

How to Apply for a Certificate from the Historic Districts Commission

All work on properties within an historic district, with the exception of minor landscaping, require a certificate. Even though a building permit may not be required in some cases, such as exterior painting or installing a fence, a certificate must be obtained to maintain an accurate record of the work done on an historic property.

The Historic Districts Commission issues three (3) types of certificates:

1. Certificate of Non-Applicability - for applications to perform regular maintenance and repair; a hearing is not required;
2. Certificate of Appropriateness - for applications that propose exterior changes visible from a public way; a hearing is required;
3. Certificate of Hardship - for applications to perform work when extraordinary circumstances are a factor; a hearing is required.

PROCESS

The Applicant begins the process in the same manner for each type of certificate:

APPLICANT

- . Contacts Historic Districts Commission office, if desired, for informal discussion of proposed work;
- . Obtains HDC application from Historical Commissions office or Building Department;
- . Completes application describing proposed work, and attaches required exhibits*.
- . Returns the required number* of completed applications to HDC office.

**Please see "Application Requirements for a Certificate of Non-Applicability" and "Application Requirements for a Certificate of Appropriateness" available on the Historic Districts Commission webpage: http://www.hingham-ma.com/historical/HDC_documents.html*

HISTORIC DISTRICTS COMMISSION

- . Administrator reviews application and informs applicant whether or not a public hearing is required.

If no hearing is required...

- . Administrator determines within 5 days of receiving the application whether the application can be approved. If approved, the Administrator issues a Certificate of Non-applicability sending one copy to the applicant, one to the Building Commissioner and one to the Town Clerk.
- . Owner proceeds with building permit process.

If a hearing is required...

- . Administrator notifies applicant and schedules a hearing.
- . Hearing is posted fourteen (14) days prior to the meeting date. Abutters within a minimum of one hundred (100) feet of the property are notified via U.S. mail.
- . Commission conducts hearing and reviews application fully. Applicant and/or applicant's representative attends, along with abutters and interested members of the public.
- . Commission either continues the hearing if more information is required, or votes on the application.

At the hearing...

- . **If at the hearing the application is approved as submitted**, commission votes to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness. Certificate is issued within 45 days of the hearing/approval date. One copy is sent to the applicant, one to the Building Commissioner and one to the Town Clerk. Applicant proceeds with building permit process.
- . **If the application is not approved as submitted**, hearing is continued to another date, allowing time for applicant to:

modify plans in accordance with the commission's recommendations;

provide missing/additional information or documentation; and /or

schedule a site visit.

Commission reviews revisions and additional material and makes its determination at the continued hearing. If the commission votes to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness, applicant proceeds with building permit process; if further modifications or information are required, the hearing is continued.

NOTE: Revised plans and any other information to be considered at a continued hearing, must be submitted at least one week prior to the meeting.

- . **If the application is denied**, it is denied without prejudice and the applicant may submit a new application for the same project at any time in the future, providing that the new application is substantively different from the original application.

Extending or Withdrawing an Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness

The commission must act on an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness within 60 days after receiving the application in the Historical Commissions office. If a hearing continuation date will exceed the 60 day period, the applicant may either extend the application for an additional 60 days, or withdraw the application. A new application for a Certificate of Appropriateness may be submitted at any time in the future.

Extension and Withdrawal forms are obtained in the Historical Commissions office.

Failure to Extend or Withdraw an Application

If an extension or withdrawal form has not been filed and the 60 day period for an application will expire before its next regularly scheduled meeting, the Historic Districts Commission will vote to deny the application without prejudice. The applicant may file a new application at any future time.

Certificate of Hardship

If failure to grant a certificate would produce **substantial hardship**, financial or otherwise, the commission may vote to issue a Certificate of Hardship. One copy is sent to the applicant, one to the Building Commissioner and one to the Town Clerk. Applicant proceeds with the permit process.