

## Maintaining the Integrity of Your Historic Home

Have you been thinking of making some changes to your historic home? Perhaps you are planning an addition or wish to convert your garage to a hobby room. The Historic Preservation Office is here to assist you. For projects that involve the exterior of your house and require a building permit, you must first obtain approval through the design review process.

So, what is involved in that process? The office approves about 90% of all requests over-the-counter as a Certificate of No Effect (CNE). Projects that are eligible for a CNE are minor projects including some additions, solar panels and modifications to accessory buildings. For those projects that are not eligible for a CNE, a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) is required. A COA involves a public hearing before a Historic Preservation Hearing Officer. The city will place a small sign on the property with information about the request and a notice will be sent to the liaison for the historic district. An agenda for the hearing will also be posted on the city's website. The decision of the hearing officer can be appealed to the Historic Preservation Commission. Their decision can be appealed to the City Council. Once either a CNE or COA is approved, the certificate is valid for one year.

You may ask why there is a special design review process for historic properties. In order to be designated historic, a district needs to meet certain criteria. At the time of designation, your historic district met the criteria. A majority of the properties in a district must be considered contributors to the district. Sometimes a property may not be considered a contributor due to its age. It may not have been constructed during the district's period of significance. Many times it is not considered a contributor due to a loss of integrity. Inappropriate changes to an historic home can cause a property to lose its contributing status. This loss of integrity can affect not only the individual home but also the entire historic district.

Those homes that are not contributors to a district or are new homes still require design review to ensure the work fits the scale and setbacks of the neighborhood. Sometimes, a non-contributor can even become a contributor when inappropriate changes are reversed.

There are no fees associated with this special design review process. Even if a permit is not required, you may wish to consult with historic preservation staff because there are changes that can affect integrity that do not require a permit. An example of such a change would be replacement of historic windows. Windows are a character-defining feature of a home. Since July of 2011, the city has not required permits for window replacements that basically do not change the opening size, but there are often better alternatives to window replacement.

Some properties have conservation easements that require staff review of any exterior changes. You should check with the office to ensure there is no easement on your property prior to commencing any work.

Demolition work requires a permit and approval by the Historic Preservation Officer. If a structure is of historic significance, demolition can be denied and a stay of demolition enforced.

For more details on the design review process, including the design review guidelines, Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation and our preservation philosophy, please see [www.phoenix.gov/pdd/historic](http://www.phoenix.gov/pdd/historic).