

The City of Orange Township Historic Preservation Commission

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Do I need to apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC)?

YES if the building is within a historic district and you're doing work that is visible from the street. Consult the map to see if your structure is located in an historic district.

NO if the work is only on the inside of building, the work to be done is not visible from any public street, or if the work to be done is a repair or maintenance work that will not change the exterior look of the structure.

EXCEPTION: if you are replacing materials on the outside of your structure and you are using the exact same materials (for example, replacing a broken pane of glass in a window with glass, replacing asphalt shingles with similar looking shingles, replacing slate with slate, replacing wood siding with wood siding), then you do not have to apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness from the HPC. You still have to obtain a building permit from the City of Orange Township.

What if it's an emergency?

If work needs to be done immediately to protect the safety or health of occupants or prevent structural damage (for example, repairing a leak in the roof), the Division of Planning may be able to give you a permit for temporary emergency repairs, and you can appear before the HPC afterwards to document the emergency work and apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness for a permanent repair.

What materials are allowed in repairs and renovations?

Work to replace exterior materials should be of like kind and type to the materials being replaced. For example, replace a wooden window with a wooden window, not a vinyl window. Wood clapboard should be replaced with wood clapboard, and roof shingles should be replaced with a similar type of roof shingles.

In some cases, substitute materials may be used if the original materials are too expensive to replace with like kind materials or doing so would violate fire or other building codes. For example, asphalt shingles may be used to replace a slate roof if the style, shape and color match the existing slate roof.

What about siding?

Retain and repair original materials whenever possible.

If the original siding is wood, and is too damaged to repair, it can be replaced with wood material of like construction, matching the original as near as possible in size, shape, profile and texture. Even if synthetic (vinyl) or aluminum siding was previously applied to a structure, restoring the original material is preferred and is better for your structure. Replacing vinyl or synthetic siding with new vinyl or synthetic siding may be approved only if it can be applied without endangering the integrity of the building or its cladding and without removing, damaging or covering up the building's architectural features and trim such as soffits, corbels, and decorative trim, shingles and cladding or elements that keep the cladding watertight. Fiber cement board siding, such as HardiePlank, is preferred over vinyl or aluminum siding. In no case will a structure clad in wood be allowed to be covered in vinyl, aluminum or synthetic siding.

What if the steps/ porch/walkway are falling apart?

If steps cannot be repaired, they must be replaced in the same style as the original with like kind materials. Synthetic or substitute materials, such as fiberglass columns, will be considered on a case-by-case basis where compatible in size, proportion, style, and texture.

Can I replace the front door or windows?

The number, size, shape and location of existing entrances must be maintained. You cannot change the size or height of a doorway to fit modern stock door sizes. You can replace a front door with one similar in style to the original. The same is true of windows. Keep the original size and type of windows intact, and repair them or replace them with like kind materials.

Can I replace a fence or railing?

If it is visible from the street, a fence or railing must be replaced with appropriate like kind materials. Opaque fencing such as tall board-on-board fencing and modern materials such as chain link, plastic or vinyl are not historically appropriate and cannot be installed if visible from the street.

What about additions?

Any addition or renovation visible from the street must be compatible in style, scope, and material with the existing structure.

How do I get a Certificate of Appropriateness?

The application form is available in the Office of the City Clerk or at the website <http://orangetwpccc.org> under the Forms and Application tab. Upon approval of your COA you must apply for a construction permit from the Building Department.

The HPC's meeting dates are posted at City Hall and on the website.