

Morehead Hill Historic District Survey Results

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Morehead Hill Historic Preservation Committee:

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Table of Contents:

Morehead Hill Historic District, Historic Preservation Goal.....	1
Survey Timeline and Methodology.....	2
Questions and Responses.....	3
Appendix.....	11



Morehead Hill Historic District, Historic Preservation Goal:

(taken from page 31 of Morehead Hill Historic Preservation Plan)

<https://durhamnc.gov/DocumentCenter/View/8658>

The goal of the Morehead Hill Historic District Preservation Plan is a viable residential neighborhood with its historic heritage intact, preserved and displayed in its buildings and landscape, and a community which understands and respects that heritage. This goal addresses the physical elements of architecture in the district, but also focuses on awareness in the Durham community and in the neighborhood of our historic resources. In the Morehead Hill Historic District, the heart of this historic significance is Durham’s early economy based primarily on tobacco and clothing mills. The people long associated with these industries built their homes in the neighborhood, and Durham is fortunate to have these architectural treasures today. The goal further emphasizes the thoughtful rehabilitation of historic properties, compatible new construction, and new investment in and around the district.

In keeping with the goal to maintain a residential neighborhood, it is a goal of the Plan to limit the intrusion of commercial zoning in the neighborhood and, where possible, to down-zone properties to a lower density residential use. This goal is consistent those stated in the Southwest Central Durham Plan. It is also a goal to prevent the widening of major streets throughout the district (including Vickers, Morehead Hill Historic District Preservation Plan 32 Morehead and Lakewood Avenues and Duke Street) and to promote other traffic calming measures that maintain the traditional pedestrian orientation of the neighborhood. The addition of decorative street lighting and appropriate historic district signing is a final goal.

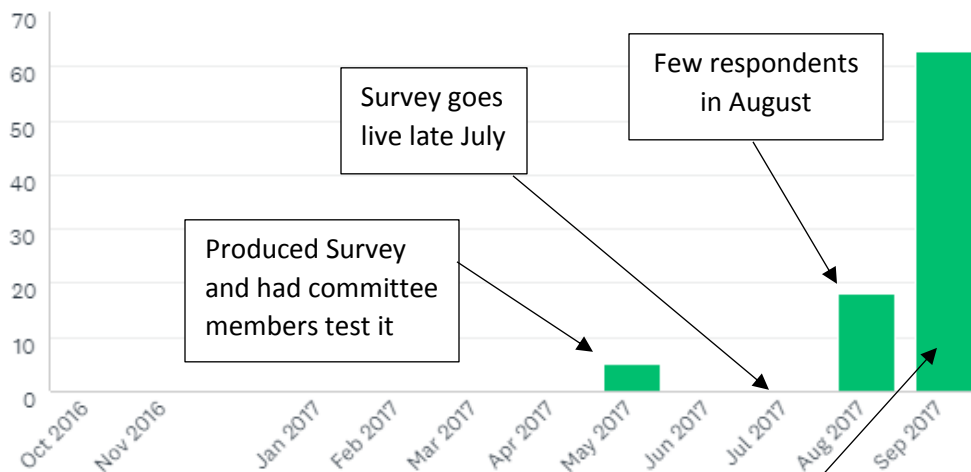
The policies to reach the goal of the Morehead Hill Historic District Preservation Plan are grouped into six categories of preservation concern: Education, Regulation, Financial Issues, Technical Assistance, and Planning Coordination. This categorization is not meant to reflect a priority; these policy areas are considered of equal importance in achieving the Plan's stated goal. Specific recommendations or actions are included for each policy as steps to be taken by the City or other actors to implement the policies of the Plan.

Survey Timeline and Methodology:

In Feb 2017, the Morehead Hill Neighborhood Historic Preservation Committee decided to gather neighbor input and understand the experiences and current sentiment of property owners relative to the benefits and burdens of National Historic District designation and the accompanying responsibilities. The survey was initially advertised on the Morehead Hill Neighborhood list serve.

Responses (by month)

First: 5/2/2017 Zoom: Oct 2016 to Sep 2017



Given the low response rate in August, we decide to incentivize participation with a chance to win a \$50 Durham Food Co-op gift certificate. The survey was advertised again on the list serve and we had much better participation during the month of Sept. Some residents were also emailed directly. The survey was not advertised via flyers or a USPS mailing.

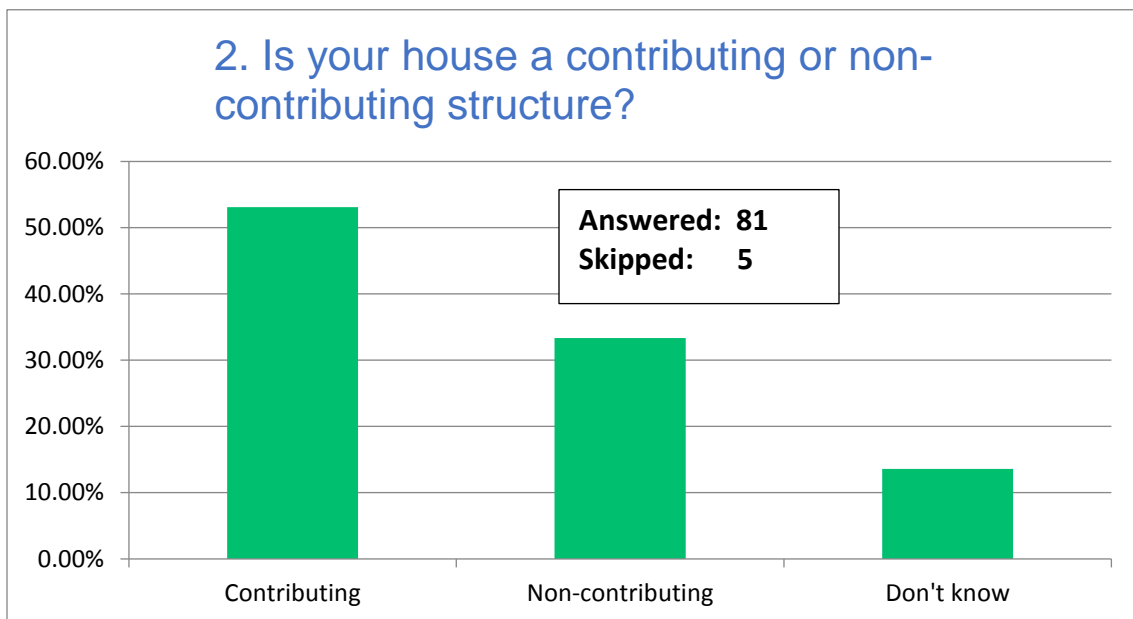
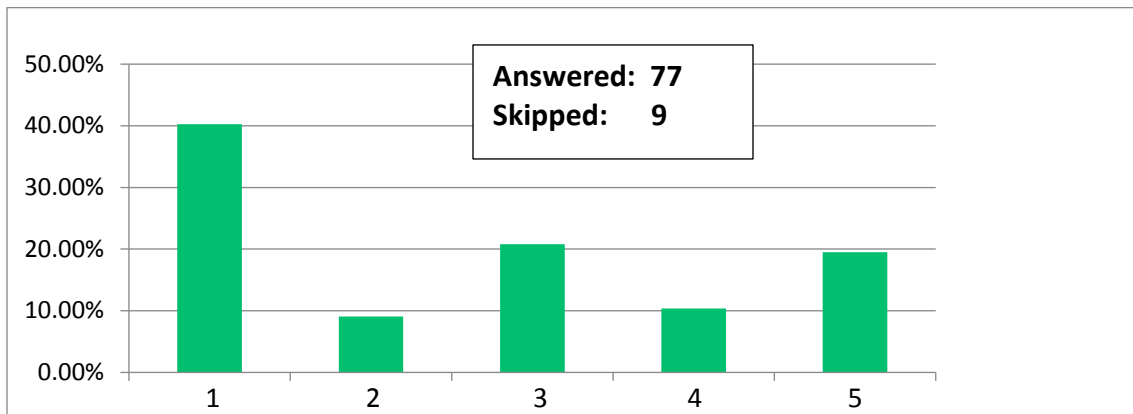
Survey was produced, distributed and results were analyzed and presented using Survey Monkey.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/>

