

Historic Preservation Review in Cleveland Park

A Procedural Guide for Homeowners, Architects, and Real Estate Agents

THE CLEVELAND PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY WWW.CLEVELANDPARKHISTORICALSOCIETY.ORG

The Cleveland Park Historic District is governed by the District of Columbia's 1978 Historic Landmark and Historic District Protection Act. (See a high-resolution map of the Cleveland Park Historic District and read more about its history at clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org/historic-district.) As in all of the 56 historic districts in DC, building projects in the Cleveland Park historic district are reviewed for their effect on the historic fabric and character of buildings, landscapes, the immediate historic context, and the historic district as a whole.

The DC Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) and its staff in the DC Historic Preservation Office (HPO) have the authority under the law to review alterations to historic properties.

HPRB and HPO seek input from ANCs and from neighborhood historic preservation organizations. In Cleveland Park, the groups that provide input to the city on preservation matters are **Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3C** and **the Cleveland Park Historical Society's Architectural Review Committee (ARC)**.

This guide explains how preservation review works in Cleveland Park at the city and neighborhood levels. The process can sound complex, especially because there are a lot of acronyms, but the bodies that conduct preservation review aim to help owners and architects move their projects expeditiously through the review process and arrive at design solutions that allow owners to adapt their homes for modern living while preserving their historic character.

Contacts and Websites

Here is the contact information for everyone involved in preservation review in Cleveland Park at the city and neighborhood level. The roles of these organizations are explained on the next page.

DC Historic Preservation Office (HPO) and Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB)

HPO: (202) 442-8800, historic.preservation@dc.gov; website: planning.dc.gov/page/historic-preservation-office

HPRB website (meeting calendar, agendas, reports): planning.dc.gov/page/historic-preservation-review-board

ANC3C (website: anc3c.org)

Nancy MacWood, ANC3C-SMD09: nmacwood@gmail.com, (202) 966-5333

Emma Hersh, ANC3C-SMD05: 3C05@anc.dc.gov, (301) 651-4329

Cleveland Park Historical Society (for all ARC matters and questions about neighborhood history)

Carin Ruff, Executive Director: staff@clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org (preferred) or (202) 780-9660

CPHS website: www.clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org

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Who conducts preservation review?

A guide to the parties and their abbreviations

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CITY-LEVEL GOVERNMENT BODIES

HPRB, the DC Historic Preservation Review Board

DC's historic preservation law gives HPRB the authority to review projects affecting historic district properties and historic landmarks, as well as to designate new historic districts and landmarks. HPRB reviews larger projects and nominations at its monthly meeting and delegates review of smaller projects to the staff of the DC Historic Preservation Office.

HPO, the DC Historic Preservation Office

The District of Columbia Historic Preservation Office is a division of the DC Office of Planning. HPO staff serve as staff to HPRB, conducting preliminary review of projects and approving many smaller projects under authority delegated to them by HPRB. HPO assigns a staff person to each historic district, and that person is responsible for reviewing projects and advising owners and architects in that district.

NEIGHBORHOOD-LEVEL BODIES

The ARC, The Cleveland Park Historical Society's Architectural Review Committee

The ARC reviews projects in the Cleveland Park historic district for their preservation impact, and has done so since the creation of the historic district thirty years ago. The ARC makes recommendations to HPO and to HPRB. Those recommendations are advisory.

Current members of the ARC are Win Brown, Phil Eagleburger (co-chair), Ana Evans, Christine Hobbs (co-chair), Stefan Hurray, Danny Ince, David Kay, Tina Mead, Ron Ngiam, Lois Orr, and Anne Weir.

ANC3C, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3C

ANC3C reviews projects involving preservation, zoning, public space, and related matters, and makes recommendations on them to HPO staff and to HPRB. DC government agencies are required to give "great weight" to ANC recommendations. Like the ARC's opinions, these recommendations are advisory.

Note: ANC3C is bigger than the Cleveland Park historic district and has a mandate that includes much more than preservation, so it reviews many projects not reviewed by the other bodies named here.

A small portion of the Cleveland Park Historic District—from Sedgwick to Tilden east of Reno Road—falls in ANC3F, which does not normally conduct preservation review.

What projects require what level of review?

Projects in historic districts that require a DC permit also require preservation review.

The District of Columbia's authority to conduct historic preservation review depends on its permitting authority. Therefore, only projects requiring a DC permit require preservation review.

Many projects do not require review at all!

Ordinary repair and maintenance do NOT need preservation review, nor do gutters, downspouts, or storm and screen windows. (However, replacement of windows, doors, roofs, or other architectural elements *does* require review.) Painting does NOT require review, unless you have a landmark with unpainted masonry that has never been painted. The historic preservation law has NO authority over what you do to the interior of your house, except in the very rare case of a landmarked interior. If your project affects only the building interior, you will need the appropriate DC permits, but preservation review will not be necessary.

Smaller alterations to your property can be reviewed by HPO staff without neighborhood review and without going to HPRB.

Citywide, over 90% of projects are handled at the staff level at HPO.

Larger projects require review by HPRB and neighborhood groups (ANC3C and ARC).

An overview of the process for full review follows below.

For details about HPO staff review and HPRB review, visit <https://planning.dc.gov/node/1180411>.

What is the process? Where do I start?

