowners may qualify for funding assistance through Housing and Neighborhood Services. Check the Neighborhood Development Section of the Housing and Neighborhood Services webpage at [www.cityofrockhill.com](http://www.cityofrockhill.com).



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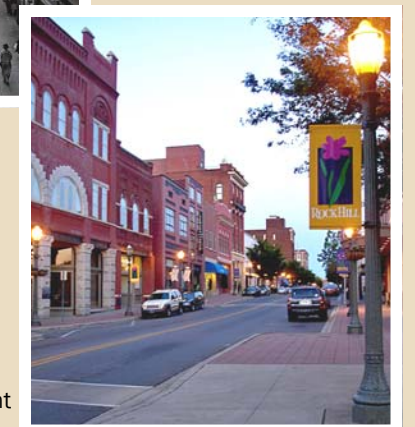
This brochure provides an overview of the Rock Hill Board of Historic Review and the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) process. Additional information is also provided regarding building and site improvements that are generally permitted or prohibited within the City's Historic Districts. Please visit the Development Services department link on the [www.CityofRockHill.com](http://www.CityofRockHill.com) website or contact Janice Miller at 803/817-5129 for a complete set of the Historic Design Review Guidelines.



Main Street, 1895



Main Street, 1920's



Main Street, Present

## Is My Property in an Historic District?

A call to the Development Services Department at 803/817-5129 can establish whether or not a property is within one of the designated districts. The department also has maps of the districts on file when a property owner applies for a Building Permit. If the property is within a designated historic district or is considered an individual historic property, the owner must obtain a COA application with their Building Permit.

## What Kinds of Work Require a COA?

Any new construction, renovation, restoration or alteration to an existing building in a designated historic district must be reviewed by Development Services staff and the Rock Hill Board of Historic Review, including:

- ◆ Any type of new construction including major buildings, such as residences or commercial buildings, and outbuildings such as garages or sheds.
- ◆ Moving of any new building or structure into or out of a historic district, including prefabricated garages or sheds.
- ◆ Reconstruction of buildings.
- ◆ Additions to buildings.
- ◆ Alterations to existing buildings, including replacement of doors and windows, and changes to exterior siding.
- ◆ Repair of exterior details.
- ◆ Signs for residential or commercial use.
- ◆ Demolition of buildings.
- ◆ Public improvements, such as street lighting and sidewalks.
- ◆ Erection of fences, exterior lighting, and construction of walks and driveways.



## What Kinds of Work Do Not Require a COA?

A COA is not required for the following:

- ◆ Interior changes and alterations unless the interior has been identified in the historic designation ordinance.
- ◆ Painting.
- ◆ Landscaping.

## The Review Process

The Rock Hill Board of Historic Review (RHBHR) was established in 1989 by City ordinance and was given certain powers and duties, including the identification and designation of historic districts and properties, and the adoption of the Historic Design Review Guidelines to promote appropriate restoration, renovation and new construction. Residents and property owners within designated historic districts must obtain a COA prior to the initiation of any exterior work, changes in a property's site and setting, and new construction. The staff at the City's Development Services Department is available to assist property owners in the COA process.

Development Services staff can automatically approve request for repairs and maintenance of any exterior building feature when the proposed work exactly reproduces the existing design and when the same or similar materials are used. Staff can approve handicap ramps located on secondary and rear facades for residential properties when the design meets the following criteria:



- ◆ All wood construction to meet ADA Standards
- ◆ Ramp size is in scale with the structure
- ◆ Design of side rails and balusters are simple in design
- ◆ Side rails and balusters painted to match trim of existing structure, if appropriate
- ◆ Landscaping installed to disguise and soften the appearance of the ramp

Handicap ramp COA applications for commercial properties must be submitted to the RHBHR for review.

Staff can also quickly approve certain minor alterations that follow the Design Review Guidelines upon consultation with two on-call Board members, including:

- ◆ Minor changes to existing signs including replacement with new in same size and materials, subject to Zoning Ordinance requirements
- ◆ Replacement of existing canvas awnings and canopies
- ◆ Rear fire escapes
- ◆ Rear yard fencing not visible from any street
- ◆ Storm and screen windows and doors when the frame is narrow and the visual effect of the opening is not altered
- ◆ Security grilles of simple design
- ◆ Skylights and solar panels not visible from any street
- ◆ Simulated materials on portions of the structure not facing any street provided that the material matches the original width and general appearance, that corner boards are retained in width and decorative trim, and that decorative details are retained



Other alterations, restorations, renovations, additions, new construction and demolition are considered major changes and require consideration by the Board at their next regularly scheduled meeting. Please consult Development Services staff for application deadline dates.

The review process is triggered by a Building Permit application. For historic property owners, a COA application must be approved either by staff or the Board prior to the issuance of a Building Permit. Although some work such as paving does not require a Building Permit, a COA is still required. A COA application is available from the Development Services Department or online at the City of Rock Hill website. A completed application along with drawings, photographs, and in some cases, samples of materials, must be submitted for review by staff.

If the COA is to be considered for review by the Board, applicants will be notified of their scheduled meeting date. Representation at the meeting by either the property owner or a representative, such as the contractor, is required in order to answer questions the Board may have regarding the application.

The Board may approve the work as presented, approve with conditions, or deny the application. Upon approval, a Building Permit can be issued; if denied, no Building Permit may be issued. The property owner may modify their plans to comply with the Design Review Guidelines, choose not to proceed with the work, or appeal the decision of the Board.

## How Do I Apply for a COA?

Go to the City of Rock Hill's Development Services Department at City Hall, Suite 300, and apply for a Building Permit. Property owners in the historic districts will be given a COA application and be informed of the deadlines for submitting applications in order to be placed on the Board's meeting agenda. The Board meets the first Thursday of each month at City Hall.

For minor changes, completion of the form with a description of the work may be all that is required.

Drawings, photographs, plans, and other documentation that fully illustrate the property and proposed work are required for major restoration or renovation work, and for new construction. This documentation must be submitted with the completed COA form.

The applications are then submitted to the City's Development Services staff for review. Staff can often issue a COA for minor work, minimizing the delay for the property owner. For more extensive work, staff will examine the COA application to make certain the Board has the necessary information to render a decision. Applications are generally presented to the Board within thirty (30) to forty-five (45) days after the application is filed. Property owners will be contacted if additional documentation is necessary.