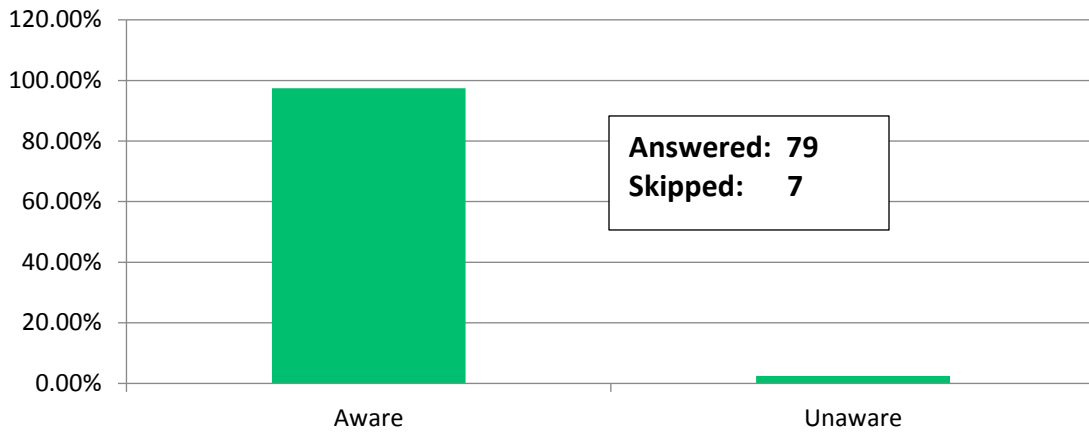
Questions and Responses:

1. When you purchased your property were you aware that it was in an Historic District? How did, or how would this information have affected your decision to purchase?

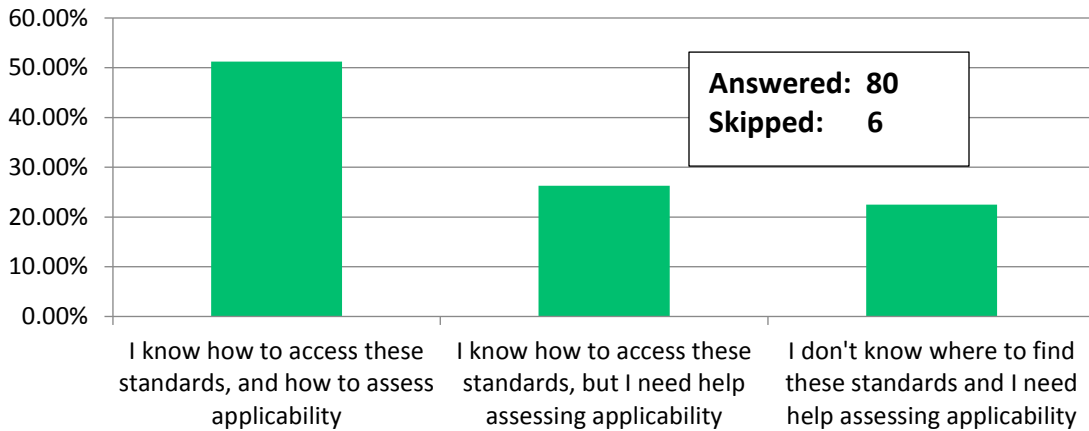
- 1.) Aware of the historic designation and this encouraged me to purchase
- 2.) Aware of the historic designation and this detracted from my eventual decision to purchase
- 3.) Unaware of the historic designation but this would have encouraged me to purchase
- 4.) Unaware of the historic designation but this would have discouraged me from purchasing
- 5.) Purchase predated formation of historic district



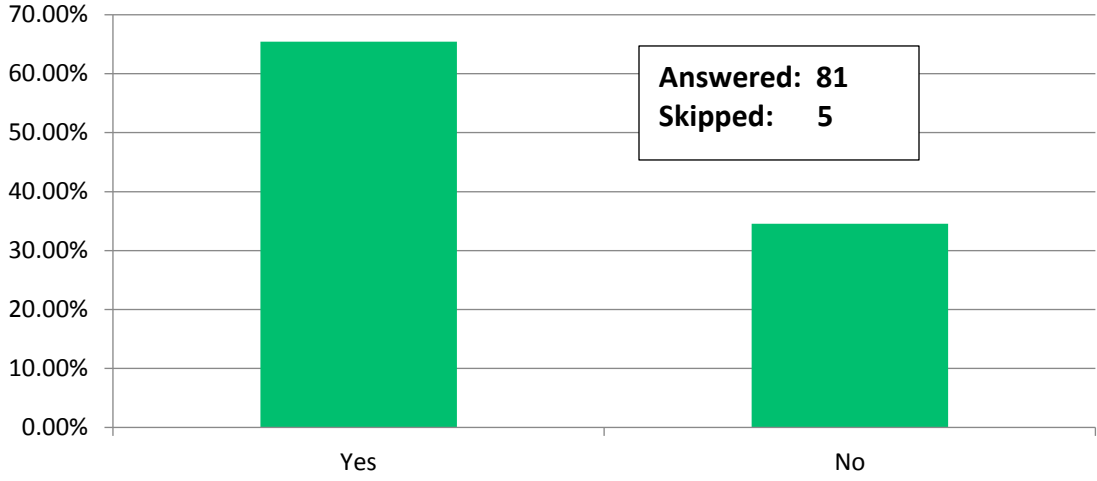
3. Are you aware that there are standards that define required maintenance and permissible modifications for structures located within the historic district.



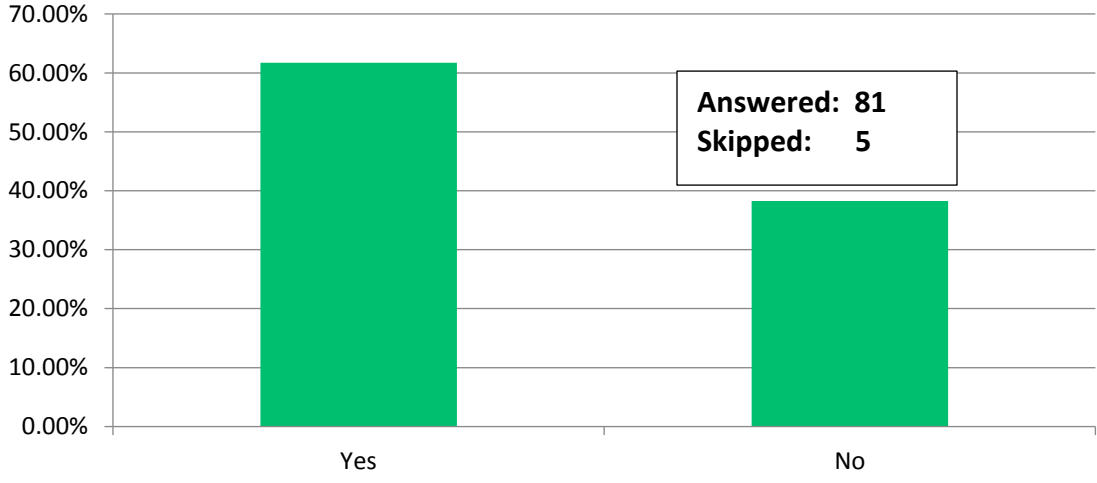
4. Do you know how to access these standards, and would you be able to assess their applicability to the maintenance or modification of your property?