1. The first step is *always* to contact HPO staff.

Contact information is on p. 1 of this brochure. Describe your project. HPO staff will tell you what level of review your project requires and help with the application process. They will work with you on developing your project so it meets historic preservation requirements.

2. If HPO staff say that your project needs HPRB and neighborhood review, then contact the ARC and ANC3C.

Contact information is on p. 1 of this brochure.

3. The ARC and ANC3C will review the project in advance of the monthly HPRB meeting.

If your project needs full review, you will present it to the ANC's preservation & zoning (P&Z) committee on the first Monday of the month and meet with the ARC on the second Monday of the month. The case may be discussed at the ANC public meeting the third Monday of the month, or it may go on the ANC's consent calendar. The ARC and the ANC both submit recommendations to HPO staff before the staff write the report on each case for HPRB.

Presenting your project to the ARC

When and where does the ARC meet?

The ARC meets the second Monday of every month except August at 7:30 pm at the Cleveland Park Congregational Church, 3400 Lowell Street, NW. See the meeting calendar and agendas at www.clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org.

Who should attend ARC meetings?

Homeowners are welcome to attend the meetings where their projects are discussed, but **we strongly encourage you to have your architect present the case**. The committee will want to discuss aspects of the plans to which a design professional can most readily respond, and if there are changes to be made, it will be easier if the project architect hears them directly.

What should applicants bring to the meeting?

Please send plans no later than the Friday before the meeting by email to staff@clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org, and then **bring EIGHT 11" x 17" hard-copy sets of your plans with you to the meeting**.

Presentation packets **MUST** include:

- Existing and proposed plans and elevations of the entire house. Proposed elevations should have “cast shadows” or be otherwise rendered to convey three dimensions. Several three-dimensional views of the existing and proposed states are strongly encouraged.
- A site plan that makes it clear how the existing and proposed structures relate to the lot and property lines, and a map showing the relationship of the property to the footprints of nearby buildings.
- Photographs of the house and surrounding context, including photos that demonstrate how any proposed addition will or will not be visible from public space.

In short, the ARC welcomes anything that will help committee members visualize the project in its entirety and its effects on its setting and the neighboring properties. See a sample presentation at clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org/historic-district/preservation-design-review.

What happens at an ARC meeting?

The committee members sit around a table with the applicants and hear a brief presentation of the plans from the architect. The ARC includes both architects and laypeople, so the explanation of the plans should be pitched accordingly.

ARC members may have questions about the plans and may discuss alternatives. They will want to hear about any feedback the applicant has already received from HPO staff, the ANC preservation committee, and neighbors.

Following the presentation and discussion, after all cases have been heard, the ARC goes into closed session to discuss its report. Within 2-3 days following the meeting, the ARC sends its recommendation to the applicants, the ANC, and HPO staff for inclusion in the materials the staff sends to HRPB.

How can neighbors comment on projects?

Under new HPRB regulations (2017), the DC Historic Preservation Office will notify adjoining and facing neighbors about any project submitted for HPRB review, and will provide copies of the submitted plans to the neighbors upon request. Applicants must also post signs at the project address according to HPRB regulations about the pending HPRB application. (Applicants will receive instructions from HPO about this.) Neighbors are welcome to contact us (staff@clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org) with any questions about proposed projects near them and to find out when the ARC will be reviewing the project.

Neighbors are welcome to attend the ARC meeting to hear the plan presentation, ask questions or give feedback, and are also encouraged to send written comments to staff@clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org either before or after the meeting for inclusion in the materials that the ARC forwards to HPO staff. The ARC will report to HPO staff on any neighbor comments it receives and will forward any letters from neighbors along with its own report.

Neighbors may also testify at the monthly ANC meeting and the monthly HPRB meeting. Read more about the public input process at planning.dc.gov/page/historic-preservation-review-board.

Note that the ARC's mandate is to consider **matters directly related to historic fabric, design, and landscapes**. Many matters of concern to neighbors—for instance, traffic, parking, noise, and land use zoning issues—are better taken up at the ANC.

Where to find design guidelines

The Cleveland Park Historical Society is in the process of drafting Cleveland Park-specific design guidelines. Until those are complete and formally adopted by HPO, please consult HPO's general design guidelines for DC historic districts here: planning.dc.gov/page/design-guidelines

Special circumstances: Conservation Easements, Shipstead-Luce

A small number of properties in the Cleveland Park historic district have additional restrictions on them that are outside the jurisdiction of DC's local historic preservation law.

Conservation easements

If your house has a conservation easement on it held by the L'Enfant Trust or another easement holder, you must contact the easement holder **first** to discuss any planned alterations. Easement holders generally have stricter requirements than what is required by DC's preservation law. If you have an easement, there should be a plaque on your house (not the CPHS date plaque, but one with the easement holder's seal) and the easement should have been disclosed at purchase. The DC Historic Preservation Office keeps a current list of properties with easements, so check with them if in doubt: 202-442-7600.

Shipstead-Luce

The Shipstead-Luce Act, a 1930 federal law, places properties that abut Rock Creek Park under the design review authority of the federal Commission of Fine Arts (CFA). HPO staff will let you know if your property falls under Shipstead-Luce and will help coordinate review. The CFA has information on review for Shipstead-Luce properties at www.cfa.gov/project-review/shipstead-luce.