

MACON - BIBB COUNTY



A GUIDE TO OWNING PROPERTY IN A
DESIGN REVIEW DISTRICT

What is a Design Review District?

- ▶ In the 1980s Macon-Bibb County Planning & Zoning identified neighborhoods with well-established architectural character or historical significance, developed Design Guidelines for each district type, and rezoned the properties to HR-1, HR-2, HR-3, HPD, CBD-1, or CBD-2. The local districts with these zoning designations are Central Business District, Cherokee Heights, Intown, and Vineville.
- ▶ Historic Beall's Hill was added as a Design District in 2005, the current zoning designation is HBH.
- ▶ The purpose is to protect historical, architectural, and cultural treasures.
- ▶ Properties in these districts require review to ensure that proposed work preserves key historic or architectural features and is compatible with the look and feel of the specific district.

What is a Certificate of Appropriateness?

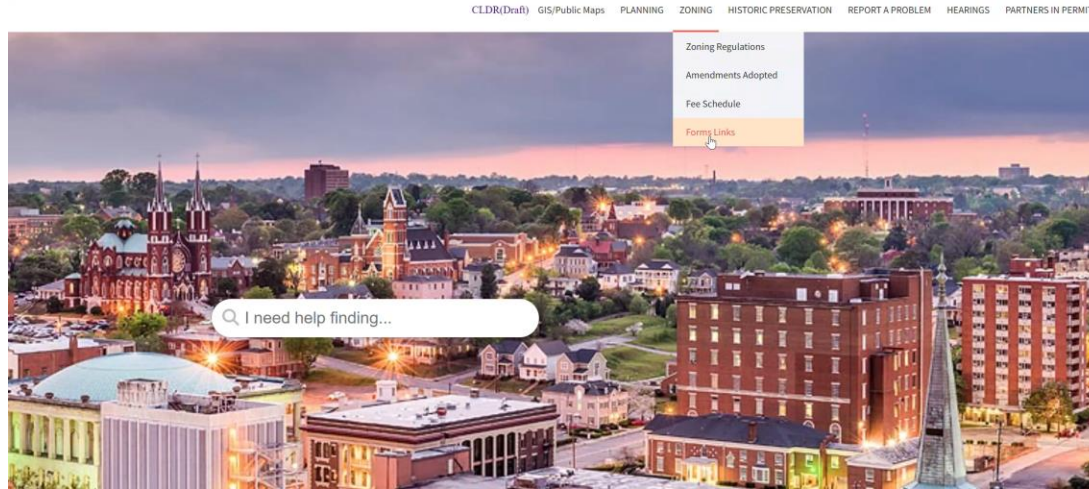
- ▶ A "Certificate of Appropriateness" (CoA) is a document issued by a local government agency that confirms that proposed changes to a property are deemed appropriate and comply with local design regulations, essentially giving permission to proceed with exterior alterations, additions, or even demolition while preserving the area's historical, architectural, or cultural character; it usually needs to be obtained before a building permit is issued.
- ▶ Some CoAs be issued at staff level, and some require approval by the Design Review Board (DRB) at a public hearing.

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What Work Requires a CoA?

- ▶ Interior work may require a building permit but will not require a CoA.
 - You will complete a Zoning Work Release form which must be signed by an MBPZ staff member before obtaining a building permit. The forms are available on our website:



- ▶ All other work, excluding routine maintenance and repair requires a CoA.

What is Considered Routine Maintenance/Repair ?

- ▶ Re-nail loose pieces of wood.
- ▶ Reattach non-historic siding installed prior to 1985 and remove dents.
- ▶ Clean and paint currently painted wood or masonry structures or architectural components.
- ▶ In-kind replacement of a building material or feature, except for masonry repairs and entire window and door replacement.
 - Masonry repairs and entire window or door replacements will require review by staff to determine whether a CoA is required.
- ▶ Minor repairs to windows, including caulking, reglazing, weather-stripping, mechanical repairs, and replacement of broken windowpanes, in-kind, so long as window size and style are not altered.

What is Considered Routine Maintenance/Repair ?

- ▶ Repair and replacement, in-kind, of gutters and downspouts.
- ▶ Wood repairs including sanding, epoxy, fillers, consolidants, and Dutchmen repairs.
- ▶ Repairs to existing storm and screen windows and doors, including replacing broken parts.
- ▶ Repair existing walkways, parking areas, patios, driveways, or other paved areas without expanding the paved area or changing the material.
- ▶ Seal, repair, or overlay existing asphalt.
- ▶ Landscape maintenance, including pruning trees and shrubs (this does not include removal of landscaping required to screen mechanical equipment or utilities).

What is Considered Routine Maintenance/Repair ?

- ▶ Replacement of existing mechanical equipment.
- ▶ Repair or replace, in-kind, locks, latches, and other hardware.
- ▶ Cleaning with the gentlest means possible (water at standard pressure but excluding sandblasting and high-pressure water blasting).
- ▶ Routine maintenance activities should be documented by taking before and after photographs in sufficient detail to demonstrate that no material effect on the exterior material or features of a designated landmark, site, structure, or district occurred.
 - Staff often receives notification /complaints from neighbors when work is being performed; adequate documentation prevents future issues.
- ▶ If in doubt whether your proposed project requires a CoA, contact staff. Our contact information is on our webpage, www.mbpz.org . NEVER assume that because a neighboring property did something, that is allowed; it may be grandfathered, or the owner did work without a permit and it's in violation.

Frequently Asked Questions?

▶ **Can I paint without a CoA?**

- If the structure or feature is already painted, yes; if it is not currently painted, you will need a CoA.

▶ **Can I remove the paint from my house or business without a CoA?**

- No. Removing paint changes the appearance of the structure, but it can also alter the building material by making it more porous which can lead to deterioration of the structure or key architectural features.

▶ **Can I replace my columns with resin, fiberglass, or other material so long as it looks the same?**

- No. This is a change in material and requires DRB approval.

Frequently Asked Questions?

- ▶ **Can I change the style of column on my home without a CoA?**
 - No. This will require DRB approval.
- ▶ **Can I change the design or material of my existing handrail without a CoA?**
 - No. This will require DRB approval.
- ▶ **Can I add a handrail without a CoA?**
 - No. This will require DRB approval.
- ▶ **Can I change the style, design, or material of my porch railing without a CoA?**
 - No. This will require DRB approval.
- ▶ **Can I change the style, design, or material of my fence without a CoA?**
 - No. This will require DRB approval.

Frequently Asked Questions?

▶ Can I add a fence without a CoA?

- No. This will require DRB approval.

▶ Can I replace my existing windows, which are not appropriate per the Design Guidelines, with the same style and material?

- No. This will require DRB approval. Replacing them with an appropriate material and design would require a staff level CoA.

▶ Can I remove a dead or dying tree without a CoA?

- No. This will require a CoA and you will need a statement from an arborist or tree surgeon. Removal of small dead or diseased trees can usually be issued a staff level CoA.

▶ Can I change my roofing without a CoA?

- No. This will require DRB approval.

▶ Can I add solar panels to my roof or yard without a CoA?

- No. This will require DRB approval.

Frequently Asked Questions?

▶ How do I know if my property is in a Design Review District?

- Visit our GIS/Public Maps, available on our website, www.mbpz.org

▶ How do I find the Design Guidelines?

- The Design Guidelines are on our website, www.mbpz.org/design

Additional Questions?

Please contact our staff:
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