

**Village of Lancaster**  
**Historic Preservation Commission**  
Municipal Building, Lancaster NY

**Why do I need a Certificate of Appropriateness?**

It is a matter of public policy in the Village of Lancaster that the protection, enhancement and perpetuation of landmarks and historic districts is necessary to promote the economic, cultural, educational and general welfare of the public. Inasmuch as the identity of a people is founded on its past, and inasmuch as Lancaster has many significant historic, architectural and cultural resources which constitute its heritage, the Village of Lancaster intends to:

1. Protect and enhance the landmarks and historic districts which represent distinctive elements of Lancaster's historic, architectural and cultural heritage.
2. Foster civic pride in the accomplishments of the past.
3. Protect and enhance Lancaster's attractiveness to visitors and the support and stimulus to the economy thereby provided.
4. Ensure the harmonious, orderly and efficient growth and development of the Village.

**When is a Certificate of Appropriateness required?**

No person shall carry out *any exterior alteration, restoration, reconstruction, demolition, new construction or moving of a landmark or property* within a historic district, nor shall any person make *any material change in the appearance of such a property, its light fixtures, signs (permanent or temporary), sidewalks, fences, steps, paving or other exterior elements visible from a public street or alley* which affects the appearance and cohesiveness of the historic district, without first obtaining a certificate of appropriateness from the Historic Preservation Commission.

No building permit shall be issued for such proposed work until a Certificate of Appropriateness (CoA) has first been issued by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). Failure to obtain or adhere to a Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations is a violation of the Code of the Village of Lancaster and subject to fines and reversal of the unauthorized alterations.

There is no fee to obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness (CoA).

**What to include with your application:**

The Historic Preservation Commission provides an application and a checklist to assist you in petitioning for a CoA.

To complete the application please provide:

- The address of the property
- Contact information for the applicant AND the owner of the property (if not the applicant), and contractor(s) if available.
- A concise, *detailed* description of your project (use additional sheets is necessary.) Please include BOTH a phone number AND e-mail address for contact purposes.

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- Any additional materials needed to illustrate your proposal, such as current or historical photographs; drawing, renderings, elevations or surveys; product specification sheets or samples; historical evidence or research findings, etc. *Where the proposal includes signs or lettering, provide a scale drawing showing the type of lettering to be used, all dimensions and colors, a description of materials to be used, the method of illumination and a plan showing the sign's location on the property.*
- Any other information that may be useful for the HPC to visualize the proposed work – including an existing photo of the property.
- Sign and date the application

**Where do I submit my CoA Application?**

To allow time for processing and distribution of your application to all board members, your completed Petition for Certificate of Appropriateness should be returned two (2) weeks prior to the upcoming meeting to

Historic Preservation Commission

Municipal Building

5423 Broadway

Lancaster NY 14086

You may also drop off your materials in person at the Village Clerk's office during business hours – 8:30am – 4:30pm.

**What happens next?**

Once your materials are received, a hearing will be scheduled to take place during the next regularly scheduled public meeting of the Village of Lancaster Historic Preservation Commission, which takes place on the *second Wednesday of each month at 7:00pm in the upstairs Council Chambers of the Municipal Building.* *You or someone representing your project is expected to attend to present your proposal and answer any questions from the board.*

**How does the Historic Preservation Commission evaluate my petition?**

Due to the diversity of project types, building details, and historical information to be considered, each petition is evaluated on a case-by-case basis using all applicable standards and criteria to determine whether a proposed alteration is appropriate to a specific property.

Each property in the district is documented with one or more professionally prepared Historic Resource Inventory forms, which detail the property's architectural and historical significance, and which serves as a basis for the HPC's evaluation of your proposal. A copy of the inventory form may be provided to you upon request.

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According to Chapter 184 of the Code of the Village of Lancaster, the HPC shall not consider changes to interior spaces, unless they are open to the public, or to architectural features that are not visible from a public street or alley. The HPC's decision shall be based on the following principles:

- Properties which contribute to the character of the historic district shall be retained, with their historic features altered as little as possible.
- Any alteration of existing properties shall be compatible with its historic character, as well as with the surrounding district.
- New construction shall be compatible with the district in which it is located.

In applying the principle of capability, the HPC shall consider the following factors:

- The general design, character and appropriateness to the property of the proposed alteration or new construction.
- The scale of proposed alteration or new construction in relation to the property itself, surrounding properties and the neighborhood.
- Texture, materials and color and their relation to similar features of other properties in the neighborhood.
- Visual compatibility with surrounding properties, including proportion of the property's front façade, proportion and arrangement of windows and other openings within the façade, roof shape and the rhythm of spacing of properties on streets, including setback.
- The importance of historic, architectural or other features to the significance of the property.

Other sections of the Code may also be applicable.

Furthermore, reference will be made to the United States Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation*, which pertain to historic buildings of all materials, construction types, sizes, and occupancy and encompass the exterior and the interior, related landscape features and the building's site and environment as well as attached, adjacent, or related new construction. The Standards are to be applied to specific rehabilitation projects in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility.

- A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
- The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
- Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.

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- Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
- Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
- Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical or pictorial evidence.
- Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage of historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
- Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
- New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
- New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

**When will I find out if my CoA has been approved?**

Following your hearing, or within 30 days of submission of your petition, the HPC will rule on your petition. Your petition may be approved as presented, approved with conditions (specific modifications or requirements that must be met in order for your proposed alterations to be appropriate and eligible for a CoA), tabled to a later meeting (usually pending more information) or denied.

You will also receive written notification of the ruling by mail. Copies of your ruling will be sent to the property owner (if the applicant is someone other than the owner) and the Building Department. If your petition is modified or denied, your notification letter will include an explanation.

**Does my CoA expire?**

The effective term of a CoA shall be limited to one (1) year from the date of issuance. Thereafter, an application for a CoA must be renewed.