

**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) and
Application Form for Local Registration of Architectural Significance
Marin County Architectural Commission**

FAQ

1. What is the Architectural Commission and what is its purpose?

- A. *Five Marin County appointees whose purpose is to determine if each project submitted for their review reflects the cultural values of the County and locality to an architecturally significant degree.***

MORE: The Marin County Architectural Commission was created by the Board of Supervisors in their adoption of Ordinance Number 3619 (2014); and is codified in Marin County Code in Section 19.04.028. In 2015 the Board of Supervisors appointed five Commissioners comprised of two licensed architects, one registered engineer, one licensed building contractor and one member of the general public. The County Chief Building Official serves as a non-voting member and secretary to the Commission. The purpose of the Architectural Commission is to determine if clear and compelling architectural significance, as defined below and within Ordinance 3619, Marin County Code and/or the Architectural Commission Bylaws, is evident within each application submitted to the Commission for determination.

2. How is “architectural significance” defined?

- A. *Architectural significance is the term used to describe the basis by which the attributes of a structure, site or design should be preserved or encouraged.***

MORE: Architectural significance, when determined by the Commission to be present, is an attribute associated with present or proposed structures, and/or specific features of present or proposed structures deemed by the Commission to have present or future local importance to the history, architecture, well-being or culture of an area. Historical significance is certainly a criterion, when applicable. However, it is not the only criteria examined by the Commissioners. Factors such as the use of alternative construction, design, materials and methods that protect the environment; stimulate the economic viability of sustainable construction; aid affordability of construction practices; increase participation and consumer protection through lawful construction activity; enhance owner equity in the improvement of property; and/or contribute to the well-being of the community are weighed with equal consideration by the Commissioners when determining if architectural significance exists.

3. How do I apply for local registration of architectural significance?

- A. *Complete the attached application form and submit to the Chief Building Official.***

MORE: All applications for local registration of architectural significance submitted to the Commission for determination are purely voluntary and non-binding on behalf of the applicant and/or property owner. Attached to this FAQ is a blank Application for Local Registration of Architectural Significance. To begin the voluntary process of submitting your project for determination, simply complete the attached application form and submit to the attention of Bill Kelley at the address provided in the footer of the first page of the application form. You will then be notified when your application will be agendaized at a regular Commission meeting and encouraged to attend.

4. Are there advantages to having a designation of architectural significance?

A. *When filing for building permits involving architectural significance, registry supports the use of alternative codes and standards.*

MORE: Receiving a designation of architectural significance may be considered advantageous when securing a building permit using alternative codes such as the California Historical Building Code. The intent of an Architectural Commission determination of architectural significance is to support the preservation of those structures and/or features determined by the Commission to be architecturally significant. Architecturally significant structures and/or features are registered within the Marin County Register of Architecturally Significant Structures. Once registered, a building permit applicant may voluntarily request the acceptance of alternatives to the prevailing codes and standards typically required for construction activity. Allowance of the use of proposed alternatives must be shown to be necessary in order to preserve architectural significance, and may include provisions from alternative codes on a case-by-case basis.

5. Is there a fee for applying for local registration of architectural significance?

A. *No.*

MORE: There is no fee required of the applicant for submitting their project to the Architectural Commission for determination, or for registration in the Marin County Register of Architecturally Significant Structures.

6. Will my property be visited by the commissioners in order for them to determine the status of my application for local registration of architectural significance?

A. *Probably not.*

MORE: Typically, Commissioners do not need to visit sites where structures, and/or features, are under consideration for a determination of architectural significance. However, a site visit may be deemed appropriate by the applicant and Commissioners, and may be voluntarily coordinated and scheduled individually or collectively.

7. If my project is granted local registration of architectural significance, will this encumber my project, or my property, in any way?

A. *No.*

MORE: Application to the Commission and registry to the Marin County Register of Architecturally Significant Structures is entirely voluntary, and may be withdrawn by the applicant and/or property owner at any time. Building permit records for projects approved for the use of alternatives to the prevailing codes and standards, based on the preservation of architectural significance, shall be documented to reflect each alternative material or measure employed, and shall be available for public access.