



Design Review Process

HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE (HDRC). The HDRC is a commission comprised of qualified citizens appointed by the City Council for a term of four years. The purpose of the HDRC is to ensure that building and development projects comply with adopted Land Use Code (LUC) standards, are of high aesthetic and functional quality, and are compatible with the surrounding community. The HDRC has the authority to approve applications and make recommendations to the Planning Commission and City Council.

Here's where you can find more information about the HDRC:

<http://www.cityofarcata.org/government/commissions/historic-design-review-commission>.

To find more information about Arcata Land Use Code that governs the HDRC, go to

<http://www.codepublishing.com/ca/arcata/>. Information about the HDRC is found in section §9.72.040.

What you need to know about making an application to the HDRC:

1. The HDRC meets twice per month.
2. An application, supporting information, and fees are submitted and must be reviewed before a project can be scheduled for an HDRC meeting. HDRC agendas are scheduled up to three weeks in advance – plan to submit your information early as additional information may be needed.
3. Applications fall into one of three categories of Historic and Design Review.
 - a. **Type A:** Only the HDRC needs to approve or disapprove the application.
 - b. **Type B:** The Planning Commission and/or City Council need to approve or disapprove an application, and the HDRC provides its recommendation(s) to the approving body. Examples of these projects are planned developments, use permits, and subdivisions.
 - c. **Type C:** The application is a request to modify site standards, and can be heard at a noticed HDRC hearing. The Zoning Administrator determines whether Design Review permit may be reviewed in lieu of a Minor Use permit.

How the process works:

1. Submit a Planning Application and the HDRC Application Checklist with the information required on the checklist, along with fees. See the next page to determine whether you will need the Large Project Checklist. ***We always recommend discussing your project with a Planner before making an application. This will give you a head start on providing as much necessary information as possible from the beginning of the process.***
2. A Planner will review the project and, if additional information is needed, will contact you (or your designated agent) by email or phone. ***Make sure you designate the primary contact on the Planning Application.***
3. Staff will perform an environmental review to determine whether the project is subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). You will be notified by a Planner if additional CEQA environmental review and an initial study must be prepared.
4. Planners may refer your project to:
 - a. Other City departments for their assessment (for example, Public Works may need to review how a project might affect existing traffic flow, or if sidewalk repairs are needed). It's possible that other fees will be required.
 - b. Outside agencies, such as the Historic Sites Society of Arcata or the Northwest Information Center.

Please note that referrals and noticing add additional processing time to applications.

City of Arcata · Community Development Department

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5. Noticing: When the application is ready to go to HDRC it will be posted on the HDRC Agenda at least 72 hours before the meeting. Additional noticing is required for projects in historic districts, Neighborhood Conservation Areas, and historic structures (refer to the Land Use Code §9.72.040.G for more information). Type B and Type C projects require a minimum 10-day noticing and noticing fees.
6. HDRC Meetings:
 - a. HDRC meetings are held on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month at 4:00 pm in the City Council Chamber.
 - b. You will receive an Agenda several days before the meeting. *You or your representative should attend the meeting – the HDRC may defer a decision if no one is present to discuss the project.*
 - c. For Type A and Type C projects, the HDRC may approve or disapprove the site or building design as submitted; or suggest alterations, changes or modifications.
 - d. For Type B projects (planned developments, use permits, and subdivisions) the HDRC determines what recommendation(s) they will make to the approving body.
7. Conditions of Approval are conditions that the HDRC imposes to ensure the project complies with the LUC and Municipal Code.
8. Once your HDRC permit is approved, you have 24 months before it expires (unless the Conditions of Approval or LUC impose a different time limit). An extension may be requested prior to the expiration date.

What if your project is not approved? You can file an appeal *within 10 working days of the decision*. Note that additional fees are required.

- HDRC actions are appealable to the Planning Commission.
- Planning Commission actions are appealable to the City Council.

What you need to submit your project to the HDRC:

1. Planning Application, which includes:
 - a. Historic and Design Review Checklist
Use the LARGE PROJECT CHECKLIST if you have:
 - 3 stories or more
 - 5 or more dwelling units
 - A property with an Historic designation
 - b. Plot Plan Checklist
2. Any additional information requested by the Planner after your application is made.