

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CONDUCTING BUSINESS WITH THE PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION AS OF 7/3/2024

The Philadelphia Historical Commission is the City's regulatory agency responsible for ensuring the preservation of the city's historically significant buildings, structures, sites, objects, interiors, and districts. The Commission identifies and designates historic resources, listing them on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. It regulates the preservation of designated resources through the City's building and other permitting processes, reviewing applications to alter, add to, and demolish historic resources and erect new buildings in historic districts. Additional information is available on the Historical Commission's [website](#).

As part of the City's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the offices of the Historical Commission at 1515 Arch Street closed in March 2020. The offices reopened in September 2021, and the Historical Commission's staff is currently splitting its time between office and remote work. Although the Historical Commission's offices have reopened, the Historical Commission and its advisory committees are still meeting remotely on Zoom. While the staff is working both in and out of the office, you may conduct business with the Historical Commission by email and telephone, and in person in the office by appointment. Email is the most efficient way to conduct business with the Historical Commission.

In Person Appointments at the Historical Commission's offices at 1515 Arch Street, 13th Floor, may be scheduled using an automated scheduling system. To schedule an appointment, click on this [appointment link](#) and follow the instructions. The appointment system will direct you to:

- Select a language,
- Provide your first name, last initial, and a cell phonenumber,
- Select an appointment with the Department of Planning and Development: Historical, Art, and Planning Commissions,
- Select an appointment type, either a Historical Plan Review or a Historical Research Appointment, and
- Select an available appointment.

Once you have selected an appointment, the system will guide you to your appointment with a series of text messages to the cell phone number you provided.

General inquiries may be emailed to the Historical Commission's general email address, preservation@phila.gov. If you are already working with a staff member, you may email your inquiry directly to that person. The Commission's staff will respond to all inquiries, but please note that some of the Commission's archived documents are not currently available.

Complaints about construction work that may violate the City's [historic preservation ordinance](#) may be emailed to the Historical Commission's general email address, preservation@phila.gov. The complaint should include a description and the date, time, and street address of the illegal work. Photographs of the work should be included if possible.

Section 106 Review inquiries may be emailed to Shannon.Garrison@phila.gov.

Nominations proposing to designate sites and districts as historic may be emailed to the Historical Commission's general email address, preservation@phila.gov. Comments regarding nominations under consideration may be sent to the same email address.

Applications for approval of proposed construction work fall into several categories.

If the Historical Commission has already approved your construction project and you are seeking **approval of details**, like window shop drawings, email your request with supporting materials to the Historical Commission's general email address, preservation@phila.gov, or directly to a staff member if you are already working with that person. Follow the guidance below regarding submission.

If you are ready to submit for a **building permit** from the Department of Licenses & Inspections, please submit the application using [eCLIPSE](#), the City's electronic Commercial Licensing, Inspection and Permit Services Enterprise. The Historical Commission's staff is reviewing building permit applications with eCLIPSE. The staff will approve your application if possible, request amendments or additional information if needed, or refer it to the Historical Commission itself for review. During the eCLIPSE reviews, all communications between applicants and the Historical Commission's staff take place within eCLIPSE.

If you are seeking **guidance** regarding your proposed construction project, for example whether the work satisfies historic preservation standards or whether it can be approved administratively, email your submission materials to the Historical Commission's general email address, preservation@phila.gov, or directly to a staff member if you are already working with that person. The submission requirements are specified below.

The Historical Commission's staff reviews and approves most applications without referral to the Commission itself, the 13-member appointed body. However, some applications propose construction work that exceed the staff's authority to review, which is defined in Section 6.10 of the Commission's [Rules & Regulations](#). When applications exceed the staff's authority, the staff refers them to a two-step review process conducted at public meetings. First, the Architectural Committee, a technical advisory committee, reviews the applications and formulates nonbinding recommendations to the Historical Commission. Second, the Commission reviews the applications and recommendations and renders decisions. The Historical Commission and Architectural Committee are currently meeting remotely on Zoom.

Applications for review by the Historical Commission and Architectural Committee as well as requests for guidance on proposed construction projects should include the following information in a file or files in Adobe pdf format. The file(s) should be emailed as attachments if they are smaller than 10MB. For larger files, use a file transfer utility like WeTransfer or DropBox.

- For a formal review, please include this information on a building permit application form. For guidance, a building permit application form is not necessary, but the information must be provided.
 - The street address of the property in question.
 - The name, email address, telephone number, and mailing address of the applicant or person responsible for the project. If multiple people are responsible for the project, contact information for all involved should be provided.
 - The name(s) of the property owners.
- A description of the proposal including the reason for undertaking the work. The description should provide any information not available in the architectural drawings and other documents, for example phasing of work, description of materials, etc.
- Photographs of the subject property documenting the primary facades and areas within the scope of work, the visibility of the work area from public rights-of-way, and the context. Photographs should be labeled with the address and date.
- Architectural plans and/or other graphic documentation detailing the proposal. The documents should comply with Section 6.7 and other applicable sections of the

Commission's Rules & Regulations (pages 35-36). They must accurately reflect both existing and proposed conditions, and be legible, dimensioned, accurately scaled, and annotated.

- Copies of any historic documentation justifying the project, if applicable, for example, historic maps, photographs, or insurance surveys.

To submit your request:

- Send an email to a staff member or preservation@phila.gov
 - Include your name, contact information, and address of the subject property
 - Include all other information in a file or files in Adobe pdf format
 - If the total file size is less than 10MB, attach the files to the email
 - If the total file size is more than 10MB, send the files to the Historical Commission using a file transfer utility like WeTransfer or DropBox. All have free transfer options.

Staff Contact Information

General email and number: Preservation@phila.gov, 215-686-7660

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