



## Certificate of Appropriateness & Expedited Review

Decatur's city ordinance requires that an approved Certificate of Appropriateness is issued by the Architectural Review Board (ARB) for any exterior work to a building in the historic district. The CoA grants permission for proposed work that is compatible with Decatur's historic preservation ordinance. If changes are inconsistent with the city's design review guidelines, the ARB will reject the application.

The CoA process protects the character of the districts, which contain hundreds of buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places and in Decatur's own locally zoned district. Decatur's Architectural Review Board wants you to be successful with your application, but please understand that they must carry out the law regarding this work, which includes compliance with design standards set by the city and those set by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior. Please contact the city's historic preservation specialist, who serves as staff for the ARB for assistance and advice *BEFORE* large expenditures are made.

We are proud of our historic neighborhoods and how well they have retained their architectural integrity and economic value. Thank you for helping maintain their uniqueness.

### Steps to Receiving a CoA

Learn about local guidelines applicable to your project and check with staff for the Architectural Review Board if you are unsure whether your project requires a CoA.

Complete the application form in its entirety, detailing proposed work. Please include any additional documentation that is required. The ARB may request a site plan and elevations or may visit the property.

Submit your application at least two weeks before the next ARB meeting. Incomplete applications may be returned for completion.

The ARB will review complete applications and a decision will be made according to due process in a public hearing, which you are encouraged to attend and answer questions about your project.

## Frequently Asked Questions

How can I be sure the work I plan to do requires a CoA?

If you are unsure whether or not the work you plan requires a CoA contact the Architectural Review Board prior to beginning any work. The ARB does not review any interior work, unless it changes the exterior appearance. Painting the exterior does not require a CoA, unless the exterior has not been painted before.

Who reviews the CoA?

Some CoAs are reviewed by the full architectural review board. CoAs that are for routine maintenance or minor work might be reviewed by the ARB staff person. The process to turn in a completed CoA is the same either way.

What happens if I don't follow the HPC guidelines?

Depending on the severity of the inconsistent work a citation or a stop-work order may be issued. The HPC has the authority to require that you reverse any work inconsistent with the historic district's design guidelines.

Do I need an architect?

No architect is needed; however, architectural drawings or detailed sketched and/or photographs may be required.

Do I need to be present at the HPC meeting when my COA request is being considered? Can someone speak on my behalf at the HPC meeting?

No, you need not be present for your proposal to be considered; however, a representative (contractor/builder) should be present to answer any questions if you cannot be there. Applications without a representative may be tabled if the ARB has questions.

How long will this process take?

Some projects can be approved at the staff level and can take as little as a week to process. Other projects require full ARB review which will lengthen approval time.

Do I have to complete my construction work within a specific time frame?

Certificates of Appropriateness shall become void unless construction is commenced within 6 months of a date of issuance. They are issued for a period of 18 months and are renewable. During this time, the work may be inspected for CoA compliance.

My house is listed as non-contributing within the district, do I still have to go through design review?

Yes, all properties within the district, regardless of listing status, have to go through design review. The ARB typically only reviews new construction and demolition for non-contributing structures. Staff handles the rest of review for non-contributing structures through a fast-track process.

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**Routine Maintenance and Minor Work Projects** are reviewed by staff. The ARB has delegated staff the ability to provide administrative approval to minor work. The ARB chair may extend this list in emergency situations. Staff may refer minor projects to the City’s Architectural Review Board if the change involves changes that are substantial, do not meet the guidelines, or of a precedent-setting nature.

**Major Work** projects are reviewed by the ARB. In general, major work projects involve a change in the appearance of the structure or site, such as new construction, expansion of a building footprint, or significant changes in landscape features.

The following list is not intended to be comprehensive, and may not cover every circumstance encountered in a project.

	TYPE OF WORK	MINOR WORK (Staff approval)	MAJOR WORK (ARB approval)
1	<b>New construction or additions</b> to the primary building		X
2	<b>Demolition</b> of any structure or demolition or removal or any part of a structure (contributing or non-contributing)		X
3	<b>Relocation</b> of buildings (contributing or non-contributing)		X
4	Repair and/or replacement of <b>existing accessory structures</b> or buildings when there is no change in design, materials, or general appearance	X	
5	Alteration of <b>existing accessory structures</b> or buildings with no expansion of footprint	X	
6	Additions to <b>existing accessory structures</b> or buildings or <b>new accessory</b> structures or buildings		X
7	Removal of <b>existing accessory structures</b> or buildings which are not architecturally or historically significant	X	
8	Removal of <b>existing accessory structures</b> or buildings which are architecturally or historically significant		X
9	Repair or replacement of <b>architectural details</b> when there is no change in design, materials, or general appearance	X	
10	Alteration, addition, and/or removal of <b>non-historic architectural details</b>	X	
11	Alteration, addition, and/or removal of <b>historic architectural details</b>		X
12	Repair and/or replacement of <b>awnings, canopies, or shutters</b> when there is no change in design, materials, or general appearance	X	

