

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR CONSTRUCTION AND ALTERATIONS IN NATICK'S HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Each application is reviewed on an individual basis.

However, in its previous rulings and decisions, the Natick Historic District Commission has tended to conform to the following:

1. Original materials and features shall be kept and not removed or altered.
 - Restoration is preferable to repair.
 - Repair is preferable to replacement.
 - If a replacement is necessary it should match the original feature in material and design.
2. The use of historically appropriate materials is preferred.
 - Cedar clapboard or shingles are preferred siding materials.
 - The application of artificial siding, including but not limited to vinyl, aluminum, asphalt, cement-fiber, reconstituted wood, composite material, artificial brick, and artificial stone, is discouraged.
 - The removal of existing artificial siding is strongly encouraged.
 - The use of non-historically appropriate materials has been permitted in new construction but only where the visual appearance and performance is consistent with the historically appropriate material.
3. Replacement windows shall have frames that are similar in overall dimensions and profile dimensions to the original windows. Muntin patterns shall match existing windows. Muntins shall be genuine, or shall be located on both sides of the glass as in a "simulated divided light" (SDL) type. Replacement windows shall be recessed to the same depth in the wall as the original windows. The Commission can assist in identifying brand names and models of replacement windows that it has found to be appropriate in historic buildings, and in reviewing other window brands and designs that may be proposed by the building owner.
4. Replacement shutters shall be similar in material, hardware, design, and scale to original shutters. Vinyl shutters are not permitted. Shutter sizes shall be such that they would cover the entire window if closed. Composite shutters such as Atlantic Shutters have been permitted.
5. Original roofing materials that are of particular importance to the character of the building, such as slate, wood shake or sheet metal, shall be retained and repaired.
6. Wood or metal gutters may be replaced with wood, metal or plastic gutters of similar shape and scale.
7. New openings on visible facades are discouraged, except to restore original or pre-existing conditions.
8. New stairs, stoops, porches, and decks shall be designed and detailed in the original style and materials of the building.
9. New fences shall be designed and detailed in original styles and materials. Chain-link fences, high gloss plastic fences, solid high stockade fences, and contemporary styles of wood fences are

not permitted in the two front quadrants of a building lot (three quadrants for a building lot that faces on two intersecting streets).

10. Wherever possible, new additions or alterations shall be done in such a manner that if such additions or alterations were to be removed at a later date, the essential form and integrity of the structure would be unimpaired.
11. Demolition of any historic structure or any historic feature of a structure is not permitted without prior Commission approval.
12. Solar Systems. The Secretary of Interior's "Standards for Rehabilitation & Illustrated Guidelines on Sustainability for Rehabilitating Historic Structures" offers several ways historic buildings can be more energy efficient. The HDC recommends applicants to pursue a home energy audit of their building before considering active solar systems alone. The use of solar collecting panels, whether photovoltaic or thermal collectors, are a distinctly foreign element on most historic structures.

Therefore, the HDC recommendations below reflect the general approach that such technology should only be permitted when it has the least visual impact on the structure.

- Preferably not visible from a public way, typically the street.
- Preferably on structures separated from the historic structure.
- Preferably on additions to historic structures than on the original structure itself.
- Preferably on 2nd floor low sloping roofs raised above the main roof, such as shed dormers.
- Preferably mounted close and parallel to roof surface.
- Preferably mounted back from all roof edges, ridges, valleys, and other breaks in the roof surface. Setback distance to be determined for each proposal and in accordance with building codes and fire regulations.
- Preferable to blend the installation of solar panels to reflect the design, configuration and appearance of the existing roof and minimize the appearance of associated wiring, conduits, controls and equipment.

13. New Construction and Additions:

The HDC encourages applicants considering new construction, including additions, to review the requirements of the application with the HDC in an informal advance inquiry at any HDC meeting. This is an opportunity for the applicant to present the scope of the new construction and better understand the level of documentation the commission will require to review it. New construction often requires a thorough review by the HDC and we offer the following as a basis for applications.

When considering the appropriateness of proposed new additions the Commission typically will require that the addition:

- Preserves significant historic materials and features of the original structure †
- Protects the historical difference by making a visual distinction between old and new portions of the building used †

Complete and coordinated documentation of the proposed building including but not limited to:

- Site plan with all existing and altered site features, including topography.
- Landscape plan, with all existing, removed, and proposed vegetation, including existing and proposed ground cover such as walks, driveways, and other proposed features such as lights.

Include all site mounted equipment such as HVAC equipment, pool or hot-tubs, fences and walls, and other visible features.

- Site views or renderings showing the 3d massing of the proposed construction, with and without vegetation, from the public ways.
- Building elevations showing all surfaces visible from the public way, dimensioned and at the same scale and with all materials noted on the elevations and proposed site grading accurately depicted. Show all
- Plans with all exterior dimension shown and interior spaces shown for reference only (HDC does not review interior spaces)
- Material and product specifications identifying manufacturer, product type or model, and all options. Manufacturer's literature without specific items selected is not acceptable.
- All typical details for the structure such as window and door casing, roof eaves and soffits, columns, stairs, etc. Show in plan and section to depict the detail in 3d.
- Product samples, where appropriate, to demonstrate color, texture and scale.
- Site photos from the public way.

14. Open Space: The HDC considers the density of the built environment a “defining characteristic” of the Natick Historic Districts. While this is not intended to prevent additions, alterations or new construction, it is highly preferable that any application consider the historic density of the site, the adjacent properties (both in and outside the districts) and the district as a whole, and restrict new building volumes such that they will have the least impact on the density of the district from the public way.

15. Signage: Property owners proposing a sign of any type should consult the *Natick Zoning Bylaw Section V – Special Requirements, V-H. Signs and Advertising Devices* which details the requirements that must be met to obtain a sign permit. Signs within the historic districts also require approval from the Historic District Commission including signage attached to buildings or structures and signage that is freestanding.

General

- Signs should be compatible to the scale of the building or structure, to adjacent buildings, the streetscape and adjacent signage.
- Signs should retain the visual harmony of the streetscape and enhance the visual integrity of the area.
- Signs whose design, method of support, and typeface style are based in historic precedent are preferred.

Lighting

- External lighting should be concealed from view if possible with planting or similar devices, and carefully controlled to illuminate only the surface of the sign with minimal brightness and glare.
- Internally illuminated signs are discouraged.
- Flashing lights, moving elements, neon lighting, or electronic lettering are discouraged.

† Old House Journal