

# Overview of Neighborhood Conservation Zoning

## What is Neighborhood Conservation Zoning (NCZO)?

NCZO is a planning tool to protect the historic character of Nashville's old neighborhoods through a design review process.

It is a type of 'overlay zoning' that is applied in addition to the 'base' land use zoning of an area.

An NCZO must be passed by Metro Council and signed by the mayor.

## How would NCZO impact changes I want to make to my home?

NCZOs do not impact permitted land uses. Instead, it regulates you, the property owner, when you are planning to: **BRAD**

- **B**uild new construction (examples: primary building, outbuilding, garden structure)
- **R**elocate a building
- **A**dd to an existing building (examples: enclose or add a porch, add a roof dormer, add habitable space, add a dormer or skylight)
- **D**emolish a building (in whole or in part)

## Why might your neighborhood want a NCZO?

A NCZO protects a neighborhood from:

- loss of architecturally or historically important buildings,
- new construction not in character with the neighborhood, and
- additions to buildings that would lessen the historic building's architectural character.

## How does NCZO work?

If your property is within a NCZO and you are planning to demolish a building, construct a new building, add to an existing building, or move a building, one step is added to the process of getting a building permit for the work: you must also obtain a preservation permit from the Metropolitan Historical Zoning Commission (MHZC). There are no additional permit fees.

## Are there guidelines homeowners would have to follow?

Yes, design guidelines are created using the Secretary of Interior Standards, as required by state law and following best practices throughout the country. Guidelines are used in the following ways:

- to determine the architectural compatibility of proposed projects
- to provide direction for property owners who want to undertake a project
- to ensure that the decisions of the MHZC are not arbitrary
- to assure that new construction and additions are sympathetic to the character of a neighborhood and to restrict the loss of architecturally contributing buildings

### **With NCZO are interior projects reviewed?**

No, only exterior work is reviewed by the MHZC.

### **With NCZO, are exterior paint colors, fences, and landscaping, projects reviewed?**

No, only new construction, additions, demolition, and relocation are reviewed in NCZOs. An NCZO is the least restrictive of the 5 types of historic overlays.

### **How does an NCZO differ from a contextual overlay?**

There are several differences. The main one is that the NCZO helps to protect historic properties; whereas the contextual overlay doesn't place any restrictions on demolition, only on new construction. In addition, the contextual overlay are standards that must be followed; whereas, in the NCZO, projects follow design guidelines, reviewed by 9 volunteers, which allows for some flexibility when a property needs to be addressed differently than other properties because it is physically different.

### **Will it take a great deal of time for me to obtain a Preservation Permit?**

Some projects can receive administrative permits, which are generally issued within 48 hours or less of receiving a complete application. Infill (new primary buildings) and other projects go to the Commission for review. The Commission meets the third Wednesday of every month. Staff is available to meet with applicants and provide advice.

### **Questions?**

Contact a historic zoning staff member at 615-862-7970 or [historicalcommission@nashville.gov](mailto:historicalcommission@nashville.gov).