

Historic Preservation

CITY OF DOVER, DELAWARE
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & INSPECTIONS

TWO TYPES OF DESIGNATION

LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT AND NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

There are two type of designation: a historic district established by the local government through ordinances and those individual properties or historic districts listed in the National Register of Historic Places, a federal designation program.

The following are definitions of each type from the City of Dover's *Zoning Ordinance*.

Historic district: The geographic areas of Dover that have been designated by the City of Dover, and graphically illustrated on the official zone map of the City of Dover, as possessing a significant concentration of properties, buildings, structures or objects associated with and representative of the historical development of Dover and which meet at least one of the following criteria:

(a) Exemplifies or reflects the broad cultural, political, economic, or social history of Dover, Kent County, the State of Delaware, or the United States of America; or

(b) Is associated with the lives of persons of historic importance or with events of historic significance to Dover, Kent County, the State of Delaware, or the United States of America; or

(c) Embodies distinguishing architectural characteristics which are invaluable resources for the study, understanding and appreciation of periods, styles, society, methods of construction, craftsmanship and the use of indigenous materials; or

(d) Represents the notable work of master builders, designers or architects whose designs, construction and craftsmanship have been recognized as distinctive and whose work has influenced the period of time in which they lived. *Zoning Ordinance*, Article 12 Definitions

National Register of Historic Places: A federal list of cultural resources worthy of preservation, authorized under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as part of a national program to coordinate and support public efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect the nation's historic and archaeological resources. The National Register program is administered by the state historic preservation office and by the National Park Service under the Department of the Interior. *Zoning Ordinance*, Article 12 Definitions

Local Historic District for Dover

covers the corridor along Loockerman Street between the railroad tracks to the St. Jones River on the east and along the State Street corridor from just north of Division Street to South Street. See map for specific boundaries.

Within the City of Dover are three **National Register Historic Districts:**

Dover Green Historic District, Victorian Dover Historic District, and part of the Little Creek Hundred Rural Historic District. The City also includes twelve (12) individual properties listed in the National Register.

BASIC DIFFERENCES

The basic differences in the protection and requirements between a historic district of local designation and National Register listing of a historic property/district:

LOCAL DESIGNATION AS A HISTORIC DISTRICT

(As part of a Historic Preservation Ordinance)

- Designates historic properties on the basis of local criteria and local Procedures.
- Often included as part of local zoning and land use regulations.
- Sets boundaries on the distribution pattern of historic properties, and other community considerations.
- Provides recognition of a community's significant properties.
- Coupled with design review process, such as a historic preservation commission or architectural review board, provides protection of character-defining exterior features of a property, but, in many cases, not historic interiors or archaeological sites.
- May qualify a property for a form of financial assistance, such as a local tax incentive for historic preservation, if the local government has passed a tax incentives ordinance.
- Can provide for review of proposed demolitions within the district, and provide delays to allow for preservation alternatives to be considered.
- Can require local commission review and approval for all changes to the exterior appearance of historic properties, and review approval for all construction, such as infill, e.g. adjacent new buildings on a site or on vacant parcels.

BENEFITS OF LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICTS

- Local districts protect the investment of owners and residents.
- Local districts encourage better design.
- Local districts help the environment.
- Educational benefits
- A local district can result in a positive economic impact from tourism.
- The protection of local historic districts can enhance business recruitment potential.
- Local districts provide social and psychological benefits.

NATIONAL REGISTER LISTING

(As an honorary status with some federal financial incentives)

- Designates historic properties based on uniform national criteria and procedures
- Set boundaries for historic district based on the actual distribution pattern of intact historic properties in the area.
- Provides recognition by the federal government that an area has historical or archaeological significance.
- Requires the effects of federally assisted work projects (actions) on historic properties be considered prior to the commencement of work. Makes available federal tax incentives for qualified rehabilitation projects. Requires conformance to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (36 CFR 67)
- Makes a property eligible for certain types of grants (when available). Work projects associated with certain grants require conformance to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (36 CFR 68).

PARTS OF A PRESERVATION ORDINANCE

Refer to City of Dover
Code of
Ordinances, Appendix B:
Zoning Ordinance:

Article 3 Section 21
Historic District

Article 10 Section 3
Historic District
Commission and
Architectural
Review

- **Statement of purpose.**
- **Creation of the Historic District Commission**
- **Commission duties and powers**

Creation and purpose. There shall be a historic district commission for the purpose of assisting the planning commission and city planner in reviewing applications for architectural review certifications as specified in subsection 3.2; and for making recommendations for designation of historic district zones; and for establishing guidelines for the preservation and conservation of historic district zones; and for advising other officials and departments in the City of Dover in matters concerning historic preservation; and for reviewing all proposed National Register nominations in the City of Dover; and for acting as a liaison on behalf of the City of Dover to individuals and organizations concerned with historic preservation; and for carrying out programs of historic preservation education in the City of Dover. *Zoning Ordinance, Article 10 Section 3.11*

- **Outlines designation process for the Historic District**

- **Sets out design criteria to govern design review**

Architectural review standards.