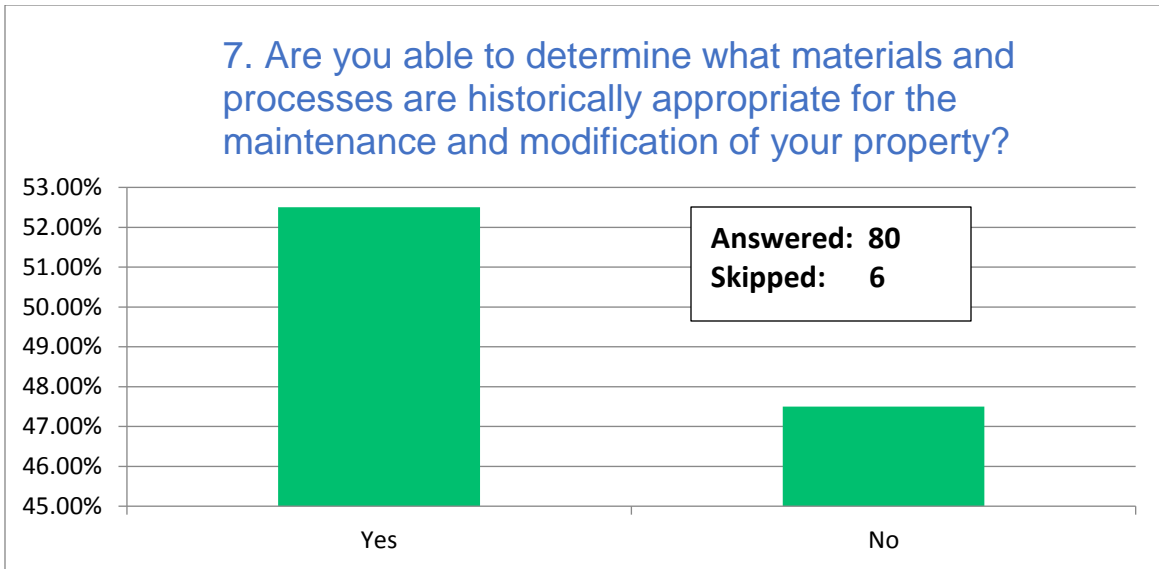


5. Do you know how to initiate and participate in the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) process?



6. Are you able to determine what type of COA any particular maintenance or modification may require (Administrative, Minor, Major)?



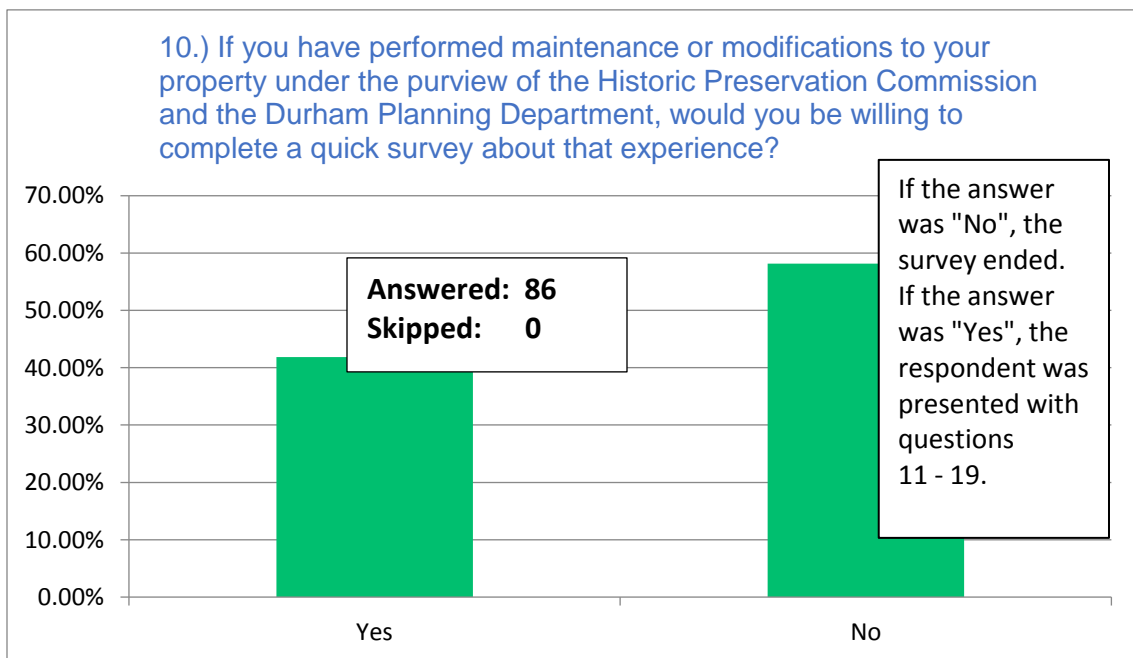


8.) Do you have any general thoughts or observations about living in the historic district or working with the Historic Preservation Commission or Durham Planning Department? **Answered: 50** **Skipped: 36**

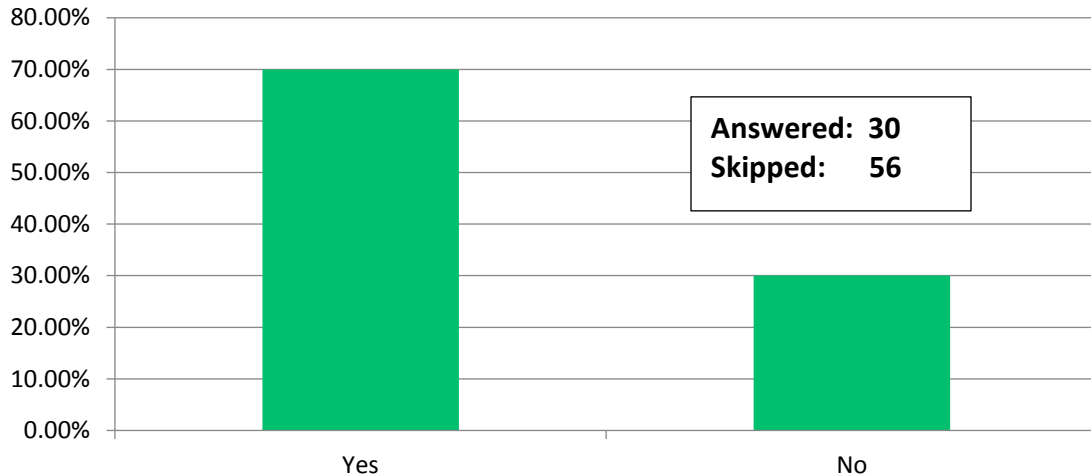
See appendix for responses

9.) If you would like to be entered into a drawing to win a \$50 gift certificate to the Durham Food Co-op, please enter your name and email address below.

