

ONE STOP PERMITTING

**COMMERCIAL
REVITALIZATION and
LOCAL HISTORIC
DISTRICTS
(DESIGN REVIEW)**

Urban Design
Room 500, City Hall
254-2479

**WILLIAM A. BELL, SR.
MAYOR**



**DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, ENGINEERING
AND PERMITS**

www.birminghamal.gov

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For information on: zoning, commercial revitalization, building permits, (address verification, construction, driveway, excavation, soil erosion and blasting permits), please see brochures or www.birminghamal.gov

WHAT IS THE COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION PROGRAM?

Over 27 Commercial Revitalization Districts exist in Birmingham so there is a good chance that your business falls within a district. Every district has its own design guidelines established by its merchant's Association where the businesses have grouped together to define how they would like the area to look. In an effort to draw patrons, they have accepted a design review process for their district and invested a great deal of time, effort, and resources into improving the district. In addition to design guidelines which are mandatory for most districts, many districts offer rebates on building and site improvements. ***For a copy of design guidelines in your district, please contact an Urban Design staff person at 254-2479.***

WHAT IS A LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT?

Property owners of some historic neighborhoods in the City have gotten together to designate them as Local Historic Districts. Each of these areas has a special historic character and is considered historically significant to Birmingham. Property owners have worked hard to designate their areas as a Local Historic District. This means that all property owners in these districts must comply with the district's design guidelines when they construct new buildings, demolish old buildings and make exterior repairs, additions and modifications. As part of meeting these guidelines, the property owner making the changes must participate in the Design Review process. ***For a copy of design guidelines in your district please contact the Historic Preservation staff person at 254-2719***

HOW CAN I DETERMINE IF I AM LOCATED WITHIN A DISTRICT?

Contact an Urban Design staff person of the Planning, Engineering and Permits department at 254-2479 or come by the fifth floor of City Hall.

ARE THERE ANY INCENTIVES?

Many Commercial Revitalization districts offer rebates on repairs and improvements to existing buildings. For businesses that comply with the design guidelines in a designated rebate area, there is a 20% rebate (maximum \$40 a front per linear foot) for improvements to the façade of the building and a 10% rebate (maximum \$1.00 per interior square foot or \$5,000.00 whichever is less) on other capital improvements as approved through the Design Review process.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO?

1. Contact the Urban Design Division of the Department of Planning, Engineering and Permits at 254-2479, 5th Floor City

Hall to determine if your business or residence falls into a Commercial Revitalization or Local Historic District.

2. Before any improvements are made, discuss the nature of your improvements with an Urban Design staff person and present your proposal for approval by the Design Review Committee.
3. A member of the Urban Design staff will review with you the guidelines for your district, prepare slides, and if necessary make a site inspection. The Urban Design staff will help you to determine what exhibits you need for your presentation to the Design Review Committee. In order to facilitate your case, you should submit these materials to Urban Design staff before you meet with the Design Review Committee.
4. If you are in a Local Historic District, you will need to present your plans to the Neighborhood Association before presenting to the Design Review Committee. The Urban Design staff will then schedule you for the next Design Review Committee meeting. Once plans are approved by the Design Review Committee you may proceed with obtaining building and construction permits.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO TO QUALIFY FOR A REBATE (IN REBATE AREAS ONLY)

1. Contact an Urban Design Representative to schedule initial inspection.
2. Staff from the Department of Community Development will perform the initial inspection of your building in accordance the adopted design guidelines. The Urban Design staff member can provide you with a copy of the design guidelines for your district.
3. After the inspection, the City will mail you a formal report describing the improvements required to meet the guidelines.
4. A set of your plans, along with the required improvements should be submitted to the Urban Design Division prior to review by the Design Review Committee. Once your plans have been approved by the Design Review Committee, you may proceed with obtaining your building and construction permit.
5. Upon completion of construction, contact the inspector who originally inspected your building or an Urban Design staff member for a final inspection. After the inspector passes your repairs, you may then submit receipts for the work performed upon your building. The inspector will file the necessary paperwork and you will be mailed your rebate.