

WHAT IS THE MHZC?

The Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission (MHZC) reviews applications to create new historic overlay districts and reviews and approves preservation permits in historic and conservation zoning districts for new construction, alterations, additions, repair and demolition.

Thousands of communities across the country use historic zoning as a tool to preserve the unique character of their neighborhoods. Property owners typically want the overlay because it stabilizes property values. Once a district has been established, property owners must apply for a Preservation Permit for exterior alterations, before obtaining a building permit. The purpose of this process is to guide change in a way that conserves historic character. Decisions about what type of alterations are appropriate for a district are guided by a set of design guidelines based on national standards and customized for the neighborhood. You can find the design guidelines for your neighborhood and permit applications at www.nashville.org/mhc. The type of projects that require permits vary with each district. Typically, an *Historic District* or *Landmark* requires a permit for all exterior alterations, new construction (in whole or in part), demolition and relocation of a building; however, a *Conservation District* only requires a permit for new construction (including, for example, additions, dormers, porches and out buildings), demolition (whole or partial) and relocation. Early consultation with the MHZC office can save you time and money and is the best way to assure that your project complies with the design guidelines BEFORE you purchase materials or begin a project.

Some applications may be approved on the staff level but any application involving complete demolition and new construction, as well as complicated projects, will go before the full Historic Zoning Commission which meets the third Wednesday of each month, 2pm, at 1417 Murfreesboro Road. All of these meetings are open to the public and shown live on Metro 3 (cable channel 3).

Since the overlay is about preserving neighborhoods, some neighborhood organizations take an active part in the public design review process by checking the Commission's agenda monthly and attending meetings that include projects in their neighborhood. The agenda and staff recommendations which provide details about the proposed projects may be reviewed online at least a week before the meeting. You may want to appoint a specific person in your neighborhood to keep a watch on projects your group will want to comment on or learn more about. Public comment can be provided via email, snail mail, dropped off at the office, or given in-person at the public hearing.