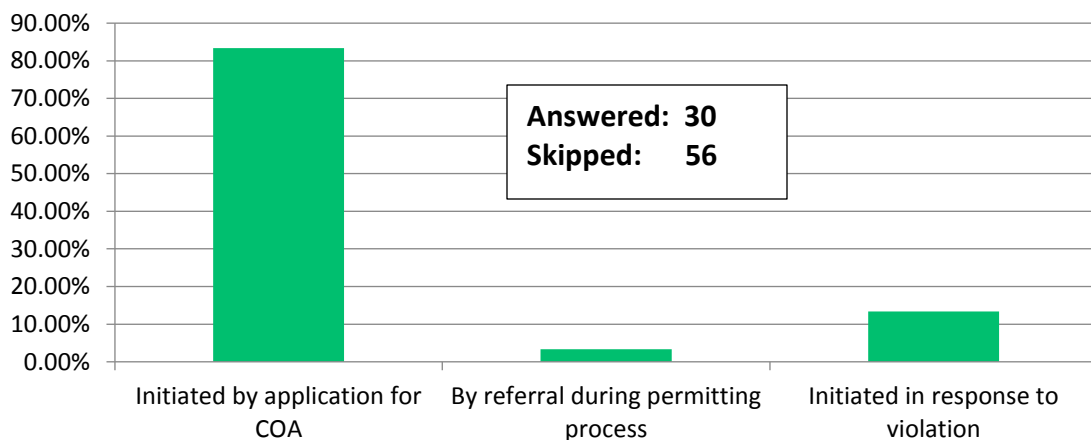
39 respondents identified themselves and will be entered into the drawing for the \$50 Durham Food Co-op gift certificate. The drawing will be held at the MHNA Fall meeting on Oct 1.



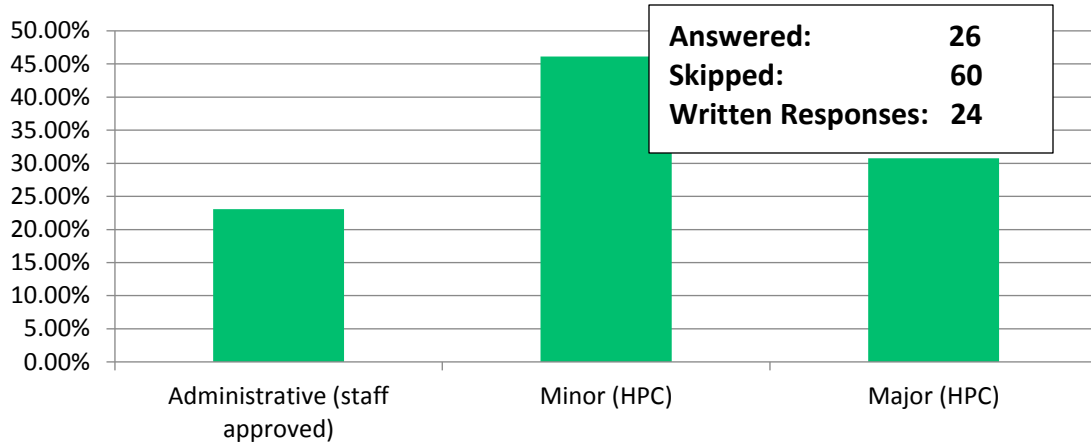
11.) Would you have undertaken an historically accurate renovation even had it not been required?



12.) Was your experience with the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) initiated by you via application for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA), by referral during a permitting process, or by the planning department in response to a violation?

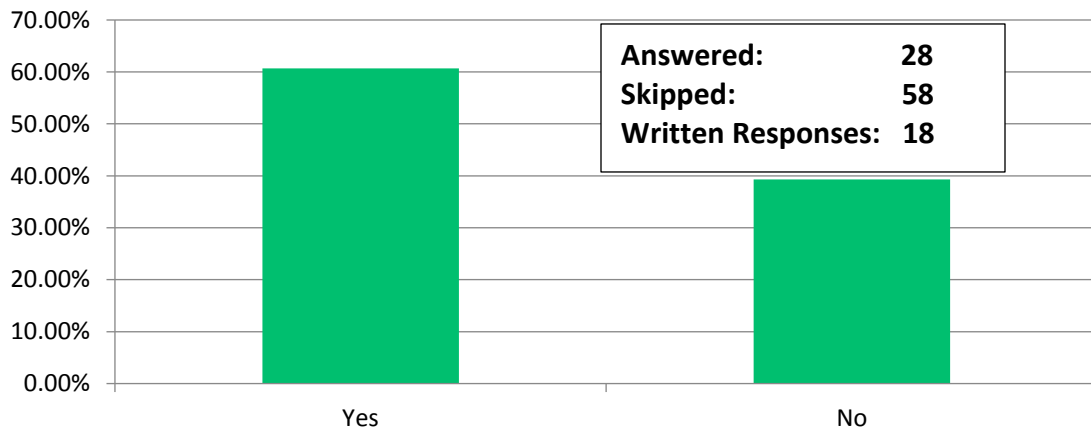


13.) What type of COA did your project require? Describe the work performed and give month and year for application dates. If more than one, please describe each.



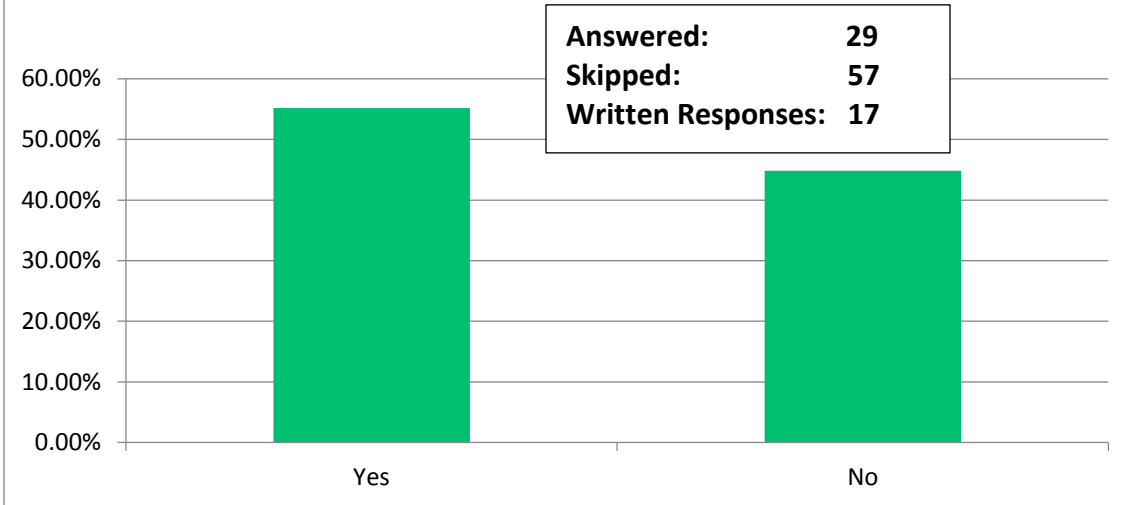
See Appendix for COA Descriptions

14.) Did the required COA process change the amount of time it took you to complete your project? If so, by approximately how much time?



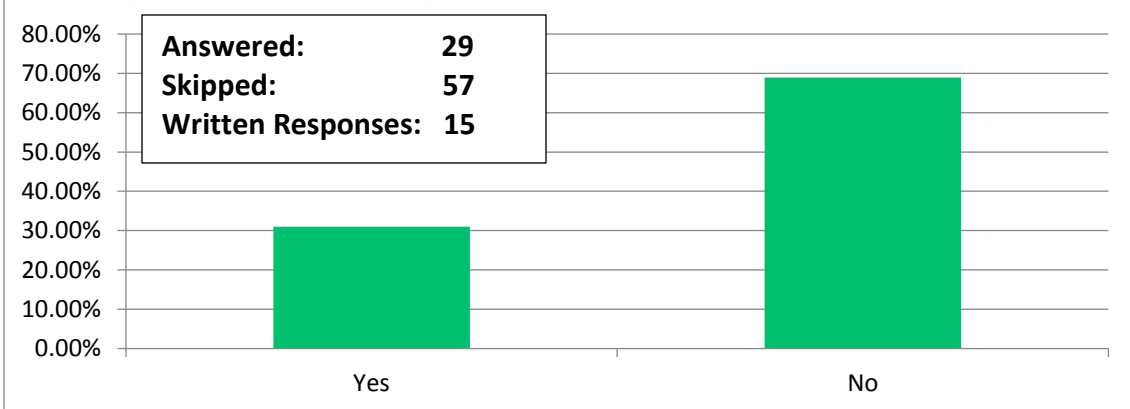
See Appendix for time estimates

15.) Did the required COA process change the amount of money you spent on your project? If so, by approximately how much?



