



Harvard Historical
Commission
Design Guidelines

Town of Harvard, Massachusetts

November 2020
Version 3



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The *Harvard Historical Commission Design Guidelines* document is produced, revised and published by the *Harvard Historical Commission, 2020*. Please visit <https://www.harvard.ma.us/historical-commission> for further information including application forms.

Pamela Marston, Chair
 Steve Nigzus, Vice-Chair
 George Triantaris, Secretary
 Emanuel Lindo, AIA
 Richard Cabelus
 Brandon Loughery
 Matthew McRae

The Design Guidelines have been revised from time to time as follows:

Date	Change Description/Approval
May 7, 2014	Change <i>Signs</i> paragraph to allow composites and synthetic materials. Editorial corrections. Approved HHC May regular meeting.
Nov 4, 2015	Changed <i>General Design Guidelines</i> to <i>Preservation Standards</i> , p 11.
Nov. 2020	Multiple changes throughout the document

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Introduction



There are over 200 historic districts in the Commonwealth. Since the first historic district was established on Nantucket in 1955, many irreplaceable historic and cultural resources throughout Massachusetts have been protected by concerned property owners working with the volunteer members of the state's Historic District Commissions. The Historic Districts Act, Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40C, was created to protect and preserve the historic resources of Massachusetts through a local review system that encourages and ensures compatible and appropriate improvement and development within historic districts.

The Harvard Historical Commission (HHC) is a group whose seven members (plus two alternates) appointed by the Board of Selectmen, meet monthly to help property owners in our historic districts make informed and successful decisions about exterior architectural and site changes to their properties. The HHC is authorized by the Historic District Act

(Chapter 48 of the code of the town of Harvard, Massachusetts) to review the appropriateness of all

proposed exterior changes to buildings and structures within the historic districts which are visible from any public street, public way, public park or public body of water. For the purposes of this Guideline, the term 'visibility' is defined to mean ability to see in whole or in part from a public way even if obstructed by vegetation.



The members of the HHC have written these guidelines to help you develop your project and maintain your property. The HHC and its members are here in an advisory role to improve the renovations process you may embark upon. As your neighbors and fellow owners of historic properties, we understand the challenges and rewards of owning an his-

toric home, and are here to help you with questions and projects small and large. We look forward to working with you.

What is Reviewed under the Historic Districts Act

The HHC reviews new construction, reconstruction, relocation and demolition of buildings and structures. The term “*structure*” includes but is not limited to: walls, fences, driveways, walks, terraces, steps, paths, and signs or lights on buildings or structures.



In making its determination of appropriateness, the HHC will consider the historic value and significance of a site or building or structure, the general and specific design features and changes under review, and the relation of those details to similar details and features on other properties in the surrounding district. In the case of new construction or additions to existing buildings, the HHC will consider the appropriateness of proposed new building or renovation to the other building(s) on the applicant’s property. The size and shape of the building or structure both in relation to the land area upon which

the building or structure is situated and to buildings and structures in the vicinity will be reviewed.

Note: Existing features on structures within the historic districts may have been in place before the districts were established, undertaken without approval by the HHC, or approved through the application process. Standards for what is appropriate evolve over time and under different circumstances and commissions. Therefore, while features existing on structures within the districts provide some guidance when considering proposed changes or additions to other structures, they are not binding and cannot be considered as precedent (even if approved in the past).

Harvard’s Historic Districts

The architectural diversity of the Harvard Common Historic District reflects changes in land use, agricultural styles, building materials, preferences in landscaping materials and goals, and varying levels of prosperity among the many owners whose tastes are expressed in the Common as we know it at the beginning of the 21st century. The scene expresses the incremental changes that have occurred since the town’s settlement in the 17th century. Such change is an inevitable, vibrant and necessary condition of any vital historic district. The HHC has written these guidelines to help property owners – both public and private – in this critical, defining neighborhood, manage change that both preserves and enhances the best aspects of the district while meeting the functional needs of property owners.

