

**TOWN OF DEDHAM, MASSACHUSETTS
HISTORIC DISTRICTS COMMISSION**

STANDARDS AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR HOMEOWNERS

Issued January 2005

PURPOSE:

Preservation is not a mandate against change; preservation promotes a set of goals to be considered and accomplished as part of change. The review procedure is not designed to prevent the improvement of properties, nor to discourage new construction. It is intended to encourage the responsible treatment of historic buildings and their context, and the sensitive and appropriate design of alterations, additions and new structures.

These standards and procedures will act as primarily a compilation of the Design Review Standards used by the Historic Districts Commission for the administration of Dedham's historic districts. And secondly they provide property owners in the districts with information on the preservation, repair and restoration of historic properties, with a guide to the selection of appropriate materials to implement the work.

MANDATE:

The Dedham Historic Districts Commission is a volunteer board of Dedham residents appointed and approved by the Board of Selectmen. The Commission is composed of persons with professional expertise in Law, Architecture, History, Historic preservation and Conservation, local Real Estate and Finance. The Commission is the official agent of municipal government responsible for district wide historic preservation, contextual compliance, and for regulatory design review within the designated local historic districts.

The local historic districts are areas with specific boundaries, (see attached map) that have been recognized for their historic and architectural significance, and so designated in 1974 by a vote of the Dedham Town Meeting under Chapter 40C of the Massachusetts General Laws.

HOMEOWNERS RESPONSIBILITY:

A resident in the historic district is required by law to seek and receive approval for any exterior alterations prior to the commencement of work. When planning alterations to your property, be prepared to apply for approval well in advance of the date you wish to begin any exterior work. No work can commence until approval is obtained. A person commencing or completing work to the exterior of a building in the historic district without the necessary approval of the Commission is subject to legal enforcement and potential fines. The Commission is not responsible for a homeowner's neglect to inquire about necessary Town permits and approval processes.

CERTIFICATES CONSTITUTING APPROVAL:

1) A Certificate of Appropriateness.

A Certificate of Appropriateness is required for all exterior alterations. This means that the Commission has found the proposed changes to be appropriate to the architectural/historic character of the building and its contextual surroundings. Examples of changes include Additions, new construction, demolition and alterations. Alterations may include changes in **design, material, color or outward appearance of the structure** including but not limited to; *siding, trim, doors, fences, entrances, gutters, railings, roofs, chimneys, porches/decks, skylights, windows, shutters, siding, garages, sheds, paint, roof vents, pipes and mechanical equipment, and exterior staircases*.

2) A Certificate of Hardship.

A Certificate of Hardship is granted for the same type of changes as a Certificate of Appropriateness but when a Certificate of Appropriateness would be denied as inappropriate and such denial will involve a substantial hardship, financial or otherwise, to the applicant. Approval of a Certificate of Hardship must not affect the historic district in general, must be without substantial detriment to the public welfare and must not cause departure from the intent and purposes of the Historic Districts act. The Commission will not approve a Certificate of Hardship in instances where the hardship was self-created (i.e. financial burden to undo work performed that had not been approved by the Commission).

For further clarification of hardship: See **Section H Procedures For Filing Applications**

3) A Certificate of Non-Applicability.

A Certificate of Non-Applicability is the Commissions' method of certifying that a Certificate of Appropriateness is not required for the intended work to be performed. This certificate (along with appropriate photographs, to be taken and submitted) protects the property owner from allegations that changes have been made without authorization. A Certificate of Non-Applicability shall be required for the following:

- 1) Additions, alterations and or new construction that is not visible from a public way, public street or public park. A representative from the Commission will determine that which is visible or not visible.
- 2) Temporary structures, subject, however, to conditions as to duration or use, location, lighting, removal and similar matters as the Commission may reasonably specify.
- 3) The reconstruction, substantially similar in exterior design, of a building, structure or exterior architectural features damaged or destroyed by fire, storm or other disaster, provided such reconstruction is begun within one year thereafter and carried forward with due diligence.
- 4) Ordinary maintenance, repair or replacement of any exterior architectural feature which is damaged, or worn provided the work does not involve a change in design, material, color, or outward appearance of the structure.

AREAS OF NON JURISTRICITION BY THE COMMISSION:

The Commission, although not regulating the following, will be pleased to advise the homeowner on any of these, or other related matters, covered in these guidelines

- 1) Terraces, walkways, driveway materials, sidewalks and similar construction that is substantially at grade level.
- 2) Interior work that does not affect the exterior in material, design or outward appearance.

3) Landscaping. (Note that the Commission does have jurisdiction over fencing and retaining walls - e.g. Railroad ties.)