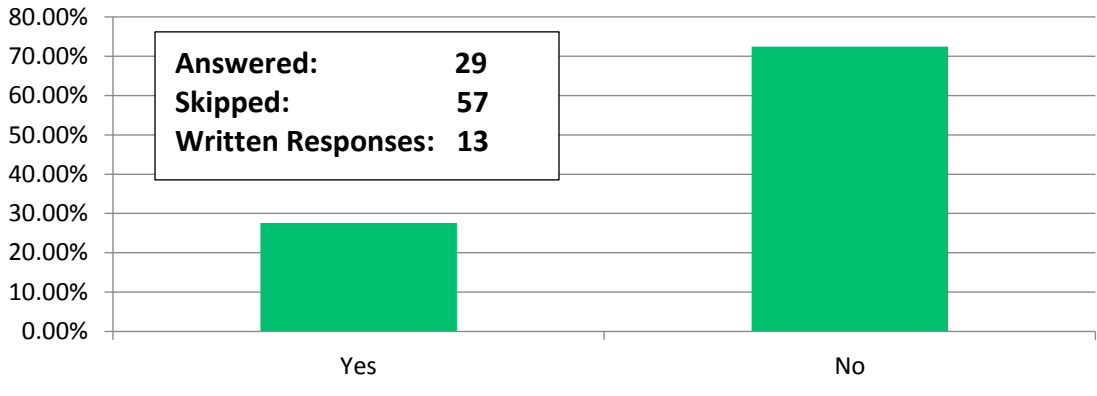
See appendix for cost estimates

16.) Do you feel that the input of Planning Staff or the Historic Preservation Commission through the required COA process led to a more historically appropriate outcome with your project? If yes, please explain.



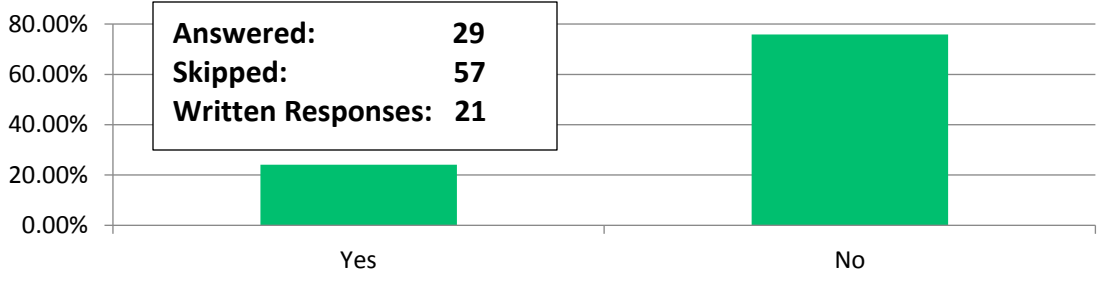
See appendix for explanations

17.) Do you feel that the input of the Planning Staff or the Historic Preservation Commission through the required COA process led to changes that make your property more valuable? If yes, please explain.



See appendix for explanations

18.) Did you make use of the historic tax credit option offered through the state? If so, approximately how much did you save? If no, why did you not apply?



19.) Is there anything else you would like us to know about your COA experience(s) or about your experience with the historic district generally?

20 written responses, see appendix for responses

Appendix:

Written responses to questions:

8.) Do you have any general thoughts or observations about living in the historic district or working with the Historic Preservation Commission or Durham Planning Department?

I think they've been helpful and fair
I'm glad my house isn't a contributing house. I've heard the historic board makes it difficult to make improvements to one's property. Meanwhile, some houses nearby are literally falling down. Why doesn't the board initiate sponsor initiatives to beautify neighborhoods or work with home owners who need help maintaining their properties?
We live in an area that insists on maintaining granite curbs, but doesn't nothing to enforce grass, bushes, weeds and other debris from obscuring them. People are not encouraged to maintain the trees or yards in the area, detracting from the historic composition. Overgrown bushes, unfettered growth of bamboo, trees leaning on houses, tent worms and prolific weed trees are as detrimental to the overall look and feel as unmaintained properties. For a historic district, there are still FAR too many rentals and absentee landlords which allow homes to look unoccupied and run down as renters do minimum upkeep. Either there needs to be higher standards or more gentrification to make renting prohibitively expensive and encourage owner-occupancy. A major way to codify the neighborhood would be to ensure the neighborhood has sidewalks! It's ridiculous the haphazard arrangement we have today with partial streets paved on both sides and the next block there are none. It makes the neighborhood appear schizophrenic and divided - it certainly doesn't encourage neighborhood unity and interaction. Finally, it would be ideal to have a list of contractors and exterior professionals on a list who are knowledgeable about the COA process and historic constraints. The most discouraging thing to do is have a plan drawn up to go to the board for review and have it rejected because of non-comformity. Or worse, trying to make sure you are in compliance and the pro knows nothing about the process causing delays and extra costs (or they bail on the project).
My house is non-contributing and it feels like the COA process took too long for a relatively minor thing like adding a small shed behind my house.
I answered "would have discouraged" but I don't think I would have had strong feelings either way. I'm generally ambivalent about it - it's nice to have standards, but the idea of going through the process has been a deterrent to me undertaking smaller projects like repairing/replacing our fence, or solving the problem of how to make our driveway more safe for our kids (since it opens onto Vickers).
I don't think you should have to get approval for tree removal or out-building modification.
It is a huge positive for me to the neighborhood and the city. I am fairly clueless about the implications and requirements, but that is because my wife, who is a historian, is very aware.
So far it has been fine. We have only replaced front and side porches and used the same materials and design.
We have had to deal with COAs on 3 occasions. Each time we needed to contact the Durham administrator responsible to ensure we were doing it right. Long and complicated. Next time, I might prefer to get a house that is not in an historic district. For example, we had to choose a very expensive aluminum clad wood window as a replacement (back of the house) instead of an affordable vinyl window. Just an example.

