



## HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW OF DISTRICT UNDERTAKINGS



### What is the basic legal requirement for historic preservation review?

The DC Historic Landmark & Historic District Protection Act requires District agencies to:

- Take into account the effect of their undertakings on properties listed or eligible for the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites; and
- Consult with and afford the State Historic Preservation Officer a reasonable opportunity to comment on those undertakings.

### What is the purpose of the review?

- Protect historic properties and ensure compatible development.
- Promote good design.
- Use federal planning standards as a model for DC projects.
- Require DC agencies to conduct full due diligence as a good business practice.
- Promote an efficient and fiscally responsible approach to project management.
- Avoid last-minute surprises, costly delays, and community controversy.

### What is a District of Columbia undertaking?

Any project of the District government that involves or contemplates demolition, alteration, subdivision, or new construction affecting a property owned by or under the jurisdiction of a District of Columbia agency, including an independent agency.

### Does the consultation requirement apply only to construction on historic landmarks or in historic districts?

No. Agencies are required to consult on *any* project that involves or contemplates construction on DC property. Part of the consultation process is to determine whether it may affect listed or eligible properties.

### When do agencies have to consult with the SHPO?

Agencies must consult *before* authorizing the expenditure of funds for design or construction or seeking the permit, license, or approval for the undertaking.

### How do agencies consult with the SHPO?

**STEP ONE:** Contact the SHPO *as early as possible* to initiate the process, identify the project, and determine the scope of review.

**STEP TWO:** Consult with SHPO to identify affected historic properties, evaluate possible effects, and seek ways to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects.

**STEP THREE:** Obtain and take into account the final written comments of the SHPO.

## **Can agencies use different procedures to comply with the requirement?**

Yes. The consultation requirement can be met in one of several ways:

- Consult directly with the HPO staff.
- If the project involves a designated historic property, obtain concept design review and permit review from the Historic Preservation Review Board and HPO.
- If the project involves a federal undertaking, complete the Section 106 review process.
- Develop a programmatic agreement to streamline the review of specific categories of undertakings.

## **What about DC project reviews by the Commission of Fine Arts?**

Most DC government projects must be reviewed by the Commission of Fine Arts. The SHPO coordinates closely with District agencies and CFA to consolidate reviews as much as possible.

## **What about public involvement?**

Agencies should involve Advisory Neighborhood Commissions and the public in a manner appropriate to the nature of the undertaking, its effects on historic property, and the level of public interest. Routine projects need little public input, but major redevelopment projects require significant opportunities for public involvement.

## **What about agency master plans and RFPs?**

Master plans, RFPs, and other planning functions are not considered District undertakings, but agencies are strongly encouraged to consult with the SHPO to identify any possible preservation issues since these activities will lead to District undertakings.

## **How long does the process take?**

Routine reviews can be completed in a matter of days, while more complex projects requiring submissions to HPRB, CFA, or ANCs may take several months depending on the agency's project schedule and ability to respond successfully to comments.

## **HPO CONTACTS**

### **David Maloney**

State Historic Preservation Officer  
442-8850  
david.maloney@dc.gov

### **Steve Callcott**

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer  
741-5247  
steve.callcott@dc.gov

### **Andrew Lewis**

Government Projects Coordinator  
442-8841  
andrew.lewis@dc.gov