



## Historic District Commission

### Design Guidelines Update – November 2, 2020

#### Summary Report

TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
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#### OVERVIEW

On October 13, 2020, staff provided an update on the Design Guidelines Rewrite Project to the Historic District Commission (HDC). The HDC continued the discussion on approval authority to the November 2, 2020 virtual meeting. This staff report provides an overview of approval authority.

#### HDC INPUT REQUIRED

Staff recommends that the Commission review the information provided in this staff report and then provide individual feedback via a survey. Survey results will be shared during the November 2, 2020 meeting and help guide discussion during the meeting.

#### CURRENT HDC AND STAFF APPROVAL AUTHORITIES

Page 69 of the [Design Guidelines for the Chapel Hill Historic Districts](#)<sup>1</sup> specifies those activities that the HDC has delegated to staff for review and approval. If there is any uncertainty as to whether the activity complies with the design guidelines, staff refers the application to the Commission. Staff does not have the ability to deny an application; these applications would also be referred to the Commission.

Items that are routine maintenance such as the limited replacement of damaged wood siding, painting, or patching a roof do not require approval by either the HDC or staff.

#### COMMON STAFF APPROVAL & COMMON CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Staff researched Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) applications from 2018 through 2020 that had been administratively approved or had been approved by the HDC as part of their consent agenda. Items that appear on the HDC's Consent Agenda have been reviewed by staff, and staff recommends that the HDC approve these items. They are often minor works that have little impact on the historic character of the districts.

Common Staff Approvals:	Common Consent Agenda Items Approved by the HDC:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In-kind replacement or patching of roof materials</li><li>• Generators on pre-cast concrete pads*</li><li>• Retaining walls</li><li>• Modifications to door design on a rear elevation</li><li>• HVAC replacement</li><li>• Porch or deck repairs that went beyond routine maintenance as there was significant replacement of materials and/or reconstruction</li><li>• In-kind expansion of picket fence</li><li>• Pavement</li><li>• New sewer or water line installation</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Modifications to approved COAs including changes to window and door designs, railings, lighting, and materials</li><li>• Replacement of decking with contemporary materials</li><li>• New signs</li><li>• Safety railings</li><li>• New windows</li><li>• Replacing deteriorated fire escapes</li><li>• Vents</li><li>• Outdoor kitchen</li><li>• Stormwater or drainage control measures</li><li>• Walkways and courtyards</li><li>• Generators and HVAC units without a precast concrete pad or those proposed in front yards visible from the street</li><li>• Fences</li><li>• Replacing a wood deck</li><li>• Roofing</li><li>• Stone piers and retaining walls</li><li>• Pergola</li></ul>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.townofchapelhill.org/home/showdocument?id=2405>

- Driveway extension

\* Generators and HVAC units placed on a pre-cast concrete pad do not require a building permit

### WHAT ARE OTHER COMMUNITIES DOING?

Staff has researched other approval authorities in the North Carolina communities listed below. Staff recommends that the Commissioners review how these preservation commissions have delegated approval authority. The table below outlines common works approved by staff administratively (A) or approve by staff based on a specified set of criteria, such as the size or location (A\*):

	Chapel Hill	Charlotte <sup>2</sup> (see pages 18-19)	Hillsborough <sup>3</sup> (see pages 73-85)	New Bern <sup>4</sup>	Raleigh <sup>5</sup>	Salisbury <sup>6</sup> (see pages 13-14)
Additions		A*			A*	
Accessory Buildings (accessory dwelling units, garages, carports, porte cocheres)		A*	A*		A*	
Awnings			A	A	A	
ADA Ramps and Lifts			A*	A*	A	
Chimneys			A*		A*	
Decks	A*	A	A*	A*	A*	
Doors		A*	A*		A	
Driveways		A	A*	A	A	
Fences			A*		A*	A*
Foundations	A*				A	
Gutters and downspouts matching the house or trim	A			A	A	A
Lighting			A*	A	A	
Mechanical equipment screened from public view		A	A	A*	A	
Patios		A	A*	A*	A	

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.charmeck.org/Planning/HDC/DesignGuidelines.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://assets.hillsboroughnc.gov/media/documents/public/historic-district-design-guidelines.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.newbernnc.gov/document\\_center/historic%20preservation/2020/Guidelines%202020-07-14%20revision.pdf](https://www.newbernnc.gov/document_center/historic%20preservation/2020/Guidelines%202020-07-14%20revision.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.townofchapelhill.org/home/showdocument?id=46173>

<sup>6</sup> [https://salisburync.gov/Portals/0/Documents/Administration/Historic%20Preservation%20Commission/HP\\_CDesignGuidelines.pdf?ver=2016-12-06-104350-990](https://salisburync.gov/Portals/0/Documents/Administration/Historic%20Preservation%20Commission/HP_CDesignGuidelines.pdf?ver=2016-12-06-104350-990)

Porches			A*		A*	
Retaining Walls	A*	A	A*		A*	A
Roofing		A*	A*	A	A*	
Signs		A	A*	A	A	A
Solar			A*			
Storefronts			A*		A	
Temporary Features					A	A
Vents			A*		A	A*
Walkways/Paths	A*		A*	A	A	
Windows		A*	A*		A	
Removing non-original (less than 50) year old/ incongruous substitute materials to restore original			A*	A	A	A
Projects that have documentation of approval from the NC SHPO for historic preservation tax credits						A
Demolitions		A*	A*		A*	

### Next Steps

Feedback provided at the next HDC meeting will be further discussed with the Design Guideline committee and then incorporated into the draft Design Guideline document.