<p>After working with the HPC once, I have absolutely no interest in doing any modifications or maintenance that would ever require it again. When I move, I will make sure I do not move into another historic district again. I can understand why people thought it was a good idea, but in actuality, the process can be very frustrating and demoralizing for a homeowner. I found the comments made by some members of the HPC to be rude, and the city employee working with the HPC actually expressed her anger at the outcome of our COA, which I thought was entirely inappropriate. I was surprised that this experience was so terrible for us, but in talking with other neighbors, I have heard very similar stories.</p>
<p>Historic designation and maintaining those standards increases all MH property values</p>
<p>I hear a beautiful structure on S Morehead is being sold to build condos, and am saddened to hear this and wonder why we are allowing this to happen</p>
<p>I believe restrictions should not be so prohibitive as to compromise homeowners ability to make their homes more energy efficient. As long as the outward appearance matches the original features, e.g. vinyl replacement windows which look like the original ones but which provide more insulation, homeowners should be allowed to make changes which benefit them economically.</p>
<p>working with the COA was difficult. So much of their decisions were just personal preferences of their members. They couldn't point to any justification for their decisions. They seemed arbitrary. that was frustrating.</p>
<p>MH as historic district was essential in preserving housing stock long enough for market forces to make renovation feasible/desirable</p>
<p>A lot of the ordinances are hard to uncover and some of the "fine print." I originally was told I needed a minor COA then was told I needed a major COA and then was informed due to a prescriptive easement on my property for storm drains (via ordinance) I was unable to build a fence. This type of information would be helpful to know when purchasing a home in this area as it may have impacted my want to purchase had I known that I would be unable to move forward with a project that I perceived to be OK. I have also been sent a letter (in error) threatening to fine me up to \$1,000 per day for the type of roof on my shed - this was cleared up in the end; however, I had to get the renovator involved as I was not the person who updated the property. I don't believe fining a purchaser of a house who had no hand in building or renovating said house is the right way to go in order to create harmony in the neighborhood.</p>
<p>I honestly really dislike the district and the associated processes. I think they are unnecessary to preserving value in the neighborhood. While these standards and processes do have some impact on historic preservation in the neighborhood, I believe the associated increase in cost and complexity which homeowners face as a result clearly contributes first to decay (because many homeowners can figure out how to navigate the system or pay to play) and then to gentrification (because eventually the money needed to fix up a decaying house is too much for a limited income homeowner to manage.</p>
<p>I have had no interactions with the commission. It would be nice to invite someone from the commission and the planning dept to meet with our neighborhood to discuss how they interact around these decisions. Who makes the final call on resident's planned renovations? Is there an appeals process? Etc Etc.</p>
<p>On question 1 I did not answer as my experience was: knew about the designation and it did not impact my decision either way, e.g. knew and neutral</p>
<p>The HPC and Planning Department do not uniformly apply the historic district restrictions across property owners. Developers are afforded more leeway to build/renovate outside the restrictions while individual homeowners are held to a stricter standard of adherence to the regulations.</p>

I find that the district is too strict. I'm on board with the general proposition of historic preservation and requiring COAs for big visible changes. But I think that roofing should be less strict - failing tin roofs should be allowed to go to asphalt as so many other houses have. That would balance keeping the 'hood affordable with keeping its character.
I support the Historic District and its preservation goals. I think the HPC and Planning Dept. are doing a reasonably good job overall. That said, my own direct experience with getting a COA was ten years ago, although I have been monitoring their operations as an observer and have regular conversations with others interacting with Planning more recently.
In relation to questions 4, 6 and 7, the answer is that sometimes I need help. Also, I have found that the customer service provided by the city has generally been very helpful in terms of providing information. That having been said, while I appreciate the preservation aspect, it just complicates everything and makes house renovation and repairs much more difficult to deal with!
When I purchased my property in 2009 I researched whether or not it was in the MH historic district. The city maps available online at that time showed my house was out of the district. That is why I purchased it - I did not want to be in the historic district knowing the what I consider horrific restrictions and the cost of having to apply for permits to complete necessary maintenance of the homes in the district. Had the city information been correct I would have passed on buying this house.
When I purchased my property in 2009 I researched whether or not it was in the MH historic district. The city maps available online at that time showed my house was out of the district. That is why I purchased it - I did not want to be in the historic district knowing the what I consider horrific restrictions and the cost of having to apply for permits to complete necessary maintenance of the homes in the district. Had the city information been correct I would have passed on buying this house.
I think that some of the rules are arbitrary and make no sense. For example, I can install PVC windows that are not hollow frame but not vinyl windows that are hollow frame. Doesn't the V in PVC stand for vinyl? And, unless someone is knocking on my window frames, who will know if they are solid or hollow from the street? I am also frustrated that the standards will not allow for green energy such as solar panels that can be viewed from the street. In my experience, neighbors that have not gone through the process of getting a COA are able to do whatever work they want without penalty whereas those that follow the rules and try to get a COA are turned down and required to do more expensive work than their neighbors. The city may threaten those neighbors who did not get a COA, but it does not seem like anything every really happens to them. So, now that there are hollow framed windows of vinyl in my neighborhood, why did I have to pay twice as much for my new windows just to have them "approved" by the preservation commission?
The historic district designation has kept absentee landlords on my street from doing (or continuing to do) shoddy renovations on their properties. I am grateful for that. The neighborhood is, of course, seeing lots of renovation and new construction, so I am curious to see how "historic" our historic district feels in a few years.
Very restrictive.
The requirement for maintaining and renovating property in the historic district does more harm than good.
I am very happy that historic preservation districts exist and wish that West End had had that designation. There were some cute houses built in the early 1900s that I wish had not been torn down. I am happy to be in Morehead Hill where the older places are protected.
I support it fort a variety of reasons from living conditions to financial. But it's egregious to be forced pay a new application fee to make just one or two changes to a plan when everything else is ok.
Since 1949, I have lived between Chapel Hill St and University Dr. - two houses in what is Morehead Historic District and one house in Forest Hills. Not all homes in Morehead District need be preserved.

I would welcome their help and advice.
We have not attempted to make major changes to the outside of our house, but we worry that the process to do so would be onerous.
We have not attempted to make major changes to the outside of our house, but we worry that the process to do so would be onerous.
The process of combining plats has been made so cumbersome that many local land surveyors either 1) will no longer provide this service or 2) charge exorbitant fees (over \$1000!!) to deal with what they characterize as the "headache" that the city of Durham requires (multiples trips back and forth with modifications for example). This is an undue and unnecessary burden on homeowners. Combining plats should be a basic administrative process requiring minimal effort from a professional surveyor. The plats exist with the city already - they haven't changed - combining them should be simple.
I don't like it lots of difficulty for basic maintenance and little to no benefit.
My answer for #1 would be more like "unaware, and not sure how this would have affected my decision". So far our experience with working with the HPC has been through our architect, and it was an easy process. I do find the idea of doing it myself (for smaller modification) a bit daunting.
I've gone through the COA process a few times, and as long as you're ok with a computer and don't mind calling or emailing the Durham Planning Dept with questions or concerns, the process was pretty easy. The part that is frustrating is how long you have to wait if it's something that has to be approved, and occasionally the HPC being too nitpicky about irrelevant or unimportant details (for example, receiving a letter to stop work because of the removal of an aluminum storm door unoriginal to the house).
I had an incredibly frustrating experience with the HPC a couple of years ago. I found the HPC to be heavy-handed, judgmental, and generally isolated from the real world experience of home owners. The overall experience has made me reluctant to invest in my property beyond the basics. And I'm someone who appreciates historic properties and the history of Durham.
Thrilled the historic district exists; HPC and Karla have been great to work with.
I do not want to be in the Historic District. When it was proposed I had no idea the requirements for non contributing would be so onerous.
More clarity needed.
Apart from times when I have to make a modification, I'm unaware that I'm in a HP district....The amount of documentation needed seemed over the top, and the decision process was never clear to me.
Yes...it is a double standard. New places do not seem to be held to the standards and consequently, new construction such as that on Yancey St. can be taller than the surrounding houses, not be required to preserve or replace trees, have lax screening requirements, etc. A contributing house is extremely restricted in what we can do and in some cases, roof replacement is cost-prohibitive. Also, there does not seem to be appearance standards, so the house next to us can look like it belongs in a trailer park and there's nothing we can do about it. It lowers house values. So, it is extremely frustrating. As a result, we decided not to pursue a major renovation...why sink \$100k or more into it when the next door neighbor doesn't keep up their place, has crap everywhere and a massive rat problem...
it generally requires professional expertise (architect) to get through the process successfully; it is a very technical process. The commission "strains at gnats and swallows camels"; it will approve massive changes to large properties by developers and make it impossible to make minor

