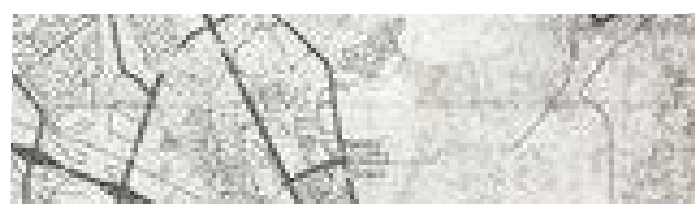




CITY OF SHREVEPORT, LOUISIANA

# HISTORIC PRESERVATION OVERLAY DISTRICTS

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



The Metropolitan Planning Commission  
[www.shreveportcaddmpc.com](http://www.shreveportcaddmpc.com)

## **Benefits of Preservation**

Historic preservation is not just about regulations that prevent inappropriate change to historic resources. Successful historic preservation programs also make available positive incentives, providing property owners financial and technical tools that help give new life to historic properties.

Economic incentives are available to historic preservation projects at the state and federal levels. The Federal government offers rehabilitation tax credits to qualified projects and properties. Residential homeowners also find that property values increase when historic preservation standards are used in rehabilitating their homes.

Technical incentives are those that allow flexibility in restoring a historic building. These structures are often made of older materials that can be rehabilitated to increase their useful lifespan. Historic structures also require innovative solutions to improve energy efficiency; as older buildings often have additional needs in meeting fire and life safety requirements.

This document is a compilation of typical questions on the creation of Historic Preservation Overlay Districts (HPODs), the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) and the Certificate of Demolition process. Other resources on the Shreveport-Caddo Metropolitan Commission (MPC) and Shreveport Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) websites will include:

- **Shreveport Unified Development Code**
- **Shreveport City Code:**
  - **Chapter 36: Shreveport Historic Preservation Commission**
  - **Chapter 37: Local Register of Districts, Landmarks and Historic Properties**
- **Design Standards and Regulations for Historic Preservation Overlay Districts**
- **Certificate of Appropriateness**
- **Certificate of Demolition**

## Historic Preservation Overlay District Concepts

### **Q1: What is a Historic Preservation Overlay District (HPOD)?**

**A1:** Historic Preservation Overlay Districts (HPODs), commonly known as historic districts, offer an additional layer of regulations for a specific area that is laid over the underlying zoning regulations. HPODs establish the review of proposed exterior alterations and additions to historic properties within designated districts. The base zoning regulations continue to be administered, but the overlay adds another level of regulations to be considered.

### **Q2: Will the use of my property change because of an HPOD designation?**

**A2:** No. The HPOD is an overlay district and does not regulate land use. Uses allowed by the existing base zoning will remain the same.

### **Q3: What is the point of an Historic Preservation Overlay District (HPOD) designation?**

**A3:** From a Code standpoint, HPOD designation seeks to preserve the overall historic character of the local historic district, as well as the key, character-defining details of each of the contributing resources, and to assure that new construction is harmonious with this historic context. An HPOD is established to provide for protection of the traditional development patterns of an area and to preserve historic resources found in it. The focus is on maintaining that character and on preserving those key character-defining external features of individual historic resources within the district, as visible from the street.

### **Q4: What are the benefits of being in an HPOD?**

**A4:** Contributing buildings in HPODs may qualify for financial incentives which can provide property tax reduction to owners of historic properties. HPODs often attract greater investment and encourage neighborhood pride. Research shows that property values in most historic districts rise faster than property values in neighborhoods that are not designated as historic.

### **Q5: Do you need permission to do exterior work to your property within an HPOD?**

**A5:** Sometimes. Any activity involving exterior features and/or exterior architectural features, within any Historic Preservation Overlay District, shall be harmonious with the special character of the HPOD. However, not all activities involving such exterior features require approval; but said activities are still required to be harmonious with the special character of the HPOD.

### **Q6: Are all properties in an HPOD district subject to Certificate of Appropriateness?**

**A6:** Yes, in certain instances. A Certificate of Appropriateness is only required when an alteration or other activity (excluding removal and demolition) on a contributing property or non-contributing property within any Historic Preservation Overlay District will (1) create a material change in exterior appearance or exterior feature(s), and (2) said alteration or other activity requires any regulated permit (e.g. building permit, right-of-way permit, etc.).

### **Q7: Are all properties in an HPOD district subject to Certificate of Demolition?**

**A7:** Yes, in certain instances. A Certificate of Demolition is required when the alteration or other activity on a contributing property or non-contributing property within any Historic Preservation Overlay District will (1) cause a removal or demolition, and (2) said removal or demolition requires any regulated permit (e.g. building permit, right-of-way permit, etc.).