PROCEDURES FOR FILING APPLICATIONS:

A) Call or visit the Chair of the Commission to discuss the proposed alterations and to determine the category of the application (Appropriateness, Non-Applicability or Hardship). Applications are available at the Dedham Town Hall. An application for a Certificate of Appropriateness or Hardship must be received at the office of the Town Administrator, Town Hall, by 3:00 p.m. at least 18 days before the regularly scheduled monthly meeting of the Commission, (the third Wednesday of each month), in order to be placed on that months agenda. An application for a Certificate of Non-Applicability may be received at any time. There is no fee for application of any type of certificate.

B) A complete application will consist of all proposed work items, thoroughly described on scaled drawings and shall include specifications regarding dimensions, materials, and any other information needed for the Commission to visualize the proposed changes in order to make a determination. Applications where appropriate shall include a manufacturers' catalog cut of the proposed item or material. Applications for paint colors shall include a manufacturers paint chip or color chart.

The following items should be included in your drawings as applicable:

1. Site Plan (if needed)
2. Elevation drawings of the specific areas
3. Details/profiles (i.e. moldings, cornices, fence caps, etc.)
4. Materials (i.e. wood, brick, etc.)
5. Dimensions (i.e. size of trim etc.)

Photographs must be provided of sufficient number and quality to adequately document existing conditions. Historic photographs, if available, (check with the Dedham Historical Society), shall be provided.

C) The Commission normally meets on the third Wednesday of each month at the Dedham Town Hall at 7:00 p.m. Meetings are open to the public and any person is entitled to appear and be heard on any matter before the commission before it votes on an application.

D) At the hearing the Commission will discuss the application with the applicant or his representative, hear the abutters, or other concerned citizens and take a vote on the application. Owners having architects or contractors are urged to have

them present at the hearing. An application may be continued until the next meeting if the commission deems necessary (i.e. for reasons of incomplete drawings or data, or to perform a site visit, etc.) In any case the Commission must make a determination within 60 days from the date the application was received, unless the applicant waives that requirement in writing.

E) No application which has been unfavorably and finally acted upon by the Dedham Historic Districts Commission shall be re-submitted and acted favorably upon within two years after the date of final unfavorable action unless the Commission finds, by a vote of four sevenths of the Commission, specific and material changes in the conditions upon which the previous unfavorable action was based, and describes such changes in the records of its proceedings after a public hearing with notice to parties of interest

F) A property owner or a contractor cannot receive a building permit unless a certificate has been issued or the applicant has a letter from the Commission stating that the change involved is not subject to the Commission's jurisdiction.

G) The Town of Dedham building inspector, and/or a member of the Historic Districts Commission reserves the right to inspect the project to certify compliance with the conditions set forth in the Certificate issued.

H) Certificate of Hardship:

If an application is deemed inappropriate or if application is specifically made for a certificate of hardship, the Commission may issue a certificate of hardship if conditions specifically affecting the building or structure involved, but not affecting the historic district generally, would result in a substantial hardship to the applicant and if approval would not result in a substantial detriment to the public welfare or substantially derogate from the intent and purposes of the Historic Districts Act. A certificate of hardship shall also be issued in the event that the Commission does not make a determination on the application within the time specified in the bylaw.

Application for a certificate of hardship shall be made on a form prepared by the Historic Districts Commission. The Commission shall schedule a public hearing concerning the application and provide notice in the same manner as described above, and any person may testify at the hearing concerning hardship in the same manner.

The Historic Districts Commission may solicit expert testimony or require that the applicant for the certificate of hardship make submissions concerning any or all of

the following information depending upon the circumstances of the hardship being claimed, before it makes a determination on the application:

- 1) Estimate the cost of the proposed construction, alteration, demolition or removal and an estimate of any additional cost that would be incurred to comply with the recommendations of the Historic Districts Commission for changes necessary for the issuance of a certificate of appropriateness;
- 2) A report from a licensed engineer or architect with experience in rehabilitation as to the structural soundness of any structures on the property and their suitability for rehabilitation;
- 3) Estimated market value of the property in its current condition; after completion of the proposed construction, alteration, demolition or removal; after any changes recommended by the Historic Districts Commission; and in the case of a proposed demolition, after renovation of the existing property for continued use;
- 4) In the case of a proposed demolition, an estimate from an architect, developer, real estate consultant, appraiser, or other real estate professional experienced in rehabilitation as to the economic feasibility of rehabilitation or reuse of the existing structure on the property
- 5) All appraisals obtained within the previous two years by the owner or applicant in connection with the purchase, financing or ownership of the property;
- 6) Assessed value of the property according to the two most recent assessments;
- 7) Form of ownership or operation of the property, whether sole proprietorship, for-profit or not-for-profit corporation, limited partnership, joint venture, or other;
- 8) Any other information considered necessary by the Historic Districts Commission to make a determination as to whether the property does yield or may yield a reasonable return to the owners.