modifications easily by the ordinary homeowner; but we support the general concept of a historic district.
Living in and abiding by preservation standards increases over all home values contributing or non contributing. It is essential that the standards required be met to the neighborhoods entire mutual benefit. Alterations to Historic Preservation standards to non contributing homes should require work performed to be in keeping with historical integrity to maintain home values for the whole neighborhood.
Printed materials provided by HPC are not at all clear. It's often impossible to figure out what is and isn't applicable or permissible.
I think the guidelines as set out are okay but the strict, nearly absurdist, interpretation by the commission is entirely negative. The assumed rights of property owners being given over to a commission should be a separate contract signed upon purchase of property within the district.
I am happy that historic buildings are being preserved and with that more older houses would be protected. The West end lost a lot of cute houses recently, that were torn down and replaced rather than restored or repaired.
We have not had any issues living in the historic district, but many of our neighbors have. I have heard it can take a while to get approval for projects and can be a headache. I hope when it is time for us to renovate we do not have any issues. We love our old home, but there are some necessary updates and that need to be made to make it an updated home for a family.

13.) What type of COA did your project require? Describe the work performed and give month and year for application dates. If more than one, please describe each.

Solar panels- I believe June 2014 or maybe 2015 Installation of small pre-fabricated shed from Costco in the backyard- summer 2013 (don't really remember)
January 5, 2016 - replace damaged driveway and storage shed, and to add a new carport to the existing house
New garage construction - October 2015. Installation of water barrels - minor COA October 2016
Roof replacement, October 2016
Back window broken during robbery 2 sides of a front gate and fencing Back porch
The work done on our home was something we thought was standard maintenance. It never entered our minds that it would be work that needed a COA because it was very basic, and it was historically accurate for our home, neighborhood and Durham in general. I'd like to add that when we bought our home, there was no information ever given to us that explained what being in a historic district meant for a homeowner. After the work was completed, we received a letter telling us that the work actually needed a COA, so we began the process to get the COA retroactively. I don't remember the classification for the COA or the dates now.
improvements to sunporch, including replacing windows
I've had Administrative, minor and major applications - for external renovations to roof, chimney, exterior woodwork and a minor special use permit for the erection of a fence along side yard/property perimeter
new build

Demolish rear deck and build a new one: 2017
Build a chicken coop/run: 2015
Remove vinyl siding and repair wood siding (haven't done): 2015
I have had two administrative (solar panels and re-siding rear dormer), one minor (replacing wrought iron railings and pillars on front porch and steps), and one courtesy review (on proposed window replacement).
Addition of wrought iron stair rails as required by our insurance company. 2010 I think
Major renovation & addition to historic (but non-contributing) property in Morehead Hill, 2007-2008
Sorry, I'm abroad right now and don't have access to precise information. My garage was restored c. 2015.
don't know. architect handled it.
New roof soon after a move when we did not know the process plus our house is not historic.
Major- in 2007 for a new roof and solar panels as well as removal of aluminum siding. Minor in 2014 for a fence. We have done multiple administrative ones. We have done them for two properties.
New roof. I had assumed this was general maintenance and didn't require a COA -- in fact I looked online and didn't see the requirement. This was in 2012.
Major, minor and Administrative - all 2016
I have a 40+year old solar house. I applied for a permit to put solar on my roof. It took me 3 months, hired experts (architects and engineers) and finally got a COA because the solar was not on the street side.
A bathroom window in the back of the house was destroyed during a burglary. March 2015, I think. I turned in lots of pictures and documentation, we had to search for someone to make a single window that met the guidelines (took a long time). The process took way more money and more time than we wanted (we had plywood nailed to the window for 3 months while this process churned along).
1. tried to replace windows; was misled by window company that they would help with the process (which they did not) and was refused by commission (windows were on sides and rear of house and were the windows done in a 1949 renovation not from the original house; we had to give the windows to habitat and lost money... 2. did renovation of back porch with help of architect who handled the commission (at additional cost) =success. 3. replaced shingle roof (administrative = no problem); so we have "run the gamut" of experiences.
April 2017: Replace balcony rail, install shutters, install exterior lighting, cut down tree August 2017: Replace chain link fences and gates, install exterior lighting
Replaced deteriorated shingle roof with a new metal roof. The application was reviewed in the fall of 2013.

14.) Did the required COA process change the amount of time it took you to complete your project? If so, by approximately how much time?

1 month
I think it delayed it by a month to go through the administrative steps which was frustrating for simple work that could not be seen from the street on a non-contributing house.
Time for architects to draw up the application and attend the meeting.
Since the project was already complete, this question is N/A
Minor special use permit for fence required a public hearing - so added about 3 months to process
2-3 months extra
At least a month in each case, probably more like two.

6 months as I was not aware that I needed a VIA for the addition
Sorry, I'm abroad right now and don't have access to precise information. Several weeks of waiting for contractors.
The ordering of the windows was delayed by weeks, and a different company had to be contacted in order to get the specific windows that the preservation commission would approve.
This is a yes and no for me- no major work was delayed, but some things I would have liked to have completed sooner, we ended up having to wait for a month until the meeting. However, the Planning Department let us start some work they knew would be approved, so they definitely worked with us.
N/A. The work was already done and then we received a violation notice.
Built it into the project timeline.
3 months
2 months
not time but money; see above
Added approximately 4-10 weeks, depending on specific item. 1) Because of the risk you won't get approved, or there will be modifications, you can't order custom-made items, sign contracts, or schedule work crews until you have COA. 2) Documentation required can take several weeks to assemble. 3) Writing application form is very time-consuming.
Added cost of painting but moreover extended the process of enjoying our new home and instead introduced the threat of having to remove the costly new roof and reroof at our expense -- equating months of stress and anxiety.

15.) Did the required COA process change the amount of money you spent on your project? If so, by approximately how much?

Hourly payment to architects for creating COA application and attending meeting.
Double the cost of a fancy aluminum-clad wood window instead of affordable vinyl.
\$2,000
Minor special use permit added considerable expense- \$900 fee plus cost of survey.
Can't quantify. Our house would have been built totally different if not in a HPD.
Outside of the value of time, the siding on the rear dormer increased in cost by approximately 50% (both were cementitious hard board, just with a slightly different look on the version the HPC wanted).
Cost of the COA.
Sorry, I'm abroad right now and don't have access to precise information. My contractor had to be paid for considerable time dealing with permits and communicating with the city.
It doubled the cost.
It decreased the amount of money we spent because we couldn't do what we really wanted to do.
It would have if we'd gone forward. We stopped for other reasons.
We spent \$2,000 defending our investment in our home.
Only by the amount of the COA cost.
\$500
I don't remember. All I know is a very affordable modern window that we could purchase off the shelf was not an option. We had to get a window custom-made to hew to materials and style.
lost \$\$ on windows which were donated to habitat; maybe \$3000? there were additional expenses for architect appearing before the commission (not sure how much).

<p>\$240 application fee \$400 painting \$800 legal fees for consultation with lawyer</p>

16.) Do you feel that the input of Planning Staff or the Historic Preservation Commission through the required COA process led to a more historically appropriate outcome with your project?

