

Historic District Property Improvements

Proposed improvements and modifications to Historic District Overlay (HDO) properties follow three distinct paths of review:

EXEMPTION REVIEW

ADMIN COA REVIEW

HDRB COA REVIEW

Consult the [Historic District Reference Guide](#) for a listing of which review path your improvement would follow. Check with the Community Development office for any questions regarding these processes at community.development@herndon-va.gov or (703)787-7380.

Completion of the [Historic District Property Modification Form](#) and electronic submission of that form to community.development@herndon-va.gov is the first step for each process. The subsequent steps for each process are outlined below:

Exemption Review

This path is followed for proposed improvements and modifications that are exempt from receiving a Certification of Appropriateness (COA) from either staff or the Historic District Review Board (HDRB). This review is voluntary but highly encouraged. With this review, staff can provide written verification that the proposed improvement is exempt from COA review.

Administrative COA Review

This path is followed for improvements and modifications that are minor in nature and do result in significant changes in appearance or character to the Historic District property on which the proposed improvements of modification would occur. This process is strictly administrative and does not go through a public hearing process. Staff-issued COAs would go to the HDRB on appeal.

HDRB COA Review

This path is followed for improvements and modifications that do result in significant changes in appearance or character to the Historic District property on which the proposed improvements of modification would occur. This process goes through a public hearing process. HDRB-issued COAs would go to the Town Council on appeal.

Exemption Review Process Steps

1. Applicant completes
Property Modification Form

2. Staff reviews form within 3
business days

3. Applicant receives
verification of exemption

Administrative COA Review Process Steps

1. Applicant completes
Property Modification Form

2. Staff reviews form within 3
business days

3. Applicant receives
verification of review path,
fee, & required submission
materials

4. Applicant compiles and
submits materials & fee

5. Staff reviews for
completeness within 3
business days

6. When complete, staff
reviews for appropriateness
within 7 business days*

7. Applicant receives final
decision

HDRB COA Review Process Steps

1. Applicant completes
Property Modification Form

2. Staff reviews form within 3
business days

3. Applicant receives
verification of review path,
fee, & required submission
materials

4. Applicant compiles and
submits materials & fee

5. Staff reviews for
completeness within 3
business days

6. When complete, staff
schedules case for HDRB
review

7. Staff sends advertisements
& notifications

8. Staff writes case report and
issues 3 business days
before work session

9. HDRB reviews case at work
session with applicant

10. Applicant submits new
materials within 5 business
days after work session

11. HDRB reviews case at
public hearing, makes final
decision*

*Note that incomplete
submissions may delay review
time.

Review Process Notes:

Required Application Materials

Staff maintains a list of application materials required for submission for the various types of improvements. These lists are available online and should be consulted as early in the planning process as possible though staff will confirm which list applies and also confirm if there are any items on the list not required or items not on the list that are required for every particular case following submission of the [Historic District Property Modification Form](#). Note that incomplete submissions may delay the review process.

Fees

Improvements and modifications that require either Administrative or HDRB COA Review have one-time application fees. The [Fee Schedule](#) is online and may be occasionally updated.

Reference Guide

The [Historic District Reference Guide](#) lists common types of modifications and improvements done to Historic District properties. When seeking to understand which review process your improvements or modifications may require or whether your project is exempt from receiving a COA, consult the Reference Guide. If your project is not listed contact staff at community.development@herndon-va.gov or (703)787-7380.

Review Times

Exemption Review occurs within 3 business days from complete submission. Administrative COA Review for completeness occurs within 3 business days from submission. Administrative COA Review for appropriateness occurs within 7 business days from complete submission. HDRB COA Review for completeness occurs within 3 business days from submission. HDRB COA Review for appropriateness occurs typically around 30 days from completed submission. Note that incomplete submissions may delay the review process.

HDRB Schedule

The HDRB typically holds a work session on the first Wednesday each month at 7pm and a public hearing on the third Wednesday each month at 7pm. To meet advertising requirements, application deadlines are usually around 30 days prior to the public hearing. The [2021 HDRB schedule](#) is online. Note that until otherwise indicated all meetings will be held virtually.

Discussion Items

For some projects that require HDRB COA Review, staff may recommend first meeting with the HDRB informally at a work session as a Discussion Item. This is an opportunity for preliminary feedback on overall project design or project options. This gives the board familiarity with the project and gives the applicant advice on design from the Board that includes preservation and architectural experts. Contact staff at community.development@herndon-va.gov or (703)787-7380 to schedule a discussion item.

Appeals

Administrative-issued COA decisions can be appealed to the HDRB within 14 days from the final decision. HDRB-issued COA decisions can be appealed to the Town Council within 14 days from the final decision.

Additional Information

For more info, see the [Historic District Overlay Zoning Ordinance](#), the [Herndon Historic Preservation webpage](#), and the [Herndon Historic District Resource Guide](#).

Additional Town of Herndon Process Guides are available online at www.herndon-va.gov/CDprocess