



<h2 style="text-align: center;">Conservation Overlay Districts</h2>	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Landmark Historic Districts</h2>
<p>Purpose</p> <p>A conservation overlay district is a way to conserve or revitalize specific areas that have distinctive features, identity, or character worthy of retention and enhancement. A conservation overlay district takes effect through adoption of area-specific zoning standards that facilitate maintenance and protection of the area’s character, and are also applicable to the development of vacant or underused lots. Buildings with a conservation overlay must meet the overlay’s zoning standards as part of any exterior remodel, addition or new-build. The overlay may also be used to establish design guidelines that are more detailed than the standards of the Denver Zoning Code.</p>	<p>Purpose</p> <p>Historic designation was established as part of the 1967 city ordinance (Chapter 30 of the Denver Revised Municipal Code) to help preserve the historic character of Denver. The purpose is to protect and perpetuate the structures and districts that reflect the outstanding elements of the city’s cultural, artistic, social, economic, political, architectural, and historic heritage. While the historic character of buildings designated as historic should be preserved, alterations and additions are allowable through the design review process.</p>
<p>Process to Establish a Conservation Overlay</p> <p>Who</p> <p>Typically, a Denver City Council member initiates a request to establish a conservation overlay; a city agency or department may also request one. A private individual or group cannot initiate a conservation overlay.</p> <p>How</p> <p>A conservation overlay is both a text amendment to the Denver Zoning Code to create the overlay zone district, and a map amendment to the zoning map to apply the district to a geographic area. The public process ending in City Council adoption is typically six months, though most conservation overlays result from more than a year of planning, neighborhood meetings, and community feedback before the public adoption process begins. Typical steps include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-application meeting • Community outreach • Submission of a formal request for the conservation overlay • Staff drafting, review, and analysis 	<p>Process to Designate a Historic District</p> <p>Who</p> <p>Designation applications may be initiated by property owner(s), the manager of Denver Community Planning and Development, member(s) of Denver City Council, or three persons who are either residents, property owners, or have a place of business in Denver.</p> <p>How</p> <p>The formal process to apply for district designation is typically four months, though most involve more than a year of researching and writing, as well as neighborhood outreach, before the public designation process begins. Typical steps include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-application meeting • Community outreach • Submission of a complete designation application, including applicable fee • Staff review and analysis • Landmark Preservation Commission (LPC) public hearing • Denver Planning Board review



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Board public hearing • Denver City Council Committee meeting • Denver City Council public hearing <p>Public notices to registered neighborhood organizations and city councilmembers keep stakeholders informed four times during the conservation overlay adoption process. Posted signs in the affected area provide public notice of the two public hearings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denver City Council Committee meeting • Denver City Council public hearing <p>City staff send notices to the owners of the properties proposed for designation, affected registered neighborhood organizations, city councilmembers, and key stakeholders prior to the LPC public hearing. The city also posts signs in the affected area to provide notice of the LPC public hearing.</p>
<p>Review Criteria</p> <p>A conservation overlay must meet one or both of the following criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The district contains distinctive building features, such as period of construction, style, size, scale, detailing, mass, color and material; and/or 2. The district contains distinctive site planning and natural features, such as lot platting, building lot coverage, street layout, setbacks, alleyways, sidewalks, creek beds, parks and gardens. <p>It also must (1) be consistent with the City’s adopted plans or provide for a community need that was not anticipated at the time of the adoption of city plans; (2) further the public health, safety, and general welfare; and (3) result in regulations and restrictions that are uniform for each kind of building throughout the district.</p>	<p>Review Criteria</p> <p>To be eligible for designation, a district must maintain its historic and physical integrity, meet two of the following three designation criteria – history, architecture or geography, and relate to a historic context or theme.</p>

<p>What It Does</p> <p>A conservation overlay district may allow for the modification of any of the following existing zoning standards to enhance the area’s identity and character.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limitations on permitted uses may be modified. • Building form standards applicable to new development may be modified. • New restrictions on building form and building or site design, including restrictions on building materials and architectural style, may be added. <p>All other development and design standards applicable to new development may be modified.</p>	<p>What It Does</p> <p>Properties are designated “as is” and there are no requirements to improve or restore a structure.</p> <p>Designated properties are subject to design review following the Design Guidelines for Denver Landmark Structures and Districts.</p> <p>Design review is only required for exterior changes tied to permits and does not include work on interiors, exterior paint colors, or general maintenance. Within historic districts, demolition of contributing buildings are highly discouraged.</p>
<p>What It Doesn’t Do</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A conservation overlay doesn’t change the permitted uses in the underlying zone district. • A conservation overlay doesn’t add new review procedures or review bodies (like boards or commissions). <p>A conservation overlay doesn’t prevent demolition.</p>	
<p>Review Process</p> <p>Once a conservation overlay is approved, it takes precedence over the underlying zone district. When zoning and/or building permits are requested, Development Services staff review plans for compliance with the adopted conservation overlay district zoning, and zoning inspectors ensure compliance.</p>	<p>Review Process</p> <p>Approximately 70 percent of landmark design review projects are administratively reviewed by Landmark Preservation staff. These projects must meet the design guidelines and are typically smaller projects, such as fences, garages, solar panels, or small rear additions.</p> <p>Approximately 30 percent of projects are reviewed by the Landmark Preservation Commission, an all-volunteer group of nine architects, contractors, and historians appointed by the mayor. These projects are generally larger in scope or do not meet the design guidelines. Often they are larger additions, “pop-tops,” infill, or historic window replacement.</p>

<p>Conservation Overlay District Examples</p> <p>About 2,400 properties in Denver are located in a conservation overlay district. Some examples of areas that have conservation overlays:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curtis Park has a conservation overlay that maintains and protects a historic pattern of larger detached accessory structures. • Potter Highlands has a conservation overlay that maintains and protects -foot side setbacks, shorter bulk planes with allowances for taller dormers, shorter heights for flat-roofed buildings, and the absence of rooftop decks. 	<p>Historic District Examples</p> <p>About 6,600 buildings in Denver are designated as historic – approximately 4 percent of all structures in the city. Some examples of neighborhoods that have historic districts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Lower Downtown Historic District protects and perpetuates structures that represent the founding of Denver, the development of the city, and its growth as the commercial center of the state. <p>The Curtis Park Historic District, northeast of Downtown Denver, preserves one of the city’s oldest residential neighborhoods. Curtis Park reflects the wide range of social and economic backgrounds of those that historically resided in the area, which can be seen in the diverse size and types of house in the neighborhood.</p>
<p>Conservation Overlays and Other Design Regulations</p> <p>There are other regulations in Denver that facilitate the maintenance or protection of an area’s specific features including historic landmark districts and design standards and guidelines. For additional information, visit www.denvergov.org/CPD.</p> <p>For more details on conservation overlays, see the Denver Zoning Code at www.denvergov.org/zoning.</p>	<p>Historic Designation & Other Design Regulations</p> <p>There are other regulations in Denver that facilitate the maintenance or protection of an area’s specific features including zoning conservation overlays and design standards and guidelines. For additional information, visit www.denvergov.org/CPD.</p> <p>For more details on historic designations, please see the landmark preservation designation website www.Denvergov.org/historicdesignations.</p>