Planning & Urban Design Department

# Understanding the Role of the

# Historic Resources Commission

The Historic Resources Commission (HRC) of Asheville & Buncombe County was created in 1979 through a local ordinance adopted by both the City of Asheville & Buncombe County pursuant to the North Carolina General Statutes. The HRC has also been certified by the State Historic Preservation Office with the concurrence of the National Park Service to carry out the purpose of the National Historic Preservation Act at the local government level.

The Commission serves the community in a number of ways. The HRC is responsible for the evaluation of historically significant neighborhoods and individual sites and recommends their designation as local historic districts or local landmarks to the City Council or County Board of Commissioners. The HRC also administers design review of new construction or rehabilitation within these locally designated areas. The HRC also serves as a community resource for information on architectural history and preservation practice.

The Commission is dedicated to the important contribution that preservation plays in sound planning and environmental sustainability. In addition to the obvious benefits of preserving our community's heritage and sense of place, historic preservation is also inherently sustainable. For example historic structures can easily be adapted for new uses and retrofitted with modern efficient energy systems. This leads to maximization of existing infrastructure, saving energy embodied in existing structures, reduction in the consumption of new materials, and saving energy through avoiding demolition, as well as reducing material that would otherwise enter into the waste stream.

All properties located within the designated historic districts (Biltmore Village, Albemarle Park, Montford and St. Dunstan's) or designated as a landmark must receive a Certificate of Appropriateness before any renovation or change is made to the exterior of the building or on the grounds of the property. Applications are reviewed at two levels, Major Works and Minor Works. The Commission will hear all Major Work applications at the regularly scheduled public meeting. Minor work applications are reviewed at staff level.

**Membership**
The Commission consists of 12 members: six appointed by City Council and six appointed by the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners. All members have equal voting rights and serve 3-year terms. No member may serve more than two terms. Officers of the Commission are elected among themselves.

**Application Process**
Applications for Minor Works are accepted at the Development Services Center, 161 S. Charlotte Street, Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

All Major Work applications are reviewed by the Commission in a public hearing. Application deadlines are typically three weeks before the Commission meeting. Applications must be complete with all information requested as outlined on the checklists before the project review can begin.

Contact HRC staff to discuss your project and determine the level of project review and required information for your application.

**Meetings**
Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month on the first floor of City Hall at 4 PM. Property owners within 200 feet of the property requesting the Certificate of Appropriateness will be notified by mail with information on the request and the pubic hearing date and time.

**Applications That the Commission May Hear**
Major Work applications include:

- New construction or additions
- Demolition or relocation of structures
- Changes to major character defining features such as roofs, windows or doors
- Replacement of architectural detail involving a change in the design or original materials

**Contact Information**
For applications, deadlines and agenda information, visit

**www.ashevillenc.gov/hrc**

Stacy Merten, Director
828-259-5836, email: smerten@ashevillenc.gov

Alex Cole, Historic Resources Specialist
828-259-5638, email: acole@ashevillenc.gov