The Commission shall review all the evidence and information required of an applicant for a certificate of hardship and make a determination within sixty (60) days of receipt of the application whether the denial of a certificate of appropriateness would deprive the owner of the property of reasonable use of, or economic return on, the property. Written notice of the determination shall be provided to the applicant and the Building Department within ten (10) days following the determination and shall be accompanied by a certificate of hardship in the case of an approval.

STANDARDS AND INSTRUCTIONS:

Additions:

Additions should be designed so that the architectural integrity of the historic building is not adversely affected. Additions should not alter the character defining features of the building and should be subservient to the historic building. Additions will be deemed appropriate based upon the following criteria:

- Scale and proportions as related to the historic building.
- Compatibility of architectural style with the historic building.
- Compatibility of building elements – doors, windows, porches, trim, etc.
- Appropriate siting – relationship to historic building and the landscape.
- Visibility from public view.

Air Conditioning Units:

Removable air conditioning units may be installed without an application to the Historic Districts Commission. Such units should be removed from the windows in cooler months and may not be left in and covered with plastic covers during the heating seasons if visible from a public way. Permanent heating/air conditioning units that are visible from a public way do require a certificate of appropriateness and will be reviewed to make certain that significant architectural details will not be altered or damaged by installation. Some screening may be required.

Barns and Outbuildings:

Barns and outbuildings are considered significant buildings in the historic districts and they should be preserved and maintained. The buildings' setting (relation to the surrounding property and proximity to outer buildings and the main house), form, materials, door and window openings are important features to be preserved.

The maintenance and appropriate rehabilitation of barns and outbuildings is encouraged. If a barn or outbuilding is converted to a new use, its original setting, form, materials, door and window openings should be preserved.

Chimneys:

Chimneys should not be removed or shortened without approval. Old masonry and mortar should be retained whenever possible. Repairs to brick chimney masonry should follow the guidelines for masonry and stucco repairs. Metal chimneys inside wood false work will not be approved.

Demolition:

Demolition or removal of a historic building in an historic district requires a Certificate of Appropriateness for Demolition from the Commission. The Commission will issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for Demolition only if the building proposed for demolition has no historic significance or if the Board of Health or building inspector has ordered the structure to be demolished in accordance with the Massachusetts General Laws or the state building code. There is a presumption that all existing buildings and structures in the districts will be preserved.

Doors, Doorways and Storm Doors:

Historically appropriate doors and their hardware should be retained. If replacement doors are necessary, the replacements should be historically appropriate in material, design and hardware and have an appropriate arrangement of panels and glass. Doors should be made of wood. Metal doors are not acceptable. Enlarging or reducing the size of an existing door opening will generally not be allowed if visible from a public way. Storm doors are permitted and require review before installation but not for seasonal changes. Simple metal-framed doors are acceptable. Wooden storm doors are preferred.

Exterior Lighting Light fixtures in public view on the exterior of a building are subject to review of the Commission. Light fixtures should be of a design and scale that is appropriate to the style and period of the historic building. Fixtures with low light levels (210 lumens per fixture) are recommended. Up-lighting and wash lighting of buildings and landscapes is not permitted. Lighting community landmarks, such as churches, courthouses and memorial buildings, is allowed.

Fences and Stone Walls

Fences should be sensitive to the design of the house, be in scale to the property and be compatible in material and style. Fences along the street should not block the view of the house. Wood, stone and wrought-iron fences are appropriate. In rare instances, painted composite materials might be approved. Indigenous stonewalls should be preserved. New stonewalls are also subject to review as to appropriateness, materials and style. Chain link, wire and vinyl fencing will not be approved. Low brick walls and brick planters are also not acceptable.

Masonry and Stucco

Mortar:

Original masonry and mortar should be retained, wherever possible. If replaced, historic mortar should replicate the existing mortar in composition, color and texture. New mortar joints should replace the original in size, profile and surface texture.

Brick:

Replacement brick must match existing brick in color, size and surface texture and reflectance. All new brickwork must match the existing in coursing pattern.

Stucco:

Existing stucco should be repaired with a stucco mix that duplicates the original in appearance – surface color and texture.

Foundations:

Foundations should be repaired or extended with materials that match the existing foundation.

Applicants may be required to submit samples of masonry materials to the Commission for approval. For large masonry restoration projects, representatives from the Commission may visit the job site to review cutting and pointing samples.

New Construction

New construction in the historic districts is subject to review by the Commission. Whether the design is contemporary or traditional, the new structure should be

compatible with the surrounding structures and with the streetscape. Among the factors taken into consideration are height, scale, orientation to the street, site coverage, roof form, door and window openings, and trim details.

Paint

Changing the exterior color of a building in the historic district requires the review and approval of the Commission. No review is required if the building is repainted its existing color.