The Shaker Village Historic District presents a far more unified architectural face to the world, the result of the controlling eye and hand of the Shakers, whose community in Harvard existed between 1791 and 1918. Those few homes and out buildings that were not built by the Shakers but predate

1960 have merged their identity so thoroughly in this village that they are more difficult for the untrained eye to spot.

If you live within the Harvard Common Historic District or the Shaker Village Historic District, you will want to read through these guidelines before contemplating changes to the exterior of your house or outbuildings, or major elements in the landscape such as fences, driveways or stone walls.

Using these Guidelines

If your work affects the exterior of your property, whether or not you need a building permit, you will need to review the work you are contemplating with the HHC before beginning your project. The HHC encourages historic district residents to contact the HHC Chairman and arrange for an informal project review. An informal design review by the HHC early on in the design process will ensure that your project will be a successful addition to the Historic District. We invite you to use this document as a set of principles that can guide your work, and to see the members of the HHC as professionals eager to collaborate with you in your efforts to preserve and enhance the valuable collective resource we all share in our historic districts. Our goal is to be ready with helpful advice to the property owners in these districts. We stand ready to assist you as you contemplate improvements to your property.

Property owners within our two historic districts should be aware that while the HHC has a controlling interest in virtually all material aspects within the district, some elements of a homeowner's property – for example, the location of a driveway cut – are not principally the jurisdiction of the HHC. In this instance the property owner would need to contact the director of the Department of Public Works. Other elements over which the HHC does have jurisdiction – for example, the specifics of window and door placement in a new ell addition – also fall within the territory of the town's building inspector and, perhaps, also of the Conservation Commission if the footprint of the new structure falls within a wetland buffer zone. When in doubt about the scope of your project, a call to the HHC Chairman early on can help you identify where to start.

Certificate Process

If you own property in an historic district you will need to alert the HHC of your intentions and submit an application prior to beginning your proposed project. The application forms may be found on the town's website at www.harvard.ma.us, or at the Harvard Town Hall. Please note that the *Certificate* is not a building permit; you should also consult Harvard's building inspector prior to beginning any project.

Applications for any of the certificates listed below must be filed simultaneously with the HHC, the Building Inspector and the Town Clerk. The date of the filing of an application is the date on which a copy of such application is received by the office of the Town Clerk. The HHC has 14 days from the date of filing the *Certificate* to determine whether the scope of the work involves any features that are subject to approval by the HHC.

If the application requires the HHC review, it will likely be placed on the agenda for the next regular monthly meeting. The proponent or his/her representative (i.e., a builder) may be asked to attend the meeting to discuss the project and answer the HHC's questions. If the scope of the project is significant, the HHC may decide to hold a public hearing on the application. Public notice for a hearing is given at least 14 days in advance by posting in Town Hall, and in a newspaper of general circulation in Harvard.

Certificate of Appropriateness

When you plan new construction or the alteration of the exterior of any part of a building or structure on your property that is visible from a public way, you will be asked by the HHC to file an application for a *Certificate of Appropriateness*.

Depending on the project you are contemplating, the HHC will ask for certain types of information. Applications for new construction, alterations or additions should include exterior elevations drawn to scale, detailed enough to show architectural design for the structure and its relation to the existing building along with a site plan showing property lines, streets, driveways, sidewalks, fences, and major plantings. Plot and site plans should be filed when applications for certificates are made for improvements affecting appearances, such as walls, fences, steps and paving. In the case of demolition or removal, the application must include a description of the proposed condition and appearance of the property thereafter. When the project includes manufactured items such as windows, doors, or balustrades, please provide manufacturer's specifications for these items. Samples of paints and materials are very helpful in HHC review.

The HHC also encourages applicants to submit a photo survey of existing conditions, particularly elevations visible from public ways. Capturing adjacent buildings in your photos helps provide a neighborhood context for your design.

