

## 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 [historicdistrict@herndon-va.gov](mailto:historicdistrict@herndon-va.gov) or (703)787-7380.

Completion of the [Historic District Property Modification Form](#) and electronic submission of that form to [historicdistrict@herndon-va.gov](mailto:historicdistrict@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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://www.herndon-va.gov/CDprocess)