

# Obtaining a Permit in Historic Districts

## **HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**

The Detroit Historic District Commission was adopted by Detroit Ordinance 161-11 to insure the preservation of historically and culturally significant areas of the city's manmade environment. The City Council designates Historic Districts. The appointed Commission consists of seven, unpaid citizen members and is staffed by the City of Detroit.

A building permit is required for any exterior changes to a building or site in a designated or proposed historic district. The Historic District Commission administers a building permit application review procedure and may approve, deny, or give notice to proceed based on the appropriateness of proposed work in Historic Districts. In addition to permit application reviews, the Commission is also involved in various other matters concerning historic properties, preservation programs and historic district designation proposals.

A building permit application provides a way for the Historic District Commission to review proposed exterior changes. The Commission's review of the application provides a forum for assisting and guiding property owners in the preparation of appropriate improvement proposals. The building permit is issued by the Buildings and Safety Engineering Department (BSED) upon report from the Historic District Commission.

## **WORK REQUIRING A BUILDING PERMIT IN AN HISTORIC DISTRICT**

1. Excavations
2. New construction or erection: Buildings, fences, walls, other structures, significant landscape features, pavement or driveways.
3. Removal: Architectural features, significant landscape features
4. Reconstructions
5. Alteration including new roofs or new windows
6. Surface treatment change, including siding replacement
7. Color change by painting or other
8. Demolition: Structure or structure portions

## **HOW TO GET A BUILDING PERMIT IN AN HISTORIC DISTRICT**

1. Owner or contractor prepares and submits building permit application and drawings, describing work in detail, to Detroit Historic District Commission.
2. Preliminary zoning and building code review by BSED (if the work involves new construction, alterations, or demolition)
3. Commission staff discusses recommended or required changes with applicant as necessary
4. Hearing held by the Historic District Commission and the Commission approves or denies application
5. BSED issues or denies permit (permit may be denied if work does not conform to current building codes)
6. Building permit fee is submitted when permit is issued
7. Inspections must be made to complete permit process
8. Owner or contractor is issued Certificate of Acceptance or Certificate of Occupancy (depending on scope of work) upon completion of permit process