In making their determination, the HHC will consider the historic value and significance of a site, building or structure; the general and specific design features and changes under review; and the relation of those details to similar details and features on other properties in the surrounding district. In the case of new construction or additions to existing buildings, the HHC will consider the appropriateness of the proposed new building or renovation to the other building(s) on your property. Members of the Commission will also consider the size and shape of the building or structure to the land on which it sits and to the buildings and structures in the vicinity.

Certificate of Non-Applicability

In some cases you may need to request a *Certificate of Non-Applicability*. In the situation where a third party - for example, a bank or other lending institution; the town's building inspector, or another town board - has a professional interest in your project you may be asked to provide a *Certificate of Non-applicability* simply to demonstrate that a *Certificate of Appropriateness* is not needed. Examples of the kind of work that does not legally fall under the HHC's review include: changes, repairs and improvements to the building's interior; changes to the exterior features not visible from a public way; and routine maintenance or very minor replacements of architectural features which do not involve a change in materials or design. If, for example, you chose to repaint your house in its existing color, no hearing is required. (See the further reference to Paint under Specific Design Guidelines).

Certificate of Hardship

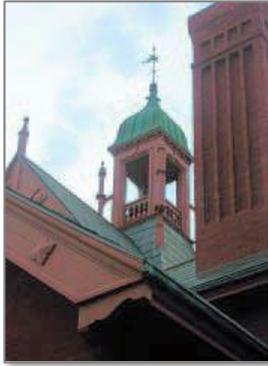
Under certain circumstances the HHC may issue a *Certificate of Hardship*. Those circumstances refer to unique aspects of the property and project proposed. For example, a lot with public ways on three sides may present reasons for the HHC to waive normally adhered-to design standards. The *Certificate of Hardship* is not used to address issues relating to the petitioner's financial ability to undertake the project.

Preservation Standards

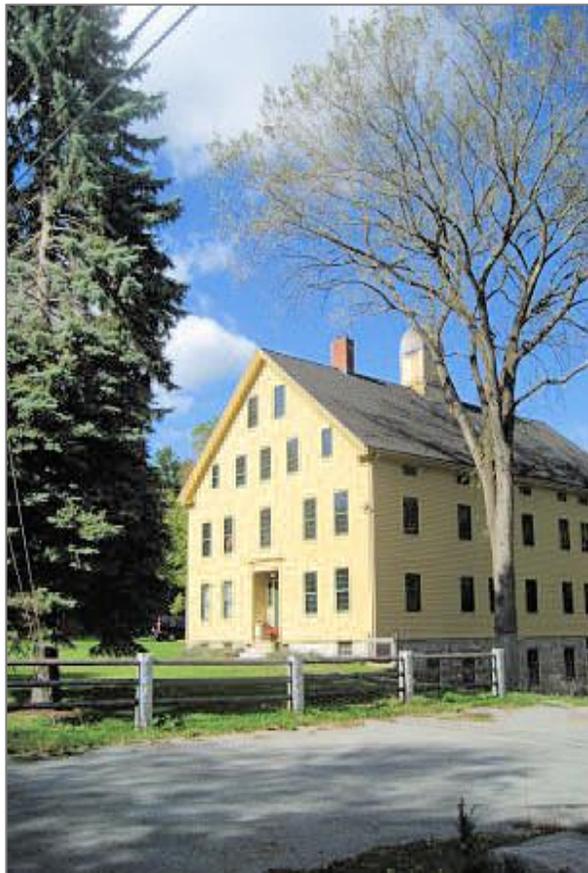
In making a determination on an application, the HHC will be further guided by standards set forth by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. The Standards state that:

