

How to Apply for Building Permits Involving Historic Property

Most construction related to privately owned buildings in the District of Columbia requires a permit. Permits are required for new construction, demolition, additions, alteration and repair, retaining walls, fences, sheds, awnings, signs, and other types of work. Applications affecting the exterior appearance of historic property, or the interior of a specifically designated historic interior, are subject to historic review. Under the DC Construction Code (Sec. 111.1.2), a permit is also required for minor repair affecting historic property. Minor repairs include such items as masonry pointing, stucco repair, and in-kind replacement of windows, roofing, siding, sidewalks and driveways.

Where does one apply for construction permits involving historic property?

The Permit Center of the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs, located at 1100 4th Street, SW, Second Floor. The hours are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 8:30 to 4:15, and Thursday from 9:30 to 4:30. For information, call (202) 442-4589.

Is a separate permit application required for work on historic property?

No. The same permit application is used for all properties. Historic preservation review involves an additional step in processing the application.

What extra processing is required when historic property is involved?

By law the application must be referred to the HPRB for review. If an application involves work on a historic property, the Permit Processing staff prepares an official transmittal to HPRB.

Are additional application materials required for historic review?

Yes. In addition to the standard permit application requirements, a submission for HPRB review must include comprehensive photographs of the property and two sets of architectural drawings sufficient to indicate the proposed exterior design. In historic districts, photographs must show the property within the context of adjacent structures or the immediate neighborhood. If necessary for review, HPO staff may request additional information.

Is there a filing fee for HPRB review?

The HPO staff can approve many types of work under delegated authority from the HPRB, for which there is no fee for preservation review. There is a filing fee for concept or permit applications for additions, new construction, larger projects, or any other work that must be submitted to the HPRB. The fee for work affecting single family dwellings is \$100 for additions, and \$25 for work other than additions. The fee for other types of projects is based on the total square footage of the rehabilitation or construction, ranging from \$100 for work under 10,000 square feet to \$300 for work between 10,000 - 100,000 square feet, to \$1000 for work in excess of 100,000 square feet. These fees are paid when the application is filed.