

WHAT IS A HISTORIC PROPERTY?

The Near West and Macon Place Historic Districts were created after requests by a majority of the residents in the District. An Ordinance was then signed by City Council approving their creation. Because of the special status of the structures within these districts, a Certificate of Appropriateness is required before any architectural changes are made to structures located in the Districts.

Other structures, which are located throughout Decatur, have been listed individually. As the owner of any structure which is considered to have historical significance, it is then the responsibility of the owner to be aware of preservation guidelines and requirements for a Certificate of Appropriateness.

WHAT IS A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS?

A Certificate of Appropriateness (C of A) is issued by the Historical and Architectural Sites Commission indicating approval of plans for alteration, construction, or demolition of a Landmark or property within the Historic Districts.

HOW IS A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS OBTAINED?

An application may be obtained in a number of ways:

- 1 Department of Neighborhood Services
One Gary K. Anderson Plaza
Decatur, Illinois, 62523-1196
- 2 Online at:
www.decaturil.gov
- 3 By calling 217.424.2797
or by e-mail irons@decaturil.gov

Please allow time for processing and check with the Historic Preservation Planner for a list of deadlines and meeting times.

WHO BENEFITS?

PROPERTY OWNERS

Property owners can be confident that their quality renovations or new construction will not be negated by poorly designed work on an adjacent property.

CONTRACTORS & DESIGNERS

Contractors and designers can review the Design Guidelines to design and implement appropriate and historically sensitive building renovations for clients in the Districts.

DEVELOPERS & REALTORS

Developers and Realtors can select buildings in the District for renovation or sale, knowing that their clients have some protection from inappropriate developments that are detrimental to overall property values.

DECATUR CITIZENS

Decaturites can admire and take pride in the distinctive and attractive appearance of Decatur's Historic Districts and Landmarks. Decaturites will then want to walk the streets, shop the stores, live in the homes and be proud to call Decatur their home.

Certificate of Appropriateness Application Process



If you plan to build, demolish, or alter the exterior of a structure within the Near West Historic District, the Macon Place Historic District, or any other structure which has been designated as having historic significance, then you must have your plans approved by the Historical and Architectural Sites Commission prior to any changes.

WHEN IS A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS REQUIRED?

It is required when any architectural exterior alterations (any changes in material, style or appearance) are made to designated structures or those located in a local historic district. Design guidelines and staff consultation are available at the Neighborhood Services Department. (217.424.2797)

THE NEAR WEST HISTORIC DISTRICT



WHEN IS A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS **NOT** REQUIRED?

It is not required for the following changes:

- Change in paint color
- Installation or change in storm doors or storm windows
- Installation or change in window air conditioners
- Installation or change in television antennae
- Ordinary repair and maintenance of existing architectural features which do not change the material and basic appearance of the structure

WHAT IF I PROCEED WITHOUT A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS?

A notification of noncompliance will be sent from the City specifying a time frame in which to comply with the Ordinance followed by an inspection. Further noncompliance may result in citations and possible daily fines from \$50 to \$500.

THE PROCESS

Certificates are reviewed by the Historical and Architectural Sites Commission (HASC) at monthly meetings for approval or disapproval. Required building permits may be obtained after certificate approval.

- 1 Obtain an Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness (C of A) from the Economic and Urban Development Department.
- 2 Review the Design Guidelines and seek qualified assistance to provide appropriate design solutions.
- 3 File Application with the Economic and Urban Development Department by the **second Wednesday of each month** for review at the monthly meeting which is held the third Wednesday of each month (due to Holidays, there may be some exceptions. Please check with City Staff to ensure accuracy). Detailed meeting dates can also be found on the website. Along with the required Application it helps to provide supporting documentation, such as pictures, site plans, and sample materials.
- 4 HASC reviews the application within 30 days of submittal at their monthly meeting, and if approved, issues a C of A so that a Building (or Demolition) Permit can be issued and construction can commence. It is requested that a representative(s) be present at the meeting or the application may be tabled until the next meeting.
- 5 If the original application is deemed inappropriate, City Staff and the Commission will work with the applicant to reach a solution so that a C of A can be issued.
- 6 Applicants should contact the Department regarding any current programs for residential homes or design assistance or facade improvement grants for commercial properties.

WHY REVIEW?

The Historical and Architectural Sites Commission was formed by the Decatur City Council as a means of;

"Protecting, enhancing and perpetuating the distinctive historical and/or architectural characteristics of the City which represent elements of the City's cultural, social, economic, political or architectural history;

Fostering civic pride in the beauty and noble accomplishments of the past as represented in the City's landmarks and historic districts;

Stabilizing and improving property values of the City's landmarks and historic districts; and, protecting and enhancing the City's attractiveness to tourists and visitors and the support of business and industry thereby provided.

It is the intent of the Chapter [Chapters 30 and 31 of the City Code] to accomplish the foregoing purposes and objectives by providing a mechanism whereby landmarks and districts in the City of Decatur identified by the City Council as having historical or architectural significance may be preserved and enjoyed in a suitable and harmonious environment".

WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL SITES COMMISSION?

HASC was established to advise and make recommendations to the City Council on issues regarding historic properties. Eleven members are appointed by the Mayor with the consent of the Council for terms of three years.