

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Permit Process

### What?

You will need a Certificate of Appropriateness if you plan to:

- BUILD a new structure,
- ADD to an existing building,
- DEMOLISH a structure in whole or in part,
- RELOCATE a structure
- EXTERIOR REPAIR OR ALTERATION
- INSTALL A SIGN
- CHANGE BUILDING COLORS
- INSTALL STREETSAPES

Certificates of Appropriateness **are not** required for

- Maintenance and/or repair activities that involve no change to material, design, texture or exterior appearance.
- Temporary maintenance and/or repair required by an order from the City of Lancaster.
- Interior Work
- General maintenance and or planting of organic material.

### How Much?

The Certificate of Appropriateness requires a fee of \$25 in addition to fees for building permits, sign permits, or zoning permits. Please see the Certified Building Department for specific fees.

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### When?

If your project is scheduled for a Historic Lancaster Commission meeting, it meets the third Wednesday of each month at 2:00 pm in the City Council Chambers at 111 S. Broad St. The deadline for submitting complete applications is the 1<sup>st</sup> Friday of each month for the meeting you wish to be heard. In special situations, a special Historic Lancaster Commission may be called by the Commission.

### How?

#### 1. Meet/Contact us

Contact the Certified Building Department at (740) 687-6649 or [building@ci.lancaster.oh.us](mailto:building@ci.lancaster.oh.us) to confirm that a Certificate of Appropriateness is required. You can request a meeting with either the staff or the Commission prior to submission of your application if the project is complex. We are pleased to meet with you during your planning process.

#### 2. Submit application

Applications can be found at the Certified Building website at:

<http://www.ci.lancaster.oh.us/158/Forms>

The form must be accompanied by the application fee and elevation drawings, specifications, paint samples, material cut sheets, or other appropriate supporting information. Applications should be submitted to the Certified Building Department at 121 E. Chestnut St, Suite 101, Lancaster Ohio 43130. Please refer to the Design Guidelines at

<http://www.ci.lancaster.oh.us/628/Design-Guidelines>

as you are completing your application.

#### 3. Historic Lancaster Commission Meetings

Once a complete application is received, it will be placed on the agenda for the next meeting. Some projects can be reviewed administratively, which usually results in receiving your permit within a week. Otherwise your Certificate of Appropriateness will

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be attached to your building, sign or zoning permit.

4. Permits are valid for 12 months but applicants can apply for a 12 month extension.

### What Else Do I Need to Know?

All proposed work must also conform to the City of Lancaster Zoning Code, Building Code and Sign Code. If you have any questions regarding these codes, please contact the Certified Building Department at (740) 687-6649.

Subject work done without a Certificate of Appropriateness is in violation of the Lancaster Codified Ordinance and is subject to enforcement action.

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### APPLICATION GUIDANCE

#### Available Application Assistance

The Historic Lancaster Commission staff often meets with property owners at our office or on-site to discuss an application or just to provide advice. We have resources available to the public on assisting with design decisions. For more information call (740) 687-6649 or visit the webpage at

<http://www.ci.lancaster.oh.us/358/Historic-Lancaster-Commission>

#### What Should I Include?

What you need to include depends on your project, but a good rule of thumb is to consider what the Historic Lancaster Commission will need to fully understand your project. Here are the minimum requirements. All drawings must be at least 8 ½ by 11 and must include dimensions.

#### New Construction

- Site plan showing the entire lot with property lines and with all setbacks clearly noted. It should show all associated site improvements, e.g. sidewalks, lighting, pavement, etc. For infill projects, the footprints of the abutting properties should be shown in relation to the proposed building.
- Elevation drawings of each façade with major dimensions and materials specified. For additions, existing and proposed areas should be clearly delineated.
- Current photographs of building or site.
- Materials list for new construction, e.g. brick, glass, stone.
- Design sketches or manufacturer's cut sheets of doors, windows, lighting and other features.
- Color chips or samples
- Anything else deemed necessary by the Historic Lancaster Commission to determine the appropriateness of the new

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construction.

### Rehabilitation

- Current photograph of building façade that is being proposed for change.
- Materials list including any new materials to be introduced into the building.
- Design sketches or manufacturer's cut sheets of new doors, windows, light fixtures, awnings, signs, etc.
- Location of all proposed changes noted on the building photography.
- Where substitute materials are proposed, an explanation of why the original material cannot be restored.
- Color chips or samples.

### Demolition

- Written description of the structure's condition and reason for demolition.
- Photographs of the current structure's condition showing all elevations, interior, accessory buildings and site features.
- Describe the proposed reuse of the site, including plans of any proposed new structures.

### Signs

- Current photograph of building façade indicating sign location.
- Scale drawing of sign including graphics and mounting.
- Color samples.
- Design sketches or manufacturer's cut sheets of lighting fixtures.

