

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW REPORT

Referral by City Planner to Historic District Commission
Meeting of June 18, 2026

Permit: Siding Permit #26-848

Location: 108 S Governors Ave, Dover
Three-story Residential Apartment Building

Tax Parcel: ED-05-077.09-01-41.00-000

File Number: HI-26-02

Present Zoning: C-2 (Central Commercial Zone)
H (Historic District Zone)

Referral of Permit:

The following application Siding Permit #26-848 for 108 S Governors Ave is referred by the City Planner to the Historic District Commission for consultation regarding the issuance of the Architectural Review Certificate for a Siding project. The project proposes the use of a vinyl siding product in a horizontal format to re clad the three-story residential apartment building. Applications for certain types of construction activity within the Historic District Zone (H) are reviewed by the City Planner (or Staff as designated) for Architectural Review Certification as part of the Building Permit application review process. Staff is referring the Permit for review under the provisions of *Zoning Ordinance*, Article 10 Section 3.22(A) and (B). See below.

Section 3.22 Architectural review certification by the city planner.

- (A) An architectural review certificate for specific classes of building permits, including Fences, signs, siding, window and door replacement, roofing, the addition or replacement of decorative features, minor demolition, residential additions, and other construction of a minor nature, may be issued by the city planner, after a review and determination that the proposed construction is in general accordance with the standards set forth in subsection 3.25.
- (B) The city planner may refer any permit application for demolition or construction in the historic district for consultation with commission.

Permit Information:

Siding Permit #26-848 was filed on May 29, 2026 for a siding project at 108 S Governors Ave in Dover, Delaware. This is a three-story residential apartment with an existing porch, tan siding (appears to be wood horizontal siding and composite shingle siding on the south elevation) and blue shutters on the window, and trimwork. The project listed in the Permit submission consists of the removal and replacement of the building's siding. The specifics for the siding were identified as to being a horizontal type of vinyl siding.

Property Information:

The project site is located within the local Historic District Zone (H) and subject to the provisions of the *Zoning Ordinance*, Article 3 §21 and referenced sections. This building is also located within the boundaries of a National Register Historic District, specifically the Victorian Dover Historic District (K-00396.204). The following is the inventory description from the Victorian Dover Historic District nomination:

K-00396.204

108 S Governors Avenue – Pre-1885, 3-story, 3-bay, Italianate-style residence; clapboard siding. Low-hipped roof; 2/2 double -hung sash; façade porch; converted to apartment units.

Staff Review of Permit for Architectural Review Certification:

Project activities are reviewed for compliance with the *Zoning Ordinance* and the *Design Standards and Guidelines for the City of Dover Historic District Zone* as stated in *Zoning Ordinance*, Article 10 Section 3.25(A).

Article 10 Section 3.25 *Architectural review standards.*

(A) An architectural review certificate may be issued if it is found that the architectural style, general design, height, bulk and setbacks, arrangement, location and materials and structures affecting the exterior appearance are generally in harmony with neighboring structures and complementary to the traditional architectural standards of the historic district as set forth in the historic district design guidelines and standards adopted by the planning commission and as set forth in the United States Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

The element must be in the “public view.” The “public view” is defined in the *Zoning Ordinance* as “that which can be seen readily from a public street, public building or public property, excluding views from alley rights-of-way.” The front façade and both side elevations are visible from South Governors Avenue due to the position of the building.

In reviewing the proposed project for Architectural Review Certification, Staff referenced various sections of Chapter 3: Maintenance, Repair, Preservation and Restoration of Existing Historic Buildings of the *Design Standards and Guidelines for the City of Dover Historic District Zone* which presents the Recommended, Not Recommended, and Inappropriate approaches to construction of various elements in the Historic District.

This Request should be reviewed for conformity with the design criteria and development guidelines found in the *Design Standards and Guidelines for the City of Dover Historic District Zone*. Chapter 3 presents the information on the appropriate formats and materials for use in the Historic District. Specifically, Chapter 3, pages 3-1 through 3-3 discuss the philosophy of the *Design Standards and Guidelines* and then it discusses the Recommended, Not Recommended, and Inappropriate practices associated with each building element. Walls: Wood Siding and Trim is discussion on pages 3-14 to 3-16.

The *Design Standards and Guidelines* focus on repairing building elements or replacement of the building elements in-kind to match existing conditions. For vinyl siding, this generally means it is not recommended for use in the Victorian historic context of the Dover Historic District Zone due to 108 S. Governors Avenue being located in the Victorian Dover Historic District. The proposed replacement vinyl siding does not comply with the recommended practices of the *Design Standards and*

Guidelines.

Historic District Commission Action

The Historic District Commission should consider the Siding project and take action in regard to the Architectural Review Certification for the Siding Permit #26-848. The Historic District Commission may add conditions for the Siding project in order to comply with the character of the property within the Historic District.

Staff Findings from Review of Siding Permit:

Staff findings and recommendations are summarized as follows for the Door and Window project as presented in Permit #26-848 and accompanying documents.

1. Siding Material: Vinyl siding is not recommended for the use in the Victorian Historic context of the Dover Historic District zone. Its sheen is noticeable and it is nearly impossible to install without converting up or obliterating original architectural details. Its seams are visible, it tends to warp and deflect with changes in temperature, and its color will fade notably over time. It also traps and hides potentially damaging moisture within the walls of the house.
 - a. Additional recommendations will be provided by Planning Staff prior to the meeting.

Advisory Comments:

1. The applicant shall be aware that issuance of a Siding Permit is required prior to the commencement of construction. The Siding Permit Application will be subject to the conditions of approval established and may be required to be updated, if necessary, to comply with these conditions established through the Architectural Review Certification process.

Attachments:

- Letter of Referral Notice to Applicant dated June 10, 2026.
- Siding Permit #26-848 Application Form and Siding sample brochure.
- *Design Standards and Guidelines for the City of Dover Historic District Zone*, Chapter 3,