Appropriate paint colors are those deemed suitable to the style of the building. Many publications can be consulted for period and style appropriate colors. Applicants seeking to change the color of their buildings should submit the following to the Commission for review:

- A photo of the building
- Color chips and numbers for the proposed paint scheme.
- Designations for how the paint colors are to be used on the building.

It is recommended that buildings in the historic districts be painted rather than stained.

Surface preparation for repainting should be done so that the elements to be repainted are not damaged. Under no circumstances should sandblasting or rotary grinding be used to remove paint. Historic building owners are also cautioned that many old paints contain lead and their removal must be in accordance with State and local laws.

Paving

Until the mid-20th century, the buildings in the historic districts had no hard paving for drives and walkways. The Commission therefore recommends minimizing hard paving around the historic buildings in the districts. Drives of packed gravel or asphalt embedded with stone dust are encouraged, as are walkways of brick and cobblestone.

Impervious paving around the perimeter of historic buildings is not allowed as it interferes with the drainage around the building. Backsplash off perimeter paving may also cause deterioration to the sills and portions of the wood frame that are near the ground.

Porches, Porticos, Steps and Railings

Any proposal to remove, alter or enclose an existing porch requires review. Original or later porches that contribute to the historic appearance of the structure should be retained. The installation of screens on existing porches initially requires a review, but seasonal changes of screens do not. Any proposal to add a porch also requires a review. Complete elevation drawings must be submitted which clearly detail all design elements (railings, balusters, columns, materials, paint color, lattice or other under porch treatment, etc.). Such additions must be consistent with the period and style of the building.

Existing porticos, porches, steps and railings that are appropriate to the house and its development should be retained. Deteriorated porticos, porches, steps and railings should be repaired or replaced, where necessary, with materials and elements that duplicate the original as closely as possible.

Roofing

A roof's shape and slope shall be preserved as part of the building's architectural character. Repairs and re-roofing of historic buildings should be with like materials –

slate with slate, wood shingles with wood shingles, etc.. Re-roofing with the same material does not require the review and approval of the Commission. Changing roofing materials, including changing the color of existing roofing materials, requires review and approval.

Roof Dormers

New and altered roof dormers shall be reviewed and approved by the Commission. Existing dormers should be repaired. Enlarging dormers is not recommended. New dormers should match existing ones. Where no dormers presently exist, new dormers should correspond in style with the other architectural features of the building.

Shutters

Existing shutters shall be retained and repaired whenever possible. Shutter removal requires approval. Where replacement is necessary, new shutters shall match original or be of an appropriate type for the building. Shutters shall be made of wood. Vinyl, aluminum or metal shutters are not permitted. Shutters should be designed and hung to reflect their original use. They should be sized to cover the entire window and be hung with the slats up when the shutters are open.

Siding and Architectural Trim

Original siding material should be retained whenever possible. Deteriorated siding may be replaced or repaired with new material that duplicates the original as closely as possible. Siding on an addition should match the existing structure in material and design. Changes of material or design are subject to review. Aluminum or vinyl siding will not be approved and its removal from existing structures is encouraged.

Architectural trim such as cornices, window moldings, brackets, doorway pediments and all other decorative elements should be retained. Its removal will only be considered if advanced deterioration precludes preservation. If architectural trim requires replacement, it shall be replaced in kind as approved by the Historic Districts Commission.

Skylights

Skylights within public view are not recommended in the historic districts. Skylights not visible from a public way should be flat and small in size. Bubble skylights will not be approved.

Solar Panels

Review and approval by the Commission of all solar panel installations in the district is required. Guidelines for installing solar panels on a historic building are as follows:

- Solar panels shall not permanently change any architectural features.
- A minimum of two feet of roof surface should be visible surrounding the collector installation.

- Framing, piping insulation, etc. should match the roof surface.
- Collectors should be mounted to match the roof slope.
- Piping should be concealed from view.

Windows

Original or later window sash and trim should be retained and repaired except in cases where they are beyond repair. The complete replacement of windows in a house where only a few windows are in need of replacement is generally not approved.

In the case where full window replacement is sought, the Commission shall visit the house to evaluate the condition of the windows.

When the determination is made that a window is beyond repair, the replacement must be based upon physical or photographic evidence. The replacement shall be all wood and of the same dimensions for all wood elements and panes of glass. All molding profiles, including muntin profiles, shall match the historic windows.

Single-paned, true divided light windows are must appropriate, but simulated divided light windows may be considered. Windows with snap-in or removal muntins will not be approved. Vinyl, aluminum or metal replacement sash will not be approved. Mirrored and tinted heat-reflective glass will not be approved.

Retrofitting original window sash with weather stripping and/or insulated glass may be appropriate. Storm windows are usually appropriate, but require a hearing. The color of the frames of the storm windows should match the color of the window frames.