### **Q8: Do historic districts affect resale values?**

**A8:** Economic studies nationally have shown that local historic district designation generally increases property values. Shreveport's historic districts not only add character and distinction to the City, they also have the unique opportunity to lead the City in a multitude of economic and quality of life metrics that non-historic districts or neighborhoods possess.

### **Q9: Are there tax advantages to HPOD designation?**

**A9:** HPOD designation does not include financial incentives. Rehabilitation tax credits are available to some properties in National Register Historic Districts.

### **Q10: Is contemporary design allowed in an HPOD?**

**A10:** Yes. In considering new construction, the Shreveport Historic Preservation Commission and the Executive Director shall encourage contemporary design which is harmonious with the character of the HPOD and shall not seek to impose architectural styles from particular historic periods.

### **Q11: Can objects such as art be placed within an HPOD?**

**A11:** Yes. Any activity involving exterior features, exterior architectural features or objects (including art or art installations) can be placed as long as it is harmonious with the special character of the HPOD.

## **General Historic Preservation Overlay District (General- HPOD) Designation Process**

### **Q1: What is the General Historic Preservation Overlay District (General-HPOD)?**

**A1:** The General Historic Preservation Overlay District (General-HPOD) will regulate all existing nationally designated local historic districts and/or individually designated historic sites, properties and landmarks. Later, neighborhood specific Historic Preservation Overlay Districts may be established. The General-HPOD provides the basic protection of the traditional development patterns of the area aimed at preserving the historic resources found in it. The focus is on maintaining that character and protecting those key character defining features of historic resources within existing local historic districts.

### **Q2: What are the criteria for a General- HPOD designation and will my property be included?**

**A2:** All existing nationally designated local historic districts (and the properties within those districts) and/or individually designated historic sites, properties and landmarks listed on the National Register of Historic Places will all be included in the General-HPOD.

### **Q3: How are boundaries determined? Who decides?**

**A3:** The General Historic Preservation Overlay District (General-HPOD) boundaries will be the existing boundaries of established nationally designated historic districts, as well as any individual property listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The process includes researching plats, visual reconnaissance surveys, and reading of existing histories. The proposed boundaries for the General-HPOD will be reviewed by the Shreveport Historic Preservation Commission and the Shreveport-Caddo MPC. Final determination is made by Shreveport City Council.



## Specific Historic Preservation Overlay District (HPOD) Designation Process

### **Q1: What is a specific Historic Preservation Overlay District?**

**A1:** Specific Historic Preservation Overlay Districts (HPODs), may be established through a code text amendment and zoning map amendment. A specific HPOD provides enhanced protection of a neighborhood's specific development patterns which preserve the historic resources found in it. The focus is on preserving specific key character-defining features of historic resources within the specific Historic Preservation Overlay District. *For example: The Fairfield Historic District could apply for a specific HPOD designation named: Fairfield Historic Preservation Overlay District (Fairfield-HPOD).*

### **Q2: What are the procedures and steps involved in attaching a specific historic preservation overlay district to the zoning of your property? At which stages can details of the proposal still be influenced?**

**A2:** The steps for creating a specific Historic Preservation Overlay District are described within the Historic Preservation Overlay District subsection of the Shreveport Unified Development Code. Once an application is filed with the Metropolitan Planning Commission, the rezoning process is the same as for all rezoning applications, and will include a zoning map and code text amendment. A Special Character Report will need to be included as part of the application.

### **Q3: What is a Special Character Report?**

**A3:** A Special Character Report, included with the application, is a brief written description of the character of the overlay district that is included in the application and report for a proposed specific Historic Preservation Overlay District. The essay is a critical part of the review process because each district is distinctly different. It aids property owners, the HPC, and MPC staff to understand the special characteristics that define a neighborhood.

### **Q4: What are the criteria for specific HPOD designation?**

**A4:** Locally designated specific Historic Preservation Overlay Districts are areas which are deemed to be of special significance in terms of their history, prehistory, architecture, archeology or culture, and to possess integrity of design, setting, materials, feeling and association.

### **Q5: How are boundaries determined? Who decides?**

**A5:** Specific General Historic Preservation Overlay District boundaries are determined by the Metropolitan Planning Commission as part of the rezoning application and report and may be an existing nationally designated local historic district. The designation report may be a revision of an existing National Register Historic District nomination or a new study by a group of citizens. The process includes researching plats, visual reconnaissance surveys, and reading of existing histories. Boundaries are drawn around the largest concentration of properties with historic and architectural integrity associated with the history of the area. The boundaries and report are reviewed by the Shreveport Historic Preservation Commission and the Shreveport-Caddo Metropolitan Planning Commission. Final determination is made by Shreveport City Council.