1. **USE OF HISTORIC PROPERTY TO MINIMIZE CHANGE.** A property shall be used for its historic purpose or placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment. Every reasonable effort shall be made to provide a compatible use for a property which requires minimal alteration of the building, structure or site and its environment, or to use a property for its originally intended purpose.
2. **PRESERVE FEATURES THAT PROVIDE DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER.** The historic character of a property should be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property should be avoided. The distinguishing original qualities or character of a building, structure or site and its environment shall not be destroyed. The removal or alteration of any historical material or distinctive architectural features should be avoided when possible, and additions or changes inconsistent with these goals should be discouraged.
3. **PRESERVE MODIFIED FEATURES THAT RECORD HISTORY.** Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained, preserved, and respected. All buildings, structures, and sites shall be recognized as products of their own time, place, and use. Changes which may have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history and development of a building, structure or site and its environment.
4. **DO NOT ADD CONJECTURAL FEATURES.** Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
5. **PRESERVE EXAMPLES OF CRAFTSMANSHIP.** Distinctive stylistic features, finishes, and examples of skilled craftsmanship and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property should be treated with sensitivity and preserved.
6. **DO NOT REPLACE IF REPAIR IS POSSIBLE.** Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Repair or replacement of missing architectural features should be based on accurate duplications of features, substantiated by historical, physical or pictorial evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different architectural elements from other buildings or structures.

7. **AVOID HARSH SURFACE TREATMENTS.** Chemical or physical treatments, such as sand-blasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.



8. **PROTECT ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES.** Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. **NEW ADDITIONS TO OLD: DIFFERENTIATED, COMPATIBLE, REVERSIBLE.** New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. New work should be differentiated from the old and should be compatible with the building's historic materials, features, size, scale, proportion and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be



unimpaired.

Specific Design Guidelines

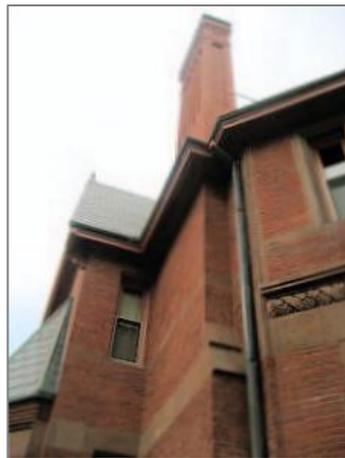
Barns and Outbuildings

Many of the 18th and 19th century homes in the Harvard Common District had barns and other outbuildings associated with them, owing to the town's history as an agricultural center. In the Shaker Village District, many of the barns, sheds and other outbuildings have vanished. These structures contribute to the cultural landscape of the town, serving as reminders of our rich and varied agricultural heritage. Where these buildings exist, the HHC strongly encourages their continued maintenance and protection.



Chimneys

When repointing or rebuilding an existing chimney the owner should reuse the existing brick if possible, or find a closely matching replacement. The chimney should be rebuilt to its original height and any corbelling or other decorative feature should be retained. Repointing masonry should be appropriate in terms of the type, color and aggregate of the mortar to be used and the width and profile of the joint. Caps, if necessary, should be made of appropriate material and size for the chimney.



Demolition

Demolition of any structure or portion thereof within the historic districts requires the approval of the HHC, except when ordered by the Building Inspector or other safety officer for reasons of

public health and safety. Demolition is generally discouraged unless the structure is so deteriorated that rehabilitation is not practical or the structure is of no historic value to the district. A building in poor condition is not necessarily structurally unsound. In most cases the commission will deny application for demolition of significant buildings or structures. In the instance where no other alternative exists except demolition, the HHC may require that the new structure replacing the original, be built in the same location, of similar scale and appropriate materials.

In general renovation or replacement in kind are preferred to the demolition of all or a portion of a historic structure.



Doors

In general, existing original or later appropriate doors visible from a public way should be retained and repaired wherever possible, including fanlights, sidelights, surrounds, canopies, transoms, and other features which the doorway comprises. The original entrance design and arrangement of door openings should be retained. Enlarging or reducing entrance or door openings for the purpose of fitting stock doors will not generally be allowed. When possible, a door that must be replaced should be replaced with a new door made of wood rather than of metal. A new wood or clad door should be constructed in a manner consistent with traditional door manufacture: assembled of stiles and rails, with an infill of wood panels or glass lights.

If the addition of a storm or screen door is desired, a wood unit is preferred. A clad door, with paintable metal exterior, is an acceptable alternative if its scale and manufacture is in keeping with

the door it replaces. Stainless steel hardware and modern pulls should be avoided where possible in preference for original hardware or appropriately designed reproduction iron or painted steel.

