

# Perry Historic District Designation and Design Review

## Frequently Asked Questions

**What is historic preservation?** The concept is fairly simple – maintain Perry’s small-town character and sense of place by protecting what makes the community unique.

**What are the benefits of creating a Local Historic District?** Designation of an area as a historic district will not directly affect property values. Because Local Historic District properties are protected from insensitive development, owners may be more inclined to make improvements to their properties which may increase the value of all properties in a given district.

National and statewide economic studies show that historic designation first stabilizes property values and then slowly values begin to rise. In most cases properties in local historic districts appreciate at rates greater than the local market as a whole, and similar neighborhoods that are not designated.

A historic district that is aesthetically cohesive and well promoted can be one of a community’s most important attractions. They attract tourist dollars which makes good economic sense. The protection of local historic districts can also enhance business recruitment. Companies continually re-locate to communities that offer their workers a higher quality of life, which is greatly enhanced by successful local preservation programs and stable historic districts.

**Are all buildings in a historic district necessarily historic?** No. A major goal of local historic districts is maintaining the overall character of the area. When the boundary is drawn for a local historic district, it will often include non-historic properties and vacant lots. Reviewing proposed changes to non-historic properties as well as historic properties ensures that more recent construction will not become more intrusive. If these properties are not included in the district, there is a greater chance that changes to these properties could have a negative impact on the area or on adjacent buildings.

**Does designation of my property as part of a historic district affect the use of the property?** No. Historic district designation does not change the zoning or land use of properties.

**May I make changes to my property if it is included in a historic district?** Designation does not prevent owners from making changes to their properties, nor does it require them to restore or repair their property. Existing property maintenance codes apply city wide. Designation ensures that exterior alterations, additions, demolitions, and new construction are in keeping with the special character of the area.

**Do I have any say as to whether my property is included in a Local Historic District?** Yes. Before a Local Historic District is designated, all tenants and owners of property in the proposed district have an opportunity to express their views at public hearings held by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) and City Council. The HPC and City Council evaluate a property’s designation based on object criteria in the ordinance, not on personal preference. City Council is legally obligated to pass laws that treat similarly situated properties alike, and therefore, treat similar historic properties uniformly.

**What is a Certificate of Appropriateness?** A Certificate of Appropriateness is the process in which an applicant proposes modifications to the exterior of a property in a historic district and the HPC evaluates the proposal using adopted design guidelines, technical assistance, and the unique character of each property. The process is intended to ensure that proposed modifications are appropriate for the architectural style of the building and compatible with the district as a whole.

**Is there a fee for a COA?** No fee is required to review an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness unless work is started before approval. In such cases, the fee is \$238.00.

**Where can I go for assistance in developing design changes that will be appropriate for the historic district?** *Perry Design Guidelines* is a useful tool in planning a project. While the HPC and staff do not develop plans or designs, they can help guide an applicant in the early planning stages of the project. For information concerning the process or for assistance with the preparation of an application, contact the Community Planner at 741 Main Street, (478) 988-2702. The historic preservation ordinance, *Perry Design Guidelines*, application forms, and more information are available at <https://perry-ga.gov/historic-preservation-commission>

**What should be included in an application?** In order for the HPC to make an informed decision, completed applications must be accompanied by required supporting documentation (see Application Checklist). Illustrations may include site plans, building elevations, floor plans drawn to a standard architectural scale, e.g., 1/4 inch equals one foot. Photographs of the building, site, and neighboring properties are also helpful. Support materials may differ according to the type and size of the project.

**Which properties require design review?** All designated properties require design review. Designated properties include all properties within historic districts and any individually designated property. Please note that design review covers both contributing and non-contributing properties. The City's Official Zoning District Map shows all designated districts and properties.

**If I am not happy with the Commission's decision concerning my Certificate of Appropriateness application, may I appeal?** Yes. Appeals of an HPC decision may be made to City Council who will determine if the HPC abused its discretion in reaching their decision by not following the standards in the ordinance or the design guidelines. Appeals of a City Council decision may be made to the County Superior Court.

**Are other reviews required?** Review of projects by the HPC may not be the only review required before work may proceed. Other city departments and commissions may be required to examine a project for compliance with existing zoning, building, engineering, sign, and landscape ordinances.