

SECTION III. PROCESS AND PROCEDURES

THE ROLE OF THE CITY OF DELRAY BEACH HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD

The city's Historic Preservation Board is composed of seven citizens appointed by the City Commission who have a demonstrated interest in historic preservation, as well as citizens who have a specialized discipline that is directly related to the work of the Board. Board members must be either a resident of the city or own a business, or be an officer, director or a manager of a business, located within the city of Delray Beach. The City Commission assigns the responsibilities for preservation matters to the Historic Preservation Board, which is supported by professional staff in the Planning and Zoning Department.

The Board meets bi-monthly on the first and third Wednesdays of each month, and its duties include:

- Reviewing Certificates of Appropriateness for rehabilitations, alterations, adaptive use, and new construction in historic districts and demolition of locally designated historic sites and historic districts;
- Reviewing and recommending properties for listing in the Delray Beach Local Register of Historic Places;
- Reviewing *National Register* nominations prior to their submission to the Florida Division of Historical Resources;
- Reviewing requests to grant ad valorem tax exemptions for qualified historic property improvements;
- Reviewing requests for variances from existing land development regulations (acts in lieu of the Board of Adjustment);
- Reviewing waivers from certain provisions contained in the Land Development Regulations;
- Developing design guidelines for historic properties;
- Recommending and providing support for grant funding;
- Providing recommendations to the City Commission concerning citywide historic preservation policy;
- Providing recommendations for ad valorem tax relief; and
- Providing recommendations for local historic designations to the Delray Beach City Commission

LOCAL HISTORIC DESIGNATION CRITERIA

Special criteria have been established to assist the Historic Preservation Board in the evaluation of applications for local historic designation. To qualify as a historic site or district, the property must meet at least one of these criteria and typically meets more than one. Generally, in order for a property to even be considered for historic designation, it must be at least 50 years old.

Criteria for Significance

- Is associated with the life of a person important in city, state, or national history;
- Is the site of a significant historic event associated with the city, state, or nation;
- Exemplifies the historical, political, cultural, or social trend of the community in history;
- Is associated with a past or continuing institution (e.g., health care facilities, schools, organized sports) which has contributed substantially to the city's life;
- Portrays the environment in an era of history characterized by a particular architectural style;
- Embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style, period, or method of construction;
- Is a historic or outstanding work of a prominent architect, designer, landscape architect, or builder;
- Contains elements of design, detail, material, or craftsmanship of outstanding quality, or which represented, in its time, a significant innovation or adaptation to the South Florida environment; or
- Has yielded, or may be able to yield, information about history or prehistory.

CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS

What is a certificate of appropriateness and who needs one?

Once a property or historic district has been listed in the Delray Beach Local Register of Historic Places, the Historic Preservation Board must review any building activity or demolition requests concerning those historic properties. The vehicle used to do this is called a Certificate of Appropriateness. The Board's objective is to insure that the character and environment of the historic building or district is preserved by preventing incompatible alterations, overwhelming additions, demolitions, and in the case of historic districts, incompatible new construction.

A Certificate of Appropriateness application is filed when alterations, construction, or other work to the **exterior** of an individually listed historic site or building within a designated historic district is proposed. The application process begins with the completion of a form that requests a thorough description of the work that is proposed and that includes sufficient illustrative information that the Board may make a reasoned decision. Following a public hearing (for more complicated projects), a Certificate of Appropriateness may be issued by the Historic Preservation Board.

Whether the property is residential or commercial, anyone who owns or proposes to alter the exterior of an individually designated historic property or building within a historic district is responsible for filing a certificate of appropriateness application. In the case of a development project that involves historic buildings, the Certificate of Appropriateness process is incorporated into the Site Plan Approval process.

If I file an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness, do I also need a Building Permit?

The Historic Preservation Board does not supercede or replace the authority and regulations of the Building Department. A building permit is necessary for any construction in the city of Delray Beach. The concerns of the Historic Preservation Board focus on the design qualities of the project, and how that design respects the historic character of the subject property. The Building Department is responsible for the structural integrity, life safety, accessibility and other building and

regulatory codes that must be in compliance before a permit may be issued. The Certificate of Appropriateness process should be concluded *before* an application for a building permit is submitted.

No building permits for exterior alterations to historic structures or buildings within a historic district may be issued without administrative approval or approval from the Historic Preservation Board.

What changes can be made to a historic building?

The goal of historic preservation is to see that historic resources continue to convey their historic character, while at the same time being sensitive to the reasonable needs and concerns of the present. Rehabilitation is a process that respects the character of each historic building while it allows for respectful change. Rehabilitation assumes that alterations will take place in order to make a building useful and practical, and to comply with code requirements that involve life safety, energy conservation and accessibility.

Do I need a Certificate of Appropriateness for ordinary maintenance or repairs?

Generally, if a building permit is not required for the proposed work, then a Certificate of Appropriateness will not be needed. Repairs are defined as correcting the deterioration by restoring the damage, as nearly as possible, to the appearance before the deterioration.

A Certificate of Appropriateness is not needed for work on the interior *unless* it was specifically designated.

When in doubt, check with the city's Historic Preservation Planner.

How can I receive a Certificate of Appropriateness?

An application for a Certificate of Appropriateness may be requested from the Planning and Zoning Department. The application must be completed, returned to Planning and Zoning, and a filing fee paid. The additional

information that accompanies the application is determined by the project's complexity. For example, the replacement of a roof will require far less documentation than for the construction of an addition.

Typically, for more involved projects, the applicant must submit:

- Site Plans
- Architectural Drawings (Building elevations and floor plans)
- Photographs
- Sketches/Renderings
- Current Survey
- Landscape Plan
- Material Samples
- Color Samples

In a development project that includes historic properties, the COA is an additional requirement that becomes part of any:

- Site Plan Approval
- Conditional Use Approval
- Zoning Changes

In addition to the general requirements, for **new construction** within a historic district, the information should include:

- Enough graphics or photographs to adequately illustrate the streetscape where the property is to be located;
- Illustrations that include (at a minimum) the buildings on either side of the buildable lot; and
- Illustrations that include buildings across the street.

A pre-application conference with the Historic Preservation Planner is strongly recommended.

How is a design evaluated by the Historic Preservation Board; do they have special standards?

The objective of design review for historic structures is to insure that the original character of the building is maintained. Character is defined as the physical appearance of the building, but in a historic district, will also include its setting. At a minimum, character-defining features include:

- Massing
- Scale
- Building Footprint
- Architectural Details
- Orientation

VARIANCES FROM THE CODE OF ORDINANCES

It is widely recognized that certain provisions of land development regulations and ordinances were enacted after the construction of many historic properties. As a result, the owners may find themselves in non-compliance before any building activity ever takes place.

The City Commission has empowered the Historic Preservation Board with the authority to grant variances when it can be demonstrated that the variance will result in the continued preservation of the historic property. Variances may be granted for setbacks, buildable lot size, and floor area ratio, for example.



The photos above are examples of various architectural styles exhibited in Delray Beach residences. They are (clockwise from top left) Art Moderne, Mediterranean Revival, Ranch, and Minimal Traditional.