

6.4. HISTORIC DISTRICTS

- A. **Purpose and Intent.** In compliance with N.C.G.S. § 160D, Article 9, Part 4, the purpose of Monroe’s historic district(s) is to maintain the historic integrity of certain areas within the City of Monroe (“City”) and to:
1. Promote the sound and orderly restoration, preservation, rehabilitation, and conservation of historic properties and areas;
 2. Increase and stabilize property values of property within the City and strengthen the overall economy;
 3. Protect, safeguard and conserve the heritage of the City;
 4. Promote and preserve any individual property or area that embodies important elements of the City’s social, economic, political or architectural history for the education, pleasure and enrichment of citizens;
 5. Ensure compliance with the standards defined in the *South Monroe Historic District Design* document; and
 6. Contribute to the enrichment of the culture and welfare of the City.
- B. **Applicability.** Before the designation of any historic district, compliance with all provisions of Chapter 152, Historic Properties of the City’s Code of Ordinances, and this Section shall occur.
1. **Local Report.** A local report, prepared by the *Historic District Commission* (HDC) (refer to Section 3.3.5: Historic District Commission) shall be prepared detailing the following items:
 - a. The proposed boundaries of a proposed or amended historic district.
 - b. The significance of the buildings, structures, features, sites or surroundings included in any proposed or amended district.
 - c. Consistent with N.C.G.S. § 160D-944, any historic district proposed shall only consist of areas deemed of special significance in terms of their history, architecture, or culture and to possess integrity of design, setting, materials, feeling, and association.
 2. **Local Report Recommendations.** The HDC shall forward its local report and recommendations to the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources (NCDRCR) for review and comment. The NCDRCR, acting through the State Historic Preservation Officer or designee, shall complete an analysis of, and recommendation concerning the proposed historic district, and shall submit its

recommendation to the City Council. Failure of the NCDRC to submit its recommendations to the City Council within 30 calendar days after receipt of a written request for such from the City shall relieve the City Council of any responsibility to await the recommendation.

3. **Planning Board.** Prior to action by the City Council, the Planning Board shall review the recommendations of the HDC and the NCDRC and forward its comments and recommendation to the City Council.
 4. **City Council.** After receiving the comments and recommendations of the HDC, NCDRC, and Planning Board, the City Council shall provide a decision as to the initiation of an application for a zoning map amendment, consistent with Section 3.4.6: Zoning Map Amendment, to classify land as a local historic district.
- C. **Historic Districts.** The historic districts existing in the City are enumerated and defined below:
1. **South Monroe Historic District.** The South Monroe Historic District extends west, south, and southeast of downtown and its area is defined in the *South Monroe Historic District Design* document, and on the City's Official Zoning Map.
- D. **Certificate of Appropriateness (COA).** A Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) shall be required when applicable in accordance with Section 3.4.12: Certificate of Appropriateness, whether a building permit is required or not. All requests for a COA shall be in compliance with N.C.G.S. § 160D -947. No exterior portion of any building or structure (including walls, fences, light fixtures, steps, pavement or other appurtenant features) may be erected, altered, restored, moved or demolished without approval of a COA by the HDC.
1. **Minor Work.** When inside a historic district, the HDC shall have the authority to delegate to the Planning Director (or designee) review authority of certain types of Minor Works. Minor work is defined as those exterior changes that do not involve substantial alterations, additions or removals that could impair the integrity of the property (or the district as a whole). The minor works shall be limited to those listed in the Monroe Historic District's design standards. The Planning Director shall review minor works in accordance with Section 3.4.13: Certificate of Appropriateness (Minor Works).
 2. **Quasi-judicial Decisions.** Other than these administrative decisions on minor works, decisions on COAs are quasi-judicial and shall follow the procedures of

N.C.G.S. § 160D -406.

E. Design Standards.

1. **Standards.** In accordance with N.C.G.S. § 160D-947, the HDC shall adopt detailed architectural and design standards for all designated historic districts and designated properties. These standards shall take into account the historic and architectural significance and historic elements of properties and of structures unique to the district, and shall guide the commission in determining congruity with the special character of the historic district for new construction, alterations, additions, moving, and demolition. In reviewing a COA, the exterior form and appearance of any proposed addition or modification to the historic property or structure within the district shall be in accordance with the adopted standards. The standards are defined in *South Monroe Historic District Design* document.
2. **Contents.** The *South Monroe Historic District Design* standards give consideration to various development standards, including standards on:
 - a. Site features and plants;
 - b. Public rights of way;
 - c. Fences and walls;
 - d. Walkways, driveways and off-street parking;
 - e. Exterior lighting;
 - f. Signage;
 - g. Garages and Accessory structures;
 - h. Cemeteries
 - i. Building exteriors and materials;
 - j. Exterior Walls;
 - k. Windows and doors;
 - l. Roofs;
 - m. Porches, entrances, patios, decks and balconies;
 - n. Sustainability, utilities and energy retrofit;
 - o. Accessibility, health and safety considerations;
 - p. Additions and new construction; and
 - q. Relocation and demolition

F. Zoning and Uses. Historic districts may contain several zoning classifications and uses.

Uses of land within a historic district shall be subject to the underlying zoning district requirements in accordance with Section 7.1: Tables of Permissible Uses.

- G. **Maintenance and Repair.** Nothing in this Section shall be construed to prevent the maintenance or repair, voluntary or as required by the Building Inspection Division due to unsafe conditions, of any exterior architectural feature in a historic district which does not involve a substantial change in design, material or outer appearance.

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