Fences

Fences should be appropriate in scale and architectural style to the building, the site and its surroundings. Always be sure to check the Harvard Building Code before installing a fence. In the Harvard Center District, fence styles are generally simple. Property owners generally build low,



spaced wooden picket or low, dry laid local fieldstone. Modern composite fencing in traditional forms may also be considered. In the Shaker Village District homeowners should retain the distinctive fence style of granite posts with wood cross members as that is the predominant style.



Fence location is important. Front yard fences should be adjacent to the sidewalk, with similar structures, if desired, extending back along the sidelines of the property. Fences should also align with neighbor fences if possible. When an application is filed to erect a fence, the application must include a plot plan of the property showing the proposed location precisely.

Where privacy is an issue, the HHC suggests planting a living fence or hedge. Plantings are not subject to review by the HHC. Fences that are intended

to be seasonal or temporary (120 days or less) such as garden fences, need not have approval by the commission.

Foundations

In new construction, foundations should be of a height consistent with the typical foundation height of the architectural style of the house. New foundations should also be in harmony with the foundation heights of buildings in the surrounding area. The foundation height of an addition

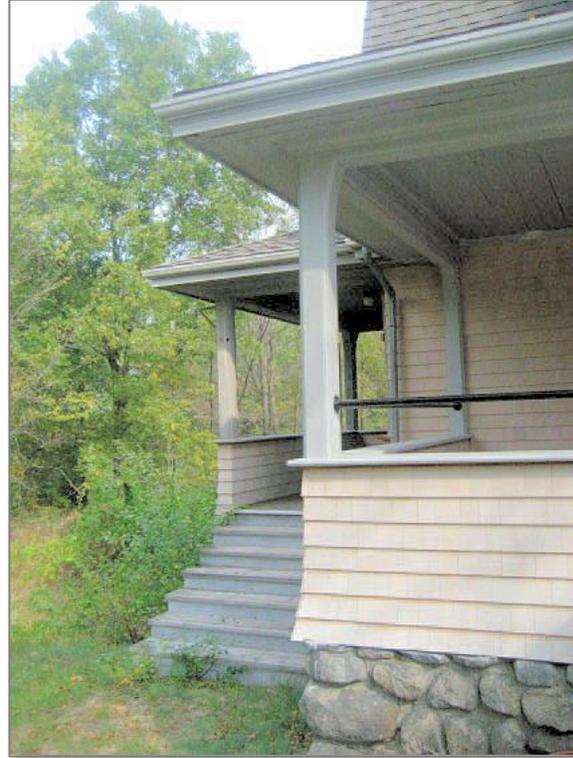
should match that of the existing structure. Foundations should be left unpainted. (See *Grading and Site Work*)

Grading, Site Work, Walks and Driveways

When grading the site for either an addition or new construction the existing, natural contours and topography of the landscape should be preserved to the fullest extent possible. Proposed building heights are measured from the original grade prior to any site work. In designing the site, natural features such as large trees, watercourses, scenic or historic spots, habitats of rare or endangered species, and similar community assets should be preserved.

Historic Paving Materials

In the 18th and 19th centuries, natural gravel, stone, cobblestones, Belgium blocks, flagstone and brick were the paving materials of choice. Concrete has been available since the time of the Roman, but was not used as a paving material until the mid-19th century, first in Europe, then America. Modern asphalt paving came into being in the 20th century and around World War II the materials and methods for asphalt paving was developed used today.



Path and Sidewalks

Location of sidewalks and walking path should consider the original historical locations of the walk, their relationship with the existing landscaping and the surrounding historic structures. For paths, an owner might consider natural gravel, flagstone stepping stones or a brick path. For sidewalks, brick is a well-known historic material in and around Boston. Cobblestones and flagstone have also been used in New England in the past. Concrete and stamped concrete (simulated cobblestone) is not as historically accurate as stone or brick, but is still a reasonable solution for walks. Modern asphalt is a 20th century material and is therefore least desirable.