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### Paint Colors

- Current photograph of building façade indicating painting locations.
- Color samples.
- No approval is necessary if the paint colors are not changed from a previously approved color scheme.

### Streetscapes including Outdoor Seating

- Current photograph of building façade indicating streetscape features.
- Design sketches or manufacturer's cut sheets of proposed items.
- Color samples.
- Copy of Right of Way application if needed.

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### **EMERGENCIES AND ECONOMIC HARDSHIP**

#### Emergency Repairs

##### What?

You are allowed to complete temporary repairs required for public safety, because of an unsafe, insecure or dangerous condition as ordered by the City of Lancaster Building Department, Fire Department or Code Enforcement. You must seek a Certificate of Appropriateness for permanent repairs within 30 days. If you need to make emergency repairs, contact the Certified Building Department at (740) 687-6649 for additional guidance.

#### Economic Hardship

##### What?

The Historic Lancaster Commission may approve changes or demolition that do not meet the Historic Guidelines if there is a Substantial Economic Hardship.

##### When does a Substantial Economic Hardship occur?

- Substantial Economic Hardship is defined with the following conditions
- Substantial reduction in the economic value of the property;
- Substantial economic burden on the property owner to reasonably maintain the property in the current form;
- No reasonable alternative exists consistent with the guidelines;
- Unable to sell the property

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### Unusual and Compelling Circumstances

#### What?

The Historic Lancaster Commission may approve changes or demolition that do not meet the Historic Guidelines if there is Unusual and Compelling Circumstances. These include

- The property has little or no historic or architectural significance.
- The property cannot be reasonably maintained in a manner consistent with the guidelines.
- No reasonable means of saving the property from deterioration, demolition or collapse other than the proposal exists.
- For non-profits it is financially or physically infeasible for the non-profits organization to be able to achieve its purpose while conforming to the guidelines.

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## MEETING GUIDANCE

### Fee

The cost of a Certificate of Appropriateness is \$25.00 paid with the application. There is no charge to meet with the Commission to discuss planning and proposed projects ahead of the Certificate of Appropriateness. If you would like to meet with the Commission, please call the Certified Building Department at (740) 687-6649 to be added to the agenda.

### Who?

The Historic Lancaster Commission is a part of the City of Lancaster and is subject to the Open Meeting Laws of the State of Ohio. Meetings are open to the public and anyone is welcome to attend. There is a period reserved for public comment not related to specific agenda items. We ask that you respect the Commission and other attendees and limit your comments to 5 minutes.

### What?

Meeting agendas are posted in City Hall and on the City website at <http://oh-lancaster.civicplus.com/358/Historic-Lancaster-Commission>. Minutes are also posted at this location.

The application process is as follows

1. Once an application is received, the staff will review and give notice to the applicant and owner that the application has been placed on the agenda. The notice may also include any questions or request additional information to be presented to the Commission.
2. The staff will prepare a meeting package to be sent to the members including the application and cover sheet with information on the property and the applicable guidelines. The package is sent to the members prior to the meeting.
3. At the meeting, the applicant will have a chance to explain

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the project and present additional information. The Commission will ask questions and provide comments on the proposal. If additional information is needed, the Commission may table the application.

4. The public will be given a chance to comment on the application. Comments may also be sent to the Commission members and staff. Comments received by the staff prior to the meeting will be given to the Commission members as a supplemental package. Comments may be sent to the Certified Building Department at 121 E. Chestnut St, Suite 101, Lancaster OH 43130 or by e-mail to [building@ci.lancaster.oh.us](mailto:building@ci.lancaster.oh.us).
5. The Lancaster Historic Commission may approve, approve with conditions or deny. If the Commission does not act within 90 days, the Certificate is automatically approved.

For most applications, the applicant can present the necessary information. For more complex projects, you may need to bring your architect, contractor, or engineer. For leased property, the Commission will need confirmation either in writing or in person from the property owner that the proposed project has their approval.

### Where?

The Historic Lancaster Commission meets on the third Wednesday of the month at 2 PM in City Council Chambers at 111 S. Broad St, Lancaster Ohio 43130. The Commission may choose to schedule a special meeting when circumstance require.

### What If I Don't Like The Decision?

You have the right to appeal to the Board of Zoning Appeals within 30

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days. The appeal must state the grounds for the appeal and follow the rules of the Board of Zoning Appeals. For more information see <http://oh-lancaster.civicplus.com/341/Board-of-Zoning-Appeals>

You may also request reconsideration for unusual or compelling circumstances or substantial economic hardship within 10 days of the denial. You may also request mediation. Contact the Certified Building Department at (740) 687-6649.

### When Can I Start Work?

The Certificate of Appropriateness is usually part of a larger permit process. No permits for the work will be issued without the Certificate of Appropriateness but no work can begin until the appropriate permits are issued.