

# City of East Lansing One Pager Plus

## Living in a Historic District

The City of East Lansing is home to a variety of unique neighborhoods, including six neighborhoods that have formally been designated as historic districts: Hillcrest Village, Chesterfield Hills, Collegeville, Oakwood, College Grove and Bailey. These historic districts fall under the regulations of the East Lansing Historic Preservation Code, which is designed to assure that new construction and repairs to existing properties in the districts preserve the historic character of the neighborhood and of individual properties. In the interest of encouraging investment and improvements to properties throughout the historic districts, the City works with individual property owners to find acceptable solutions to the challenges of historic preservation in the 21st century.

### **What work is covered by the Historic Preservation Code?**

Any work that is visible from a public street is subject to the provisions of the Code. This always includes the front and both sides of a house visible from a public street. In the case of a corner lot, the rear of the house is subject as well. Window replacement, siding repairs, building additions, and even items as small as porch railings are covered by the Code. Re-roofing a house is also covered, as are any other major maintenance items. When in doubt, check with the Historic Preservation Officer.

### **How do I get approval to do work to a structure in a Historic District?**

A property owner applies for approval under a Certificate of Appropriateness. The application asks the owner to describe the proposed project and the reason that the request is being made. Along with the description of the work, applicants are asked to provide manufacturer's cut sheets or material samples, showing the new materials that are being installed, especially in the case of windows or major structural alterations. Homeowners are also encouraged to include pictures of the area of the house being altered to help describe the changes. The Certificate of Appropriateness form can be found on the City's Web site. Hard copies are available at City Hall in the Planning Department.

### **Does the Historic District Commission have to review every application?**

The Historic Preservation Officer has the ability to review and approve a Certificate of Appropriateness application if it meets certain criteria that have been established previously by the Historic District Commission. This usually involves small changes and repairs. The Historic District Commission reviews any major changes, such as building additions or changes in window design. When in doubt, the Historic Preservation Officer will refer the item to the Commission for its review.



## Living in a Historic District (Continued)

### **How long does the review process take?**

If the Historic Preservation Officer can review the request administratively, an approval can be issued within a day or two. If the Historic District Commission needs to review the application, it will act upon the application within two months. Usually, applications to the Commission are decided within one month.

### **What doesn't the Historic Preservation Code cover?**

The interior of the building is not covered by the Code. Color is not regulated in any way. General maintenance that does not change the appearance of the structure can be done without a Certificate of Appropriateness. This includes patching, painting, fixing broken trim, and other minor changes. Lastly, the use of the structure is not regulated, this is covered by the Zoning Ordinance.

### **How can I be sure my property is in a Historic District?**

The Historic District map can be found online at <http://www.cityofeastlansing.com/Home/Departments/PlanningDevelopment/Maps>.

### **Is there a cost for a Certificate of Appropriateness application?**

At this time, there is no charge for the review of a Certificate of Appropriateness application.

### **What if my question wasn't answered here?**

Contact the Historic Preservation Officer at (517) 319-6930 or come to the Planning and Community Development Department in City Hall.

