

Historic Overlay District

(H-1 & HZ)

What is an Overlay District?

An overlay district does *not* change the base zoning for any area it covers. Rather, it is an extra layer of protection superimposed over the existing land use of an area in order to maintain its design character. This protection comes from a set of design guidelines established by ordinance. Applications for building permits in the overlay area must be accompanied by Certificates of Appropriateness certifying a project has been approved through staff review or by the review board appointed to oversee the overlay.

Historic Districts (H-1 or HZ)

This overlay district is intended to preserve and protect historic structures and areas which serve as visible reminders of the historic and cultural heritage of the City of Knoxville, State of Tennessee and the United States of America. It assists in stabilizing and improving property values in historic areas by encouraging rehabilitation or new construction harmonious with the historic area. It is intended to regulate the construction, repair, alteration, rehabilitation, relocation or demolition of any building or other structure which is located or proposed to be located in the district.

Historic districts contain significant numbers of historic properties that share common historic events, architectural features or physical development. Homes within the districts

- may be associated with people or events that have made a significant historical contribution;
- may contain structures which embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction or that represent the work of someone considered a master of their art or trade;
- may have yielded archeological information; or
- are in the National Register of Historic Places.

Within the boundaries of a historic district, properties are labeled as contributing or non-contributing. Noncontributing properties are those which have been altered from their original appearance, or were not constructed within the significant historical time frame. Proposed changes to contributing properties will receive a much more intensive review than changes for noncontributing properties.

Historic Zoning Commission

A Historic Zoning Commission is a local commission, appointed by the City or County Mayor and confirmed by City Council or County Commission. Members are required to represent historical organizations, or have experience in architecture, engineering or law, and one member must also serve on MPC. Historic Zoning Commissions are responsible for reviewing applications to alter, demolish or move properties protected by historic overlay, for reviewing proposed new construction in historic districts, for overseeing the identification and designation of historic properties and for reviewing proposed National Register nominations from their area.

When does the Committee meet?

The Historic Zoning Committee meets on the third Thursday of each month in the Small Assembly Room of the City/County Building at 8:30 a.m.

Applications

Do I need to fill out an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness before meeting with staff? No. Historic Zoning Commission staff will help property owners determine if a Certificate of Appropriateness is needed and if so, they will assist them in filling out the application. The deadline for filing an application is the first Thursday of each month.

Design Guidelines

Each Historic Overlay District is governed by design guidelines specific to that district. These design guidelines are based on the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for rehabilitating historic properties, and are written in cooperation with representatives from each district. These guidelines may be purchased from the MPC Library or they may be found at www.knoxmpc.org.

These guidelines address major changes to buildings included in the overlay district, and regulate only those things that require building permits. Although most of them contain recommendations about landscaping, fences and paint colors, those sections are included for information and are not subject to Historic Zoning Commission review.

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T E N N E S S E E

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How to get a building permit for Historic Properties

