FAQ:
How does the Zoning Code encourage development of Historically Designated properties?

Background:
The zoning code includes multiple provisions that encourage the development of Historically Designated properties. These provisions were added to the zoning code as a result of the recommendations of the Historic Preservation Task Force.

Answer:
There are three sections of the code where special allowances are given to Historically Designated properties. These allowances are outlined below:

1. Use Standards:

   Typically, the uses that are permitted on a property are based on the base zoning district and overlay districts that cover the property. However, section 14-602(8) provides additional use allowances within any building or structure that has been designated as historic; or that is located in a district that has been designated as historic and that contributes, in the Historical Commission's opinion, to the character of such district. Additionally, the building or structure must also be located in certain zoning districts (Residential district or a CMX-1, CMX-2, or CMX-2.5 district) and must have a documented current or former principal use that could be categorized under one of the following use categories and that a minimum gross floor area of 2,500 sq. ft. is currently or was formerly used for such use:

   a) Public, Civic, and Institutional Use Category;  
   b) Office Use Category;  
   c) Retail Sales Use Category;  
   d) Commercial Service Use Category;  
   e) Wholesale, Distribution, and Storage Use Category; or  
   f) Industrial Use Category.

   If an applicant is seeking to take advantage of this code provision, an application should be submitted to L&I for review. The application should indicate that they are seeking to utilize the provisions of section 14-602(8). L&I, during the review, will contact the Historical Commission to confirm compliance with the provisions of the code section. The Historical Commission will provide to L&I a description of the property and the uses that have occupied the property. L&I will make the determination if the previous uses of the property make it eligible for the exception.

2. Accessory Dwelling Units:

   Section 14-604(11)(d).1 indicates that Accessory Dwelling Units are permitted within any building or structure that has been designated as historic; or that is located in a district that has been designated as historic and that contributes, in the Historical Commission's opinion, to the character of such district.
If an applicant is seeking to take advantage of this code provision, an application should be submitted to L&I for review. The application should indicate that they are seeking to utilize the provisions of section 14-604(11)(d)(1). L&I, during the review, will contact the Historical Commission to confirm compliance with the provisions of the code section.

3. **Parking Requirements:**

Section 14-801(2)(b)(1) provides parking exception for changes of use to any portion of a building or structure that has been designated as historic; or that is located in a district that has been designated as historic and that contributes, in the Historical Commission's opinion, to the character of such district.

If an applicant is seeking to take advantage of this code provision, an application should be submitted to L&I for review. The application should indicate that they are seeking to utilize the provisions of section 14-801(2)(b)(1). L&I, during the review, will contact the Historical Commission to confirm compliance with the provisions of the code section.

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**Questions?**

Call 311 or (215) 686-8686 (if outside Philadelphia) or submit a permit-related question online via [https://form.jotform.com/81494420572154](https://form.jotform.com/81494420572154).

**Disclaimer:**

This interpretation, policy or code application is intended to provide guidance to staff for consistency of review and is subject to change without notice. Application of this interpretation, policy or code application to specific projects may vary. There may be other ways to comply with the Code. If so, you are not required to use this method. You may want to investigate other options or consult with a professional identifying an equally code compliant solution.