



Plans for any exterior alteration to property located in one of the Village's three historic districts or designated an Oak Park Historic Landmark must be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission before a building permit will be issued by the Building & Property Standards Department.

The Historic Preservation Commission is an 11-member body of citizen volunteers appointed by the Village Board to help preserve, protect and enhance the distinctive historic and architectural heritage of Oak Park. As part of its role to preserve the historic integrity of the Village, the Commission reviews exterior alterations to historic properties to ensure that the historic character of the building exteriors is preserved. The Commission also identifies landmark buildings and historic neighborhoods, and seeks to enhance the attractiveness of the Village by educating property owners and citizens about the importance of preservation, restoration and rehabilitation. An Urban Planner employed by the Village supports the Commission's work.

Building Permit Review

The Commission reviews building permit applications for exterior alterations, additions, new

construction and full or partial demolition of properties located within historic districts or designated as Historic Landmarks. Two types of reviews are conducted. A *Certificate of Advisory Review* is for properties located within one of the Village's historic districts or for any property owner seeking advice. A *Certificate of Appropriateness Review* is for Historic Landmarks, projects that propose full or partial demolition of properties in an historic district, or properties being altered with Village funding. The Commission does not review ordinary maintenance and repairs that do not require a building permit, such as exterior painting.

Review Criteria

The Commission bases its reviews on the Village of Oak Park's *Architectural Review Guidelines*. These guidelines follow the review criteria set forth in the *U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*. For a copy of the guidelines call 708.358.5417 or visit www.oak-park.us.

Certificate of Advisory Review

The Commission provides advice to property owners proposing changes to their historic properties. This advisory review process is for properties that do not meet the conditions requiring a Certificate of Appropriateness. Commission staff can expedite approval of such projects within five days under the following categories:

- Interior work
- Non-contributing structure in a historic district
- Changes not visible from the public right-of-way
- No changes in materials
- Restoration to original conditions (requires documentation)
- Changes with limited effect on the historic character of the property

If Commission staff can approve the project under one of these categories, the permit application will be stamped *Reviewed and Approved* and returned to the Building Department for completion of the permit application process. To facilitate the process, an applicant may request advisory review by the Commission prior to submittal of a building permit application. If the project does not fall under one of these categories, staff will forward the project to the Commission's Architectural Review Committee (ARC), which is composed of architects who sit on the Commission. The ARC can take up to 30 days for its review.

The ARC may act in one of three ways — recommend approval as submitted, recommend revisions that bring the project in line with the *Architectural Review Guidelines* or forward the permit application to the full Commission for review. However, since this review is advisory only, if revisions are suggested by the ARC or full Commission, the applicant can choose to make revisions or seek permits for the project without change.

What if I don't live in a historic district or am not applying for a building permit?

If your property is not within a local historic district or is not an Oak Park Historic Landmark, the Historic Preservation Commission is not required to review your project plans. However, the Commission provides Advisory Review as a service to the public apart from its review of building permit applications. Any Village property owner may, at any time, consult with the Commission to determine whether intended work on a structure would be in compliance with the *Architectural Review Guidelines* and seek the Commission's advice on how best to accomplish the work. For Commission input on a project or information about resources, call 708.358.5417.

Certificate of Appropriateness Review

Full or partial demolition of a property located in an historic district, any exterior alterations to a Historic Landmark or properties being altered with Village funding must receive a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) prior to the issuance of a permit for proposed work. Unlike an advisory review, owners of historic properties are required to comply with Commission recommendations before a building permit will be issued. To facilitate the process, an applicant may request COA review prior to submittal of a building permit application. One of the following actions may occur through the COA application review process:

- Staff may expedite approval of the COA application without Commission review if work falls within one of the six categories listed under *Certificate of Advisory Review* section of this brochure.
- Architectural Review Committee may review the application and approve it if it meets the *Architectural Review Guidelines*.



- Architectural Review Committee may forward the application to the next regularly scheduled monthly meeting of the full Historic Preservation Commission.

If the project is forwarded to the full Commission for review, the applicant will be notified of the date, time and place of the meeting. The applicant may be required to submit plans, drawings, photographs or other information needed for the review. If a majority of the Commission finds the proposed work is in accordance with the *Architectural Review Guidelines*, it may issue the COA. However, any change in the approved project after issuance of a COA will require additional review and approval by the Commission. If the Commission determines that the proposed work does not meet the *Architectural Review Guidelines*, the applicant may submit an amended application that meets the Commission's recommendations, request a public



hearing before the Commission or withdraw the application. If the COA is denied after the public hearing, the applicant may appeal to the Village Board or, when applicable, request a public hearing before the Commission for a *Certificate of Economic Hardship* waiver of the requirements.



Definitions

Demolition (Oak Park Historic Preservation Ordinance):

The razing or destruction, whether entirely or in significant part of a building, structure, site or object. Demolition includes the removal of a building, structure or object from its site or the removal or destruction of its facade or surface.

Rehabilitation (Secretary of the Interior): The act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features that convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.

Restoration (Secretary of the Interior): The act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of features from other periods in its history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period. The limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a restoration project.



For more information, call or write:
 Oak Park Historic
 Preservation Commission
 Community Planning &
 Development Department
 123 Madison Street
 Oak Park, IL 60302
 708.358.5417
 planning@oak-park.us

Or visit www.oak-park.us



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Office for Equal Opportunity
 National Park Service
 P. O. Box 37127
 Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

or

Equal Employment Opportunity Officer
 Illinois Historic Preservation Agency
 1 Old State Capitol Plaza
 Springfield, IL 62701

Building Permits for Historic Properties

Application and Review Process

