

## Guidelines for Testimony for the Certificate of Appropriateness permit applications.

Certificate of Appropriateness permits require a hearing which provides the public with the opportunity to testify and express their views and information on each application. When the Commission is considering such applications, it weighs the appropriateness of the design in relation to the individual building or site and/or the historic district within which it is located. Such evaluations are made based upon what the public can see from public spaces only, such as sidewalks, streets, and parks, and generally only covers publicly visible exterior elements of the property. As such, public testimony should address these issues, taking into consideration retention of historic fabric, form, mass and scale. Issues such as construction noise, loss of private views from individual residences, loss of lot line windows, environmental issues or impacts, and for the most part, additions which are not visible from a public thoroughfare, while important, do not fall within the purview of the Commission and therefore this public review process.

When considering your testimony, we urge you to be as specific as possible in your comments. If you think that no proposed changes are acceptable, state why. If you object to the materials, height, massing, color or details, state what those objections are and why. The Commission will not reject an application entirely just because they do not find elements of it acceptable; outright rejections typically only happen if the Commission feels no changes of any sort should be approved. Otherwise they will direct the applicant to make changes to address their concerns, and afford them the opportunity to return with a revised application for consideration, which the public can again comment upon. So comments should make clear what you think is or is not acceptable about the proposed changes, and why; simply stating that the proposed application is wrong without offering an explanation as to why based upon the criteria upon which the Commission is empowered to make decisions is unlikely to have much effect.

If you have any questions or would like further clarification on the public review process, contact us at [info@gvshp.org](mailto:info@gvshp.org).