



CHALFONT HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD (HARB) APPLICATION

APPLICANT INFORMATION PACKAGE

INTRODUCTION

The Applicant Information Package contains:

- A brief description of the *Certificate of Appropriateness* (COA) application process
- Schedule of upcoming Historic and Architectural Review Board (HARB) meetings
- An application process flow chart
- An application form with a map of the Historic District
- Submission checklists
- Historic District Design Guidelines appropriate to the project

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS (COA) APPLICATION PROCESS

Background

In 1996 Chalfont Borough enacted a historic preservation ordinance for the preservation of the unique character of the community. The Historical and Architectural Review Board (HARB) helps to maintain this community character and is responsible for reviewing plans for changes to buildings within the historic district, to determine whether the proposed changes are appropriate to individual structures and the district as a whole.

The HARB includes, by law, a registered architect, a licensed real estate broker, the Code Enforcement and Building Inspector for the Borough, and four other Chalfont Borough citizens who have knowledge and interest in historic preservation. The HARB makes recommendations for approval or denial of COA applications to the Borough Council, which makes the final decision on all HARB applications.

What is subject to review

Only exterior changes seen from the street, sidewalk, or public right-of-way in the Chalfont Borough Historic District fall under the HARB's jurisdiction. Borough Council approval, via the public HARB review process, is required for new construction, additions, alterations, renovations, repairs, replacements, replications, new or revised signs or awnings, building relocation or demolition of buildings or sites within the Borough's Historic District. This approval comes in the form of a *Certificate of Appropriateness*. The project must also comply with all applicable Borough codes. It is the responsibility of the applicant to obtain all applicable building permits before beginning work.

There is no fee for the *Certificate of Appropriateness* review process.

What HARB does not review

Interior changes and exterior paint colors are not reviewed. A COA may not be required for small maintenance or in-kind repair projects; the Building Inspector has the discretion to exempt these small tasks from the COA process. Even if a project is deemed exempt from the COA process, however, the Building Inspector still gives the HARB copies of the completed application and support material.

If you need assistance completing the Application, the Building Inspector/Zoning Officer is available Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 1:00-4 p.m. To answer your questions please call 215-822-7295. In any case, building permits may still be required, even though the project is not reviewed by HARB.

Due Date

Submissions are due at least fifteen (15) calendar days prior to the next scheduled HARB meeting. The HARB usually meets on the third Monday of each month at 7:00 PM in the Borough Council Chambers. For further information on meeting dates call 215-822-7295 or check the Borough web site at www.chalfont.govoffice.com/

Timing

The process takes a minimum of four to six weeks from the submission date of the COA application to obtaining a building permit. If HARB asks for changes to the project, or if all of the required Borough deadlines are not met or if the application is incomplete, this process may take several months.

We suggest that you contact the Borough early to make the application process flow as smoothly as possible. Borough staff is always available to be of assistance.

STEPS FOR OBTAINING A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS (COA)

- 1.** Visit the Borough Hall at 40 N. Main Street to see the Building Inspector to determine if you must go before the Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) prior to obtaining a building permit (the Building Inspector is available Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 1:00-4:00 p.m). If the project involves erecting, altering, restoring, demolishing or razing a building within the Historic District, or if the alterations are visible from the public right-of-way, and if the changes are other than a small repair or maintenance project, the inspector may determine that HARB review is required. If so, obtain at least two copies of the HARB review information package and one free copy of the *Chalfont Borough Historic Design Guidelines*.
- 2.** Review the *Historic District Design Guidelines* brochure. Talk with your architect or contractor about the *Guidelines* and how your project meets the HARB's requirements. If you wish, make an appointment to consult with the HARB on an informal basis at the end of a monthly public meeting to discuss your project *before* you file your application.
- 3.** Review the attached checklists. Determine what information is needed to submit with the COA Application.
- 4.** Submit nine (9) copies of the completed application form, and the requested number of copies of ALL required materials, to the Borough Zoning and Building Inspector. Incomplete applications may not be reviewed. Please provide all additional materials requested in a timely manner, or the application may be tabled until the HARB's next monthly meeting. There is no fee for the application.

After the forms have been completed and documentation submitted, the application will be scheduled for the next HARB meeting, which is held at Borough Hall the third Monday of each month. You will be notified of the exact date.

- 5.** Attend the HARB meeting. It is highly recommended that all building owners or their designated representative(s)—business tenant, realtor, sign/awning company representative, architect, engineer—seeking a *Certificate of Appropriateness* attend the HARB meeting. At that meeting, the COA application will either be recommended for approval, approved with conditions, tabled to a later date, or recommended for denial, based upon the standards of Borough ordinances. The HARB has no more than forty-five (45) after the conclusion of the hearing to render its decision and recommendations and notify applicants. If the HARB recommends against the application, it will inform you of changes necessary to make the plan acceptable to the HARB.
- 6.** HARB's recommendation about the COA application becomes an agenda item for consideration at the next scheduled Borough Council meeting. Check with the Borough for the exact time and date by calling 215-822-7295 or check the Borough's web site at www.chalfont.govoffice.com/. The Council will consider the same factors as HARB, as well as any other relevant factors from Planning, Zoning, or other legitimate sources.
- 7.** If your project is approved by the Council at its meeting, the Code and Building Inspector will issue a *Certificate of Appropriateness* immediately if all of the required conditions are met. Obtain a building permit from the Building and Zoning Department (provided the application complies with all other pertinent Borough Codes.)

THE HARB/COA REVIEW PROCESS

