

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
OFFICE OF PLANNING



Historic Preservation Review of DC Agency Projects

The DC Historic Landmark and Historic District Protection Act was enacted to protect the District's valuable historic and archaeological resources. In 2006, the Council adopted changes to the law that require DC government agencies to consider the effect of their undertakings on any property listed or eligible for historic designation, and to consult with the DC Historic Preservation Office (HPO) on the effects of their actions on historic properties. The HPO will assist DC agencies in evaluating whether a project will effect historic property and will work cooperatively and expeditiously with the agency to explore steps to avoid, reduce, or mitigate those effects.

- An undertaking is any government funded or sponsored activity that involves construction, demolition, rehabilitation, repair, or ground-disturbing activities.
- Historic property is a building, structure, district, or archaeological site that is listed or qualifies for designation as a DC landmark or historic district.

Step 1: Contact the HPO to Identify Historic Property

The law stipulates that DC agencies shall consult with the HPO before the authorization or expenditure of funds for design or construction, or seeks a permit, license or approval for an undertaking. Agencies are encouraged to contact the HPO when they are developing annual work plans or early in their project planning to identify whether there are any historic resources or preservation issues.

- For inquires as to whether a particular project or site might involve historic property, send an email to Consult.HPO@dc.gov.
- The email should provide a brief description of the project site, a general description of the proposed project, and the nature of the agency's involvement.

The HPO will respond within 10 days as to whether there are any historic resources or potential preservation issues. If there are no historic resources and/or the work will have no impact on historic property, the HPO will inform the agency in writing that the consultation has been concluded.

Step 2: Consult with HPO to Avoid Adverse Impacts on Historic Property

For projects impacting historic property, the HPO will assist the agency in evaluating whether the project will result in adverse effects. Adverse effects are alterations that would result in the loss of significant characteristics or features of a historic property.

Many types of work, such as routine maintenance, repair, and replacement of outdated mechanical equipment and systems have little or no impact on the characteristics of historic property. Many other types of alterations, such as construction of additions and new buildings, full-building renovations, and removal of features that are not important to the character of the property, can avoid adverse effects through appropriate design or preservation treatments. The HPO will work cooperatively with agencies to explore how adverse effects can be avoided.

In order for the HPO to evaluate a project, in addition to the information already submitted under Step 1, the DC agency should submit the following:

- A map or site plan, clearly showing the location of the project area and delineating the project boundaries;
- Photographs (print or digital) of the project site including images of all buildings and structures that may be affected by the undertaking;
- Drawings and/or a written scope of work illustrating any plans to construct, demolish, or rehabilitate buildings or structures;
- Contact information for the project manager, architect, or agency representative.

Information should be submitted to:

Historic Preservation Office
DC Office of Planning
1100 4th Street, SW Ste. E650
Washington, DC 20024
www.planning.dc.gov
(202) 442-8800

HPO staff will contact the agency representative if further information or clarification is needed, and to arrange a site visit or consultation meeting as appropriate. A written response will be provided within 30 days from receipt of the submittal.

Federal Review of DC Agency Projects

By Executive Order of the President, construction of public buildings and landscape plans for parks undertaken by the District of Columbia government must be submitted to the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) to provide it with an opportunity to advise the District on the project's design. For projects that are subject to both CFA and HPO review, the HPO can assist DC agencies in coordinating these reviews.

For more information on the Commission of Fine Arts review and submission process, please contact:

U.S. Commission of Fine Arts
401 F Street, NW, Suite 312
Washington, DC 20001
www.cfa.gov
504-2211