## Certificate of Appropriateness (COA)

### Q1: What is a Certificate of Appropriateness?

**A1:** A Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) is a document issued by the Executive Director of the Shreveport-Caddo MPC, or his/her designee, upon a recommendation (and in some cases decision) from the Shreveport Historic Preservation Commission. The document indicates approval of plans for an alteration or other activity (excluding removal and demolition) to both contributing properties and non-contributing properties within the General Historic Preservation Overlay District (General-HPOD) and/or any specific HPOD. A Certificate of Appropriateness shall also be required for local historic landmarks, local historic landmark sites, local individually designated historic properties, and national historic landmarks when said properties are within a Historic Preservation Overlay District (HPOD).

### Q2: How do I know if I need a Certificate of Appropriateness?

**A2:** Any activity involving exterior features and/or exterior architectural features, within any Historic Preservation Overlay District, shall be harmonious with the special character of the HPOD. However, not all activities involving such exterior features require approval; but said activities are still required to be harmonious with the special character of the HPOD.

A Certificate of Appropriateness is only required when an alteration or other activity (excluding removal and demolition) on a contributing property or non-contributing property within any Historic Preservation Overlay District will (1) create a material change in exterior appearance or exterior feature(s), and (2) said alteration or other activity requires any regulated permit (e.g. building permit, right-of-way permit, etc.).

Ask before you proceed with exterior work. Contact MPC staff at 318-673-6480 and speak with a planner regarding historic preservation.

### Q3: What is the process for obtaining a COA and who makes the decision?

**A3:** The COA process is described in Article 4.7 of the Shreveport Unified Development Code. COA applications are submitted to the MPC, reviewed by the HPC, and approved administratively by the Executive Director on a monthly basis.

Once the Executive Director has issued the COA, it is the responsibility of the applicant to obtain any other necessary permits.

### Q4: How are COAs reviewed?

**A4:** All applications received shall be forwarded to the Shreveport Historic Preservation Commission for the opportunity to review and make recommendations to the Executive Director or his/her designee. The Shreveport Historic Preservation Commission's recommendation is not binding upon the Executive Director and as such the Executive Director may issue a decision contrary to the HPC's recommendation and/or upon no action taken by the HPC within the designated time period.

The Executive Director, or his/her designee, may act on all completed applications and shall render a decision on or before the forty-fifth (45th) day after receipt of a completed application; unless the forty-fifth (45th) day falls on a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday, and in such case the decision may be rendered on the next available normal business day. The date the completed application is received by the Shreveport-Caddo MPC office staff shall be counted as day zero (0).

### Q5: When are COA applications due?

**A5:** An application may be submitted at any time and a determination will be made within 45 days.

### Q6: What kinds of projects require a COA?

**A6:** All exterior work that would (1) create a material change in exterior appearance or exterior feature(s), and (2) said alteration or other activity requires any regulated permit (e.g. building permit, right-of-way permit, etc.).

### Q7: What if it's a simple material change or normal maintenance on the property?

**A7:** A Determination of No Material Effect may be issued by the Chief Building Official or the City Engineer, or their designees, indicating approval for any normal repair or act of maintenance as defined by this Article. If a Determination of No Material Effect is issued, an application for a COA is not required.

### Q8: Are all primary buildings in an HPOD subject to COA review?

**A8:** Yes, as well as changes to vacant properties.

### Q9: Is there a right to appeal a COA decision?

**A9:** Yes. Appeals are filed with the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA).

### Q10: Would modern designs still be able to be built?

**A10:** Yes. The introduction of compatible but contemporary new construction can add depth and contribute interest to the district. Each COA application is decided based on the context and character of the specific district.

**Q11: Can I change the exterior paint color without a COA?**

**A11:** Yes. Color is not regulated; however, the exterior color should be harmonious with the special character of the HPOD.

**Q12: Do I need to obtain a COA if I am adding on to an existing building?**

**A12:** Maybe, depending on the extent of the addition. Contact the Office of the MPC and ask to speak with a planner regarding historic preservation.

**Q13: Does the construction of a deck require a COA?**

**A13:** Yes. To make sure the deck is harmonious with the special character of the HPOD.

**Q14: Can windows be replaced without a COA?**

**A14:** Yes. However, the windows should be harmonious with the special character of the HPOD.

**Q15: Are there restrictions on landscaping, planting and removal of trees, hedges and walls?**

**A15:** Lawn and garden objects and landscaping, including plantings, sculptures, walkways and walls of two feet or less in height are activities that do not require a COA. The removal or alteration of a "significant" tree in the regulated area requires a COA. Replacement trees are typically required.