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. *Zoning Ordinance, Article 10 Section 3.25(A)*

Historic district design guidelines and standards: The document adopted by the City of Dover Planning Commission as being the source reference document for construction and maintenance of buildings, structures and additions within the Dover Historic District and which is the guiding document for the historic district commission and city planner in their review of applications for architectural review certification. *Zoning Ordinance, Article 12 Definitions*

- **Process of Architectural Review Certification**

Architectural review certificate: A signed and dated document indicating the approval of the City of Dover Planning Commission, or the historic district commission, or city planner upon the authority of the historic district commission, for alteration, construction, relocation, or demolition within the historic district. *Zoning Ordinance, Article 12 Definitions.*

An ***Architectural Review Certificate*** may be issued in one of three ways:

- As part of the Building Permit process following administrative review of project activities by Staff.
- By the Historic District Commission following review of an application submission.
- By the Planning Commission following consideration and recommendations by the Historic District Commission's review of an application submission.

Refer to the following
guidelines:

Secretary of the Interior's
Standards for
Rehabilitation

***Design Standards
and Guidelines for
the City of Dover
Historic District
Zone***

Architectural Review Certificate

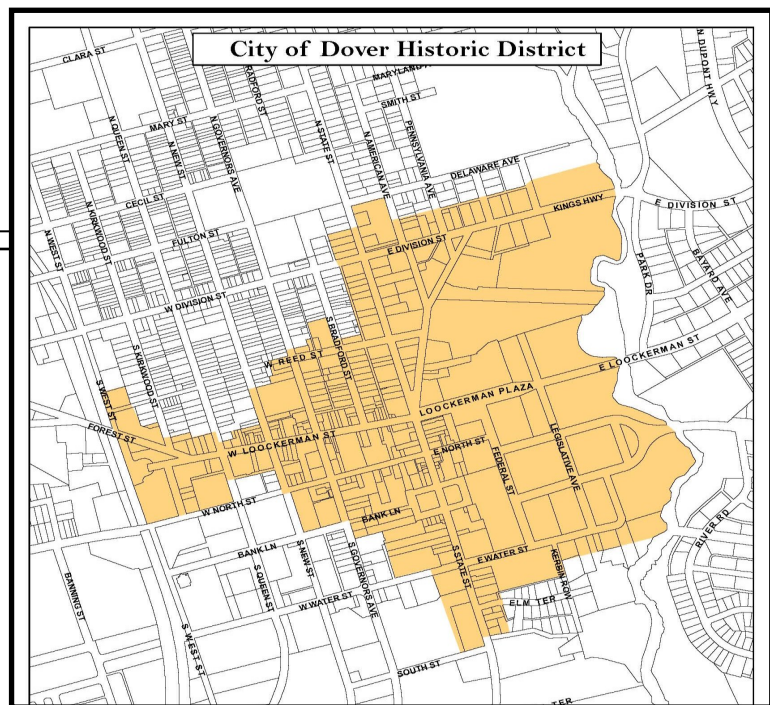
shall be required for the demolition, construction, reconstruction, alteration or restoration of any new or existing structure or where general exterior repairs are made with in the Historic District. It is not required for normal maintenance and repair, interior arrangement, or building features not subject to public view.

The City of Dover was designated a Certified Local Government in 2015.
For Information on Historic Preservation Activities and the City of Dover Historic District Commission, please contact Planning Staff in the Department of Planning & Inspections.

**City of Dover, Delaware
Historic District Commission
Department of Planning & Inspections**

**Department of Planning Inspections
15 Loockerman Plaza
P.O. Box 475
Dover DE 19903**

**Phone: 302-736-7196 or
302-736-7010
Fax: 302-736-4217
www.cityofdover.com**



Associated Topics to Learn More About:

- *Architectural Review Certification process*
- *Tax Credit Program for Historic Properties*

INFORMATION FROM:

- National Park Service website: www.nps.gov/subjects/historicpreservation
- "Design Review in Historic Districts" by Rachel S. Cox, a publication by the National Trust for Historic Preservation
- City of Dover Code of Ordinances, Appendix B: *Zoning Ordinance*
- *Design Standards and Guidelines for the City of Dover Historic District Zone*