

THE CITY OF FRANKLIN

Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB)

DESIGN GUIDELINES

THE VALUE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Franklin's Historic District is one of Pennsylvania's architectural gems with more than 200 significant buildings that represent over 20 different styles of architecture. Franklin has examples of every major architectural style from 1830-1930, including Greek Revival, Italianate, Gothic Revival, Queen Anne, Romanesque, and Arts and Crafts. The comprehensiveness of architectural styles and compactness of the Historic District surpasses that of most other communities.

The district's buildings are also of importance as a means of preserving a tangible link to the early oil industry in the region. The early derricks that once dotted the hillsides are gone along with the presence of major oil companies in the area. What remains are the homes and commercial buildings that represent that epoch.

In recognition of the city's architectural heritage, Franklin City Council passed an ordinance on January 15, 1979 that created the Historic District "for the purpose of protecting historical areas and structures within the City of Franklin which have a distinctive character recalling the rich architectural and historical heritage of Pennsylvania and of the City of Franklin..." In 1984, the District was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

In addition to their historical significance, the homes and buildings of the Historic District attract visitors and new residents who are drawn to the quality and richness of design, construction and craftsmanship that comprise the unique character of the district. Because historic resources are finite and cannot be replaced, their preservation enhances the community. According to a study conducted by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, "historic preservation efforts can have significant positive impact on property values, downtown revitalization, tourism activity, job creation, and tax revenue generation."

THE PURPOSE OF DESIGN GUIDELINES

These guidelines were developed in conjunction with the City of Franklin and Franklin's Historical Architectural Review Board (HARB). These guidelines are in accordance with the principles of the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*¹. These guidelines are intended to serve as an informational, educational and planning resource for home owners and business owners who seek to make alterations to the residential and commercial buildings and the streetscape within the Historic District. They are not meant to criticize the issuance of any 'Certificate of Appropriateness' approved prior to the establishment these guidelines. Instead, the guidelines are intended to improve the HARB review process and move forward in protecting the Historic District.

¹ <http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/four-treatments/treatment-guidelines.pdf>

The purpose of these guidelines is to;

- Provide applicants with design guidance when making building alterations to existing buildings, new construction and alteration to the streetscape.
- Encourage a visual connection with the area’s historical buildings and the Historic District.
- Encourage variety and vitality in the Historic District.
- Encourage the use of the guidelines and application of the guidelines to proposed new construction, alterations to historical buildings and alterations to the streetscape that would likely diminish the historical aspects of the Historic District.
- Assist HARB and City Council in making informed and consistent decisions about requested changes to historical properties in the Historic District.

These guidelines are not intended to replace consultation with a qualified architect or designer, or to make all homes, commercial building and structures, signs and awnings nor the streetscape in the City of Franklin to appear the same.

WHAT IS MEANT BY ‘APPROPRIATENESS’

Every building has architectural features, such as walls, windows, a roof and doors and may include other characteristics such as porches, handrails, columns or arches. The size, shape, material, profile and color of each of these elements help to define the style of the particular building.

An appropriate change or addition acknowledges the building type and thus is sympathetic to the style of the original building design and to the neighborhood of the building.

For example, a Queen Anne style house usually has a steeply pitched hipped roof with lower cross gables, extensive one story porches with tightly spaced fine turned spindles, and avoids plain flat walls through texture changes and decorative elements. Windows are tall with only a single pane of glass in each sash – sometimes with a large single center pane framed by smaller panes, and doors with decorative detailing and a single large pane of glass set in the upper portion of the door. An appropriate addition would repeat or harmonize with these architectural features, have a similar roof line, have similar doors and windows and be covered in similar materials. But proposing to add an addition with a plain façade, short or horizontal windows with a grid of panes, full glass doors or glass sliding doors and with simple plain handrails with wide-spaced spindles would not be appropriate for a Queen Anne house, even though it would be acceptable and appropriate for a contemporary or mid-century ranch house.

HOW THE HARB REVIEW PROCESS WORKS

All applicants seeking approval of alterations or demolition to the exterior of buildings, structures and the streetscape, replacement of or new signs and awnings, and new construction within the Historic Districts visible from a public street or way must first apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA).

An important part of obtaining a COA, any changes, alterations or new construction must be presented and reviewed by HARB.

HARB applications are available at City Hall or in the forms section of the City’s website, <http://www.franklinpa.gov>.

Unless the applicant is otherwise informed by the City, HARB meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 10:00am (except December when the meeting is the third Tuesday) in the Council Chambers at Franklin City Hall, 430 13th Street. Applicants are strongly encouraged to attend or have someone represent the proposed work and should schedule a review at least two weeks in advance of the monthly meetings. At the conclusion of the Applicant's presentation to the HARB, the HARB members will vote upon a motion to recommend that City Council approve/disapprove a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA).

At the next City Council meeting, HARB's recommendation will be presented and City Council will vote to approve or deny a Certificate of Appropriateness for the project. If approved, the certificate will be issued to the property owner authorizing a permit for building construction, restoration, alteration, signage or demolition. If denied, the home owner or business owner can amend the project and resubmit it to the HARB at a future meeting.

The proposed work must comply with the Zoning and Building Codes of the City of Franklin at the time of application. The applicant must obtain a COA as well as all necessary permits prior to proceeding with any work. For more information, or to obtain permit applications, please call 814-437-1430. Please review this information during the early stages of planning your project. Familiarity with this material can assist with moving a project quickly through the approval process saving applicants both time and money.

A FEW FINAL REMINDERS

- Applicants are encouraged to contact the zoning officer (814-437-1430) early in the application process to discuss the Zoning and Building Codes of the City of Franklin that apply to the proposed project.
- Schedule a HARB consultation with HARB members prior to your application review meeting. The Historical Architectural Review Board can be a resource to assist home owners and business owners considering projects in the Historic District. Applicants are encouraged to take advantage of consultations with HARB members prior to the submission of a COA application. You may call 814-437-1430 to request a consultation. Additionally, some HARB members will be available after the conclusion of regular HARB meetings to answer questions about the appropriateness of a project.
- Plan to present all your information (plans, photos, colors, text, etc.) that best describes your proposed work at the same time when submitting your application for HARB review.
- If you are planning to dig or excavate, contact utilities companies by calling 811 (PA One Call) prior to any work.
- The final decision is ultimately with the City Council, which relies on HARB's recommendations to make a final decision.
- HARB members are volunteers and some have themselves been applicants. They appreciate your efforts and equally respect the historic preservation of the City of Franklin.

References: *Pennsylvania's Statewide Historic Preservation Plan 2012-2017*.

http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/document/1266286/pennsylvania_statewide_historic_preservation_plan_2012-2017_pdf