

Q: *Where can property owners get help when applying for a COA?*

A: The Historic Preservation Planner at the Athens-Clarke County Planning Department is your first contact for technical assistance with designated properties. The Planner's job is to help residents develop appropriate plans for designated properties and to guide COA applications through the approval process.



Athens is known as the **Classic City** for a good reason: it is rich in cultural history. Many structures in Athens are fine examples of significant architectural styles. Many have played an important role in the history and development of Georgia. The government of Athens-Clarke County protects a number of these structures through **local designation**. Individual structures may be designated as **local historic landmarks**. Groups of properties, such as neighborhoods or commercial districts, may be designated as **local historic districts**.



A Real tor's Question & Answer Guide to:

Athens-Clarke County

Local Historic Districts & Landmarks

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For More Information Contact:

- .. **Athens-Clarke County
Planning Department**
120 West Dougherty Street
Athens, Georgia 30601
Tel.: (706) 613-3515
- .. **Athens-Clarke County
Building Inspections & Permits Dept.**
120 West Dougherty Street
Athens, Georgia 30601
Tel.: (706) 613-3520
- .. **Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation**
489 Prince Avenue
Athens, Georgia 30601
Tel.: (706) 353-1801

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Q: *Where are the locally designated historic districts in Athens?*

A: Areas known as Bloomfield, Boulevard, Cobbham, Dearing Street, Henderson Avenue, Rock Springs, West Cloverhurst/ Springdale and Woodlawn Avenue are the eight historic districts currently designated in Athens. Please verify whether a property is locally designated by contacting the Athens-Clarke County Planning Department. Historic District maps with address ranges are available.

Q: *Is National Register listing the same as being locally designated?*

A: No. The National Register is an official list of historic properties in the United States, which provides limited protection from the adverse effects of Federally regulated projects. Locally designated properties are protected on the local level through a design review process.

A REALTOR'S GUIDE TO LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICTS & LANDMARKS

Q: *How are properties locally designated?*

A: Under the Athens-Clarke County Historic Preservation Ordinance,* the Mayor and Commission are authorized to protect historically significant structures and districts through local designation. Through a public hearing process, the Historic Preservation Commission surveys, studies, and recommends properties for local designation to the Mayor and Commission. The Mayor and Commission make the final decision to designate landmarks and districts. Designation is the way local governments protect historically significant structures and districts.

*Chapter 8-5 of the Athens-Clarke County Code (adopted 1986 and amended 1992)

Q: *Can alterations be made to locally designated properties?*

A: Yes! Local designation does, however, require that the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) review and approve **exterior** changes to designated properties. Local designation does not prevent updating or refurbishing properties to suit modern needs; it simply ensures that such changes are historically appropriate. For more information about the design review process, contact the Historic Preservation Planner at the Athens-Clarke County (A-CC) Planning Department at (706) 613-3515.

Q: *What is the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) and who serves on it?*

A: The Athens-Clarke County (A-CC) Historic Preservation Commission functions as the official local steward of Historic Preservation in Athens. The Mayor and Commission appoint HPC members, who are all residents of Athens-Clarke County with special education, experience, and/or interest in historic preservation. Their duties include making recommendations for local designations, as well as reviewing plans for exterior changes to designated properties to ensure that they meet the A-CC Design Guidelines. The Historic Preservation Planner at the Planning Department serves as Staff to the Historic Preservation Commission. Copies of the A-CC Design Guidelines are available from the Planning Department.

Q: *What kinds of changes are regulated?*

A: **Exterior** changes only, such as demolition, additions, fences, signs, and other work that alters the property, must be reviewed and receive a *Certificate of Appropriateness* (COA). Repairs considered to be routine maintenance (such as painting or replacing deteriorated material with the same material) are not reviewed. Contact the A-CC Planning Department to determine whether your work will require a COA. Contact the Building Inspections & Permits Department for information on building permit requirements.

Q: *Are there any advantages to local designation?*

A: Yes! Property values tend to be higher for both landmark and historic district properties. Preservation through local designation helps revitalize communities, creates jobs, attracts tourists and has had a positive effect on the Athens economy.*

*For more information ask to see the National Trust for Historic Preservation Study based in Athens (1999).

Do you have questions about making changes to a designated Property?

Contact the Athens-Clarke County Planning Department at 706-613-3515.

Q: *What about tax breaks for historic properties?*

A: Some properties do qualify for tax incentives. If a historic property is locally designated and on the National Register, it may qualify for a property tax freeze of approximately nine years, through a local program. Through State and Federal programs, tax incentives are available for some historic properties undergoing substantial rehabilitative work. For more information on historic property tax incentives, contact the A-CC Planning Dept. (706-613-3515) and the Georgia Dept. of Natural Resources (404-651-5287).