Apparently my house originally had an asphalt shingle roof. I wanted to replace with metal roof, but HPC required that I replace with asphalt shingle therefore, I suppose the renovation is more historically appropriate.
I believe the project was approved without modification.
We were planning on using similar shingles to those previous, so I wouldn't say that we were led to do anything different.
The Planning staff recommended architectural shingles for roof - but what I ended up using was considerably more historically appropriate than their recommendation. In all other cases, I would have done historic work equal to or greater than required by HPC and Planning Staff
they made us make the house reflect surrounding contributing structures.
They provided no input.
This ties back to question 11. "Historically appropriate" is subject to interpretation, which one can see when the 9 members of the HPC have nearly 9 different opinions of the matter. Trying to determine what is historically appropriate on a run-of-the-mill brick ranch is also, to me, a fairly silly undertaking. If I do something really inappropriate (from a historical OR any other perspective) with my house, I will suffer for it when I sell. Values are so strong now in our neighborhood, as is the value people place on actual historic buildings and building elements, that people have a pretty strong incentive, in my view, not to mess those things up on houses where it matters.
My plans were approved without modification
Only in terms of restricting materials used.
PVC looks fine to me, but it looks very similar to the original vinyl windows we had chosen.
We never proposed anything that was not approved or needed suggestions from them. I did seek advice from the planning dept to make sure my application was appropriate before submitting it so that we wouldn't lose time on the project.
The project was putting solar panels on a solar house. Is there anything more appropriate?
I'm sure it did. Historically appropriate for a vulnerable window at the back of the house was not my chief concern.
we were stuck on the windows; i think we did not contact the right people soon enough; we just used an architect the second time; did not want to personally appear after the first experience.
Actually, the opposite. The COA process seems primarily geared toward stopping all change, without reference to whether the change is beneficial.

17.) Do you feel that the input of the Planning Staff or the Historic Preservation Commission through the required COA process led to changes that make your property more valuable?

N/A - I believe the project was approved without modification.
I mean, I guess they kept me from putting something weird on it?

Perhaps but hard to say because we haven't had extensive changes.
Input given by the HPC was not valuable or educational. In fact, it seemed quite subjective, and at times, lacking clear standards.
I don't think that the input of HPC or Planning staff on actions to my house necessarily made it more valuable, as I would have exceeded their requirements in any case. But I do think that their input into the historic district/neighborhood as a whole has added to the value of my property by giving it a more consistent, high-quality neighborhood context.
They offered no input.
I am quite certain they have had zero effect.
See 16
N/a
If I hadn't planned to do a historically accurate renovation, their input would have increased the value of the house
I do not know. It was just a window.
not relevant
Only in that they agreed to let us keep the more valuable roof by a slim margin vote, so it would have actually decreased the value had one vote gone the other way.

18.) Did you make use of the historic tax credit option offered through the state? If so, approximately how much did you save?

House is non-contributing
Didn't know about it.
These came through purchase of the renovated property and not due to the above COAs.
I didn't think roofs were part of this.
Unaware of credit
I don't remember.
I was not aware there was a historic tax credit option. How do I find out more information about this?
Approximately \$65,000
I did not apply because my house isn't actually historic (it's a 1950s brick ranch, for God's sake!) and I don't want / need / deserve any tax advantages for fixing it up the way I want it!
Not worth the headache
Not clear if I'd qualify. Also, tax credits only help offset income tax liability, which in my case is minimal. More trouble than it's worth to me.
It looked way too complicated and I think my projects were too small for it to be appropriate.
I'm pretty sure that my house does not qualify for any time of historic tax credit option through the state.
\$80k. Woot!
There is no such options for homes that aren't historic. No benefit at all for Homeowners.
A lot.
We were doing routine maintenance.
Maximum non-income producing credit - \$22,500. (Although this, of course, is unrelated to the local district.)

still working on that for current work; did not use it for previous work as it did not meet the old threshold minimum.
Not all tax credit projects require a COA, and not all projects that require COA are eligible for tax credits. (Another issue that is not explained by HPC.) I expect to save approx. \$15K
Home is not historic and not in the national historic zone that does not overlap with the local historic district. That this question is in here emphasizes the ridiculousness of the historic district creation and processes. I had to pay to get permission from historic "experts" on a non-contributing, non-historic home that is specifically excluded from the national historic district.

19.) Is there anything else you would like us to know about your COA experience(s) or about your experience with the historic district generally?

Staff was friendly and knowledgeable but felt like unnecessary bureaucracy for a simple project that couldn't be seen from the street on a non-contributing house
In general my experiences have been positive - mainly because I made a point of understanding the city's requirements regarding changes to my property.
I think that houses that aren't actually "historic" but are in the zone might have more latitude
Our experience was overwhelmingly negative. As I stated previously, I have no interest in ever doing any work/improvements on our house that would require a COA again. We did not feel that the process was very respectful of us as homeowners. If there is any chance that our neighborhood could change our status to no longer being part of a historic district, we would be thrilled.
I am very pleased to live in a historic district and very much appreciate the efforts of neighborhoods who preceded me to make this happen
the COA experience was painful
we had to do many things differently than we would have wanted and yet, some of the changes seemed arbitrary (.e.g they told us that we couldn't have a picture window on the front because "picture windows belong on 1960s ranches."
The survey references "required maintenance" but property owners in a local district are not required to get approval for maintenance--only for modifications. This is from the National Park Service: local designation "requires that prior to material changes or major alterations to a designated historic resource, the commission or other local entity (such as a planning commission or city council) must approve a certificate of appropriateness. Maintenance, such as painting, caulking, and other minor repairs and targeted replacement in kind, usually does not require such a certificate)." Such is the case in Durham.
I think it is no longer necessary and that, as a lengthy, expensive process has become a subtle driver of gentrification.
HPC & Planning could do a better job of "selling" the benefits of historic preservation. Communications tend to focus on process and nitty-gritty details, neglecting its raison d'etre.
I have always found folks responding to my email inquiries about CoAs etc. to be very helpful, and I appreciate that.
No, but I wish I had been fully aware of what I was going to be prevented from doing with a house that I own BEFORE I purchased it. Especially when two houses away from my own is considered non-historic!
I've been to a number of hearings. The committee is hard-working, tries to be fair, and is easy to work with.

<p>I don't like it and find it ridiculous that homeowners don't have to be told how it works or explicitly agree as they would an HOA. As I said it's a big pain limiting what we can do with our own property and how we can maintain it with no benefit to us at all. It says things like we can't have solar panels where they would be most effective and I strongly disagree. Other neighborhoods do just fine without the local historic designation including my former neighborhood where I did live in a 1928 home.</p>
<p>It's been fine. It seems like a pain and a bunch of hoops to jump through, but honestly it's worth it to me in the bigger picture.</p>
<p>Again. I found the process very upsetting. I haven't heard anything positive about the HPC and COA process from any other home owner in the neighborhood when I've discussed this with them.</p>
<p>Concerned about the wording of this survey - not sure it captures the alternative / community consequences and benefits of the historic district. Survey seems geared towards capturing how much hassle and benefit it is for individuals. The goal of historic districts are to create a public good, even though it may entail private cost.</p>
<p>Get me out of the historic district!</p>
<p>commission "strains at gnats and swallows camels" - i.e. the small things they can control they obsess over, and they miss the big picture things...</p>
<p>As long as there are big hurdles put in the way of people who care about preservation and/or want to play by the rules, combined with no significant penalties for breaking rules, there is no incentive to work with HPC.</p>
<p>I will put off any modifications or updates to my home until absolutely necessary in order to avoid paying for the commission's input on my plans for my property, and I know that I am not the only one that feels this way. I do this out of principle, but are there sliding scale fees for lower income households or is this another factor that contributes to gentrification?</p>

Morehead Hill Historic District Survey Results



Or here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B4cTmfwcYVW5YU5EWXN1R0tzR1U/view?usp=sharing>