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13	Installing <b>new awnings, canopies, or shutters</b> , or the alteration, addition, and/or removal of existing awnings, canopies, or shutters	X	
14	Construction of <b>new carports</b> or the alteration, addition or removal of an existing carport		X
15	Construction, alteration, and/or removal of <b>chimneys</b>	X	
16	Repair and/or replacement of <b>decks</b> when there is no change in design, materials, or general appearance	X	
17	Construction of new <b>decks</b> , or the alteration/addition/removal of existing decks		X
18	Installation of <b>new doors</b> , or the alteration, addition, and/or removal of doors	X	
19	Installation, alteration, and/or removal of <b>storm doors</b>	X	
20	Construction, alteration or removal of <b>dormers</b>		X
21	Repair and/or replacement of <b>existing driveways</b> when there is no change in design, materials, or general appearance	X	
22	Alteration, addition, and/or removal of <b>existing driveways</b>	X	
23	Construction of <b>new driveways</b>		X
24	Repair and/or replacement of <b>existing fences, or walls</b> when there is no change in design, materials, or general appearance	X	
25	Removal of <b>existing fences or walls</b>	X	
26	Construction of <b>new fences or walls</b> Front yard fences or walls (full ARB review) Side or rear yard fences or walls (staff)	X	X
27	Repair and/or replacement of exposed <b>foundations</b> when there is no change in design, materials, or general appearance	X	
28	Alteration of exposed <b>foundations</b>	X	
29	Repair and/or replacement of <b>gutters and downspouts</b> when there is no change in design, materials, or general appearance	X	
30	Installation, addition, and/or removal of <b>gutters and downspouts</b>	X	
31	Installation of <b>house numbers and mailboxes</b>	X	
32	Planting of hedges or other <b>landscaping screen plantings</b>	X	
33	Removal of hedges or other <b>landscaping screen plantings</b> that are less than 42" in mature height	X	

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34	Removal of hedges or other <b>landscaping screen plantings</b> that are 42" or greater in mature height		X
35	Review of <b>landscape master plans</b> impacting less than 25% front yard area and/or less than 50% of total side and rear yard area	X	
36	Review of <b>landscape master plans</b> impacting 25% or more of front yard area and/or 50% or more of total side and rear yard area		X
37	Repair and/or replacement of <b>exterior lighting fixtures</b> when there is no change in design, materials, or general appearance	X	
38	Installation, alteration, and/or removal of <b>exterior lighting fixtures</b>	X	
39	Repairs and/or replacement, including repointing, to <b>existing masonry</b> when the color and composition of the mortar match the original, and new brick or stone matches the original	X	
40	Construction, alteration, and/or removal of <b>masonry</b>	X	
41	Installation, relocation, and/or removal of exterior <b>mechanical equipment</b> (such as solar panels, heating and air conditioning, freestanding, or window units)	X	
42	<b>Painting</b> any previously unpainted surface exterior		X
43	Repair and/or replacement of existing <b>parking lots</b> when there is no change in design, materials, or general appearance	X	
44	Alteration and/or removal of existing <b>parking lots</b>	X	
45	New construction of or addition to <b>parking lots</b>		X
46	New construction, addition, and/or removal of <b>porches</b>		X
47	Repair and/or replacement of <b>roof coverings</b> when there is no change in design, materials, or general appearance	X	
48	Alteration of <b>roof coverings (includes skylights)</b>	X	
49	Installation of <b>satellite dishes and/or television antennas</b>	X	
50	Repair and/or replacement of <b>signs</b> when there is no change in design, materials, or general appearance	X	
51	Installation, alteration and/or removal of <b>signs</b>	X	
52	Repair and/or replacement of exterior <b>stairs</b> and steps when there is no change in design, materials, or general appearance	X	

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53	Alteration, addition, and/or removal of exterior <b>stairs</b> and steps or construction of new exterior stairs and steps	X	
54	Repair and/or replacement of <b>exterior surfaces</b> when there is no change in design, materials, or general appearance	X	
55	Alteration, addition, and/or removal of <b>exterior surfaces</b> where there is a change in general appearance.		X
56	Alteration, addition to, and/or construction of a <b>swimming pool</b>		X
57	Removal of a <b>swimming pool</b>	X	
59	Removal of <b>trees</b> with a combined girth of less than 8" in diameter, measured 4 ½ feet above ground level	X	
60	Removal of <b>trees</b> with a combined girth of 8" or greater in diameter, measured 4 ½ feet above ground level		X
61	Removal of dead, diseased or dangerous <b>trees</b> when a replacement tree is proposed	X	
62	Installation, alteration, and/or removal of <b>temporary features</b> that are necessary to ease difficulties associated with a medical condition, not to exceed 6 months	X	
63	Repair and/or replacement of existing <b>walks</b> when there is no change in design, materials, or general appearance	X	
64	Alteration, addition, and/or removal of existing <b>walks</b> or construction of new walks	X	
65	Repair and/or replacement of <b>windows</b> when there is no change in design, materials, or general appearance	X	
66	Alteration and/or removal of existing <b>windows</b> or installation of new windows with a change in general appearance		X
67	Installation, alteration, and/or removal of <b>storm windows</b>	X	
68	Installation or removal of window or door shutters	X	
69	Most changes to previously approved <b>Certificates of Appropriateness</b>	X	
70	Emergency installation of <b>temporary features</b> to protect a historic resource damaged by a natural disaster or declared state of emergency (that do not permanently alter the resource), not to exceed a 6 month duration	X	
71	A change made in or upon any public street, way, or park within the boundaries of any Historic District	X	
72	Renewing a previously approved CoA (1 time only)	X	