

# Historic Commission Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) Application & FAQs

## What is a Certificate Of Appropriateness (COA)?

A Certificate Of Appropriateness (COA) is a permit that is required before work can begin on exterior changes to buildings or their setting, new construction, relocation, and partial or whole demolitions and all signs in the historic district.

The COA application is filed before all other required Town building and zoning permits have been received. The COA application can be obtained at Town Hall or downloaded [here](#). It must be accompanied by a list of all Design Guidelines that apply to the application and a description of how proposed changes are consistent with the [Design Guidelines for the Beaufort Historic District & Landmarks](#), photographs of the existing conditions, a description of the proposed action and site plans for any proposed new construction or additions.

## What is the COA application process?

Determine if the proposed action requires a COA, is classified as a “Minor Work” item (approved by Town staff only) or requires review by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC).

If a Minor Work item, the COA application is reviewed by Town staff for conformance with the guidelines and usually does not need further review by the HPC.

In some cases, the applicant will want to take advantage of the pre-application phase, an informal discussion of the project where HPC members and Town staff provide suggestions on the project. A pre-application is required for projects exceeding \$10,000 and for all new construction in the Historic District.

The completed COA application is reviewed by the HPC at one of its regular meetings, where it can be approved, denied or tabled for further investigation. Attendance at the HPC meeting by the owner/applicant is required.

If a COA is granted, the applicant is notified in writing after the Order is approved at the next meeting, and the COA remains valid for six months from issuance of the Order.

If the COA is denied, the application may be resubmitted with changes, or the HPC’s decision may be appealed to the Board of Adjustments on procedural grounds only.

## What policies govern additions?

Old buildings often grow to adapt to changing uses and circumstances. However, the changes should not destroy or detract from the architectural features that make the building significant

in the first place. The Guidelines should be consulted and a pre-application scheduled for all medium-sized to large additions.

## **Is the installation of new vinyl or aluminum siding permitted in the historic district? What about cement fiber siding?**

The use of artificial siding such as vinyl and aluminum in the historic district is generally not permitted, but its use may depend on whether the elevation in question is on the front facade or on the rear or on a non-visible side of the building. Use of cement fiber siding or other wood substitute is also strongly discouraged in the historic district, but the HPC will consider its use on a case-by-case basis.

## **I'm building a new house in the historic district. What factors should I consider?**

Effective historic district guidelines do not dictate certain architectural styles to be used for new construction in the Beaufort Historic District. Instead, they seek to encourage good contemporary design that is sensitive to both its immediate surroundings and Beaufort's special architectural character. Consult the guidelines as your plan is being developed and remember to consider such factors as scale, materials, rhythm and proportion that go into designing a new building in the historic district.

## **Can buildings be demolished in the Historic District?**

Demolition represents a grievous loss to both the property and to the Beaufort streetscape and should be avoided at all costs. Requests for demolition in the historic district can be delayed for up to one year. During that time, the HPC will work with the property owner to arrive at a more harmonious resolution of the issue.

## **Supporting Documents**

Historic Commission Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) Application 178.77 KB