

How to Apply for Conceptual or Preliminary Review

Is it possible to obtain historic review before a project is fully designed?

Yes. Applications may be submitted for Conceptual Design Review or Preliminary Review. If workload permits, informal consultation with the Historic Preservation Office (HPO) staff is also possible prior to submitting a permit application. An appointment with the appropriate staff person is recommended. Photographs of the property and preliminary designs are usually essential for a staff consultation.

What is Conceptual Design Review?

Conceptual Design Review allows project concepts to be developed in coordination with Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) before filing a construction permit application. It is most often recommended for complex or costly construction projects, but it may also be used for smaller projects if a complete permit application is not ready for filing.

If a project receives Conceptual Design Review, is a full review of the building permit application also required?

If HPRB has completed review of a project in concept, review of the final building permit application is simplified. In most cases, HPRB can delegate final approval to the HPO staff.

What is Preliminary Review?

Preliminary review allows permit applications to be reviewed by HPRB if they have received zoning approval, but the architectural plans are not sufficient for structural review. Preliminary review is rarely used because it takes place after a permit application is officially filed. It requires complete architectural drawings of the exterior, and the owner may incur additional costs if HPRB requires major changes in the project.

How does one apply for conceptual or preliminary review?

Applications for conceptual and preliminary review are made at the Permit Processing Division in the same manner as permit applications. For conceptual review, less detailed architectural plans are acceptable, and zoning and structural clearances are not needed. Otherwise, the same application materials are required. [Select this link to download a copy of the Concept Review Application.](#) The Permit Processing Division of the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs is located at 1100 4th Street, SW, Second Floor. The permit office is open to the public from 8:30 am to 4:15 pm, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday. Thursday hours are 9:30 am to 4:30 pm. For information, call (202) 442-4589.

What are the filing fees?

Filing fees for conceptual review are the same as those for historic review of permit applications. When a fee is paid for conceptual review, a second fee is not assessed for review of the final permit application.