



Welcome to Oxford and your new historic home!

The members of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) are delighted to welcome you as the newest stewards of one of our community's beautiful historic homes. In Oxford, our homes are more than just places to live—they are part of a shared story, rich with character, craftsmanship, and tradition. By choosing a historic property, you are helping preserve the charm and heritage that make our town so special.

Please take a few moments to review the Frequently Asked Questions document included in your welcome bag. It is designed to answer common questions and serve as a helpful guide as you settle into your home and our historic district.

We encourage you to explore, connect, and enjoy all that Oxford has to offer—from front porch conversations to our tree-lined streets and distinctive architecture. If you have any questions, we are here to help. Each of us shares a deep passion for preserving and celebrating our historic homes, and we are always happy to be a resource.

Thank you for investing in Oxford's past, present, and future. We are so glad you are here!

Warm regards,
Oxford Historic Preservation Commission



www.oxfordhpc.org

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is the Historic Preservation Commission?

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) consists of seven volunteer members appointed by the Oxford Board of Commissioners. It is a quasi-judicial body, established by the Board of Commissioners through the enactment of Oxford's Historic Preservation Ordinance in 2007. Its primary duty is to review applications for Certificates of Appropriateness ("COA").

2. What is a COA?

The COA is a permit, authorized by the HPC, to physically alter property within the two Oxford Historic Districts. It is issued when the HPC determines that proposed changes are appropriate to, and compatible with, the historic character of a property and the Historic Districts as a whole. All work authorized by a COA must comply with the terms of the COA.

3. How do I know whether my house is in one of the Oxford Historic Districts?

You can look at the Historic District maps on the HPC web site, which are located on pages 5 and 6 of the Oxford Design Guidelines (the "Guidelines"), or call the City Planning Director, at 603-1117.

4. What are the responsibilities of a property owner within the Historic Districts when planning improvements or other changes to the exterior of their property?

Whenever you plan to make changes to the exterior of your property, the changes may need to be reviewed by the HPC. Consult the Guidelines on the HPC web site to determine whether the planned changes are allowed by the Guidelines. If so, and if HPC approval is required, submit an application for a COA to the Oxford Planning Director before beginning this work. Please note that COA's must be received 7 days prior to the next HPC meeting.

5. Is a COA required for all exterior work?

No. Ordinary maintenance does not require a review by the HPC. You can view a list of what is considered ordinary maintenance in the table that appears beginning on page 17 of the Guidelines.

6. Can the interior of a structure be changed without a COA?

Yes. The HPC only reviews exterior changes, which can affect the character of the Oxford Historic Districts. The HPC is not authorized to review changes to the interior of structures located within the Districts.

7. Do exterior repairs, beyond ordinary maintenance, require a COA?

Yes. However, if the scope of repair work can be classified as "Minor Works," the COA application can be approved by the Minor Works Committee of the HPC and will not require a formal hearing for a COA to be issued. You can view a list of what is considered Minor Works in the table that appears beginning on page 17 of the Guidelines.

8. Does the installation of a backflow irrigation device (e.g., lawn sprinkler system) require a COA?

Yes. Mechanical and utility equipment, like heating and air conditioning equipment, electrical meters, satellite dishes, solar panels and other utility connections should be shielded from public view, as much as possible. Continuation of HPC Frequently Asked Questions

9. Do I need a COA if I am looking to remove trees from my property?

It depends. Removal of mature trees, which are defined as sixteen inches in diameter and 4.5 feet off the ground, requires a COA with a written recommendation of a tree specialist or certified arborist who examined the tree, and removal of trees that are causing damage to structures (e.g., main house, outbuildings, driveways). All should be shown by photographic evidence.

10. What is the timeframe for application review and issue of a COA?

Upon receipt of the COA application, the Planning Director will assess whether the proposed work can be classified as Minor Works. If so, the application will be forwarded to the HPC Chairman for concurrence and approval. If the HPC Chairman does not concur that the scope of work constitutes a Minor Work, or if the Planning Director did not determine the scope of work to be a Minor Work, the application will be formally heard by the HPC at its next regularly scheduled meeting (or within 45 days from application submission if a special meeting must be called).

11. What if the work planned does not require a Building Permit from the City. Do I still need to submit an application for a COA?

Yes. A COA is a separate requirement from a building permit. Unless the scope of proposed work can be classified as ordinary maintenance, a COA is required whether or not a Building Permit is also required. (Note: Building Permits in Oxford are issued by the Granville County Inspections Department).

12. If I want to paint my house, or portions of my house, a different color, do I need to apply for a COA?

Yes. A change in color is not considered maintenance or Minor Works and will require review by the HPC. However, painting your home the same color is classified as maintenance, and a COA is therefore not required.

13. How often does the HPC meet?

The HPC meets on the third Thursday of each month, from January through October, at 6:00 PM in the training room on the first floor at City Hall.

14. How soon do I need to apply for a COA?

A COA application must be submitted to the Planning Director no less than 7 days before the next regularly scheduled meeting of the HPC. If not, the application will be deferred to the next regularly scheduled meeting of the HPC. Applications received within 7 days of the regularly scheduled October meeting will require a special called meeting of the HPC, which will be scheduled within 45 days of application submission.

15. Do I need to attend the HPC hearing when my COA application will be reviewed?

You may attend the hearing personally, or you may have a representative attend the meeting on your behalf. The HPC is not authorized to review an application for COA unless the applicant or the applicant's representative is present at the hearing.

16. If the HPC denies my application, what can I do?

If an application is denied, it can be resubmitted after modifying the aspect of the application that was denied. Otherwise, you may appeal the action of the Commission to the Oxford Board of Adjustment within 45 days of the action. In such an appeal, the Board of Adjustment will not reconsider the COA application or the HPC decision, but will instead only consider whether the HPC conducted the hearing and acted in accordance with its responsibility.