**Q16: Do objects such as "art" require a COA to be placed within an HPOD?**

**A16:** Yes. A Certificate of Appropriateness is required when an alteration or other activity on a contributing property or non-contributing property within any Historic Preservation Overlay District will (1) create a material change in exterior appearance or exterior feature(s), and (2) said alteration or other activity requires any regulated permit.

**Q17: What if acquiring a COA creates a financial hardship?**

**A17:** An Exception for Economic Non-Viability may be issued when the alteration, other activity, removal or demolition on a contributing property or non-contributing property within any Historic Preservation Overlay District will (1) create a material change in exterior appearance or exterior feature(s), or cause a removal or demolition, and (2) said alteration, other activity, removal or demolition requires any regulated permit; and (3) for which a Certificate of Appropriateness and/or Certificate of Demolition "has been denied" or "would be denied"; and (4) the property owner has shown he/she will be deprived of any reasonable economic return on the property if not allowed to

proceed with the requested alteration or other activity.

**Q18: Can a request to demolish a building be denied? What factors are considered in evaluating this request?**

**A18:** No, demolition cannot be denied. However, the HPC may approve the request for a demolition delay of up to 180 days in some areas to allow time to explore alternatives to loss of the building. Factors considered include the significance of the building to the character of the Historic Preservation Overlay District; the impact of the demolition on the character of the district; the physical condition of the building; plans for mitigating the demolition; alternatives explored

## Additional Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### **Q1: What is the Shreveport Historic Preservation Commission's (HPC's) role in the HPOD designation process?**

**A1:** The HPC's mission is to identify, preserve, protect, and promote Shreveport's historic resources. In that role the commission has a responsibility to survey the city to determine neighborhoods and individual buildings that may be eligible for designation as local and/or National Register historic districts and landmarks. The HPC, along with MPC staff, often meet with neighborhood groups and the public to provide information on the benefits and responsibilities of designation. Before a designation report can be sent to the MPC Board, the HPC must review and formally recommend whether the district meets the criteria for district designation (see answer 2).

### **Q2: What are the criteria for creating a specific HPOD?**

**A2:** The process for creating an HPOD is described in Article 21.3 of the Shreveport Unified Development Code. Any HPOD may be established to preserve areas with (1) Pre-historic Significance, Historic Significance, Architectural Significance, Archeological Significance, or Cultural Significance (as all defined by this Article); (2) consist of a least one block face (as defined by this Article); (3) contains a minimum of three contiguous properties; (4) at least three-fourths of the properties are at least fifty (50) years old; (5) vacant properties over two acres must be contributing properties (as defined by this Article); and (6) petition must include at least 60% of property owners within the proposed boundary.

### **Q3: Who has the right to speak up, object, and weigh in, etc. on this subject?(i.e., can a private citizen or developer who doesn't own property in the discussed area or another property owner in adjacent property, etc. be part of the decision?)**

**A3:** The UDC does not specify who can or cannot speak. However, during the public hearing process, the MPC and City Council considers input from property owners to be critical and necessary.

### **Q4: What is the required percentage of property owner support? How is support or opposition determined?**

**A4:** Property owner support is needed at several points of the process. The Unified Development Code (UDC) requires at least 60% of property owners within the proposed boundary for designation as a specific Historic Preservation Overlay District.

### **Q5: How do you intend to survey the citizens' interests in being included in an HPOD?**

**A5:** Surveying of the neighborhood is done by the citizens or neighborhood group proposing HPOD designation.

### **Q6: Is support or opposition shown with one response per property owner or one response per property?**

**A6:** Either way is acceptable as long as the method is consistent and documented.

### **Q7: What recourse do individual property owners have to remove their properties from the proposal?**

**A7:** Property owners have multiple opportunities to express their opinions about the boundaries for a historic preservation overlay district, including public meetings at both the MPC and City Council.

### **Q8: Does the UDC or State Law place a moratorium on the issuance of demolition permits pending the adoption of an historic preservation overlay district?**

**A8:** No. However, during the pendency of an HPOD, the HPC or City Council may delay demolition for up to 180 days. This determination is made through the Certificate of Demolition.





Further information regarding Historic Preservation Overlay Districts can be found at [www.shreveportcaddompc.com](http://www.shreveportcaddompc.com) and in the *Historic Preservation Overlay Districts: A Guide for Understanding Historic Preservation Overlay Districts in the City of Shreveport* handout.