



HDC Frequently Asked Questions

1. Will the interior of my designated house be affected by the Ordinance and review process?

No – reviews are only done for work affecting the exterior appearance. Any work that might change the exterior appearance of a locally designated district requires HDC review and approval.

2. What if I want to do maintenance on my house that replaces an existing material, but does not change the exterior?

Work that physically changes an exterior appearance or material requires HDC review and approval. However, if the work does not physically change the material or appearance, this is considered ordinary maintenance and under the Ordinance does not require review.

3. Is it true I will NOT be able to put an addition on my house?

No – new additions are reviewed by the HDC to ensure that the proposed work complies with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The HDC is always willing to meet with an owner to discuss a proposed modification to a designated historic district prior to formal plans being submitted.

4. What does the Commission review?

The HDC reviews any proposed exterior work including additions, alterations (i.e. new windows), construction, site features and structures, moving of resources, excavation or demolition.

4. Will I be required to spend additional money maintaining/rehabilitating my home to exactly the way it looked originally?

No – ordinary maintenance is required of all homeowners in the City, not just designated properties. During a review of proposed work, the HDC can often times be very helpful in providing information about available cost saving materials and resources.

5. Are tax credits available for rehabilitation done on a historic house?

The State of Michigan provides a 25% tax credit to owners of designated historic properties meeting the appropriate rehabilitation criteria. The credit is also available for commercial or income producing property.

6. Does the HDC base its review on standards?

Yes – the HDC bases all reviews and approvals on the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.

The Commission also considers:

- the historic or architectural value and significance of the resource and its relationship to the historic value of the surrounding area;
- the relationship of any architectural features of the resource to the rest of the resource and the surrounding area;
- the general compatibility of the design, arrangement, texture and materials proposed to be used, and
- other factors such as aesthetic value that the HDC deems relevant to its determination under the above review standards and guidelines.

The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards are to be applied in a reasonable manner.

7. Is a review a lengthy process?

In most cases, a decision is rendered at the meeting, and a full explanation of the decision and work process is provided to help homeowners preserve the integrity of their structure. (Additional information about the process can be found on the [HDC Review/Permit Procedure](#) handout.)

8. As a designated historic district, why are additional restrictions placed on my property?

Although there is the added review process for proposed work on historic property, the process is not meant to be burdensome to a property owner. The review benefits the property owner by ensuring appropriate modifications are made, often times resulting in increased property value for both the designated property and the surrounding area.

9. What are the criteria for local designation?

The property must possess at least one of the following: generally 50 years old, significance in architecture, craftsmanship, or an association with events or significant people.

It is always a good idea to check with the HDC through the City’s Planning & Development Department (248-656-4660) prior to beginning a project affecting the exterior of a resource.

The public is welcome to attend any of the regularly scheduled HDC meetings held on the second Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM at City Hall to observe the review process.