Driveways

The locations of a driveway, like sidewalks; should consider the original historical locations of the driveway, their relationship with the existing landscaping and the surrounding historic structures. Driveways must be built to support modern cars and trucks. Snow removal by plows and snow removal equipment can be a challenge for historical materials. Gravel driveways have a long history in New England and are therefore a natural choice for many homes. Brick and cobblestones also have long history as a paving material in New England, but do present challenges with snow removal. Concrete is a newer material with historical roots that meet most driveways technical challenges in modern America. Asphalt, being a 20th century material is the least desirable for historic homes.

Gutters, Downspouts and Drainage

Gutters constructed of wood, seamless painted aluminum, copper, galvanized or other metal should be of a scale, contour, and detail found to be compatible with the style of the subject building. Unpainted, mill-finished aluminum is generally not appropriate for flashing, gutters and downspouts. Attachments should be concealed and visible hanging straps or brackets should not be used unless consistent with the original construction. Installation should not involve the removal of any historic detailing such as cornice moldings or brackets. Gutters are inappropriate if constructed of short sections, visible brackets, heavy connectors and prominent end caps, all of which are incongruous with the appearance of the historic precedent.

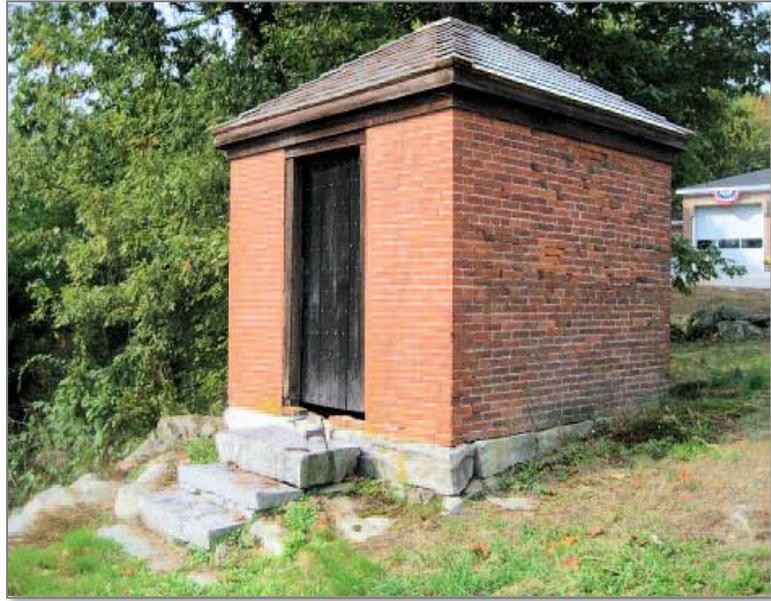


Landscaping

While the HHC does not have jurisdiction over landscape planting, historic homeowners are encouraged to consult the variety of historic landscape resources available when contemplating landscape changes. Make plant and design choices that suit the architectural style of the property.

Lighting

As the development of Harvard's historic districts date to periods where exterior lighting was limited, the use of exterior lighting – now used to promote traffic safety and security – should be used sparingly when providing general exterior lighting. Effort have been made over several decades to preserve Harvard's rural character. Exterior lighting should be kept at low levels, discreetly designed to harmonize with the structure or landscaping and shielded to prevent glare or overspill of the light off the property. Over-illumination of building with flood lights is inappropriate. Excess lighting that create an urban environment in not in keeping with the historic nature of Harvard. Fluorescent and sodium vapor fixtures are incompatible with the districts. The style and materials of light fixtures visible from a public way should be appropriate to the historic character of the district and, of course, the building to which it is attached. If possible, consideration should be given to concealing the lighting source with landscaping elements.



Masonry and Stucco

Original masonry and mortar should be retained, wherever possible, without the application of any surface treatment. Old mortar should be duplicated in composition, color and texture. New mortar should reproduce original in joint profile and size, and should be applied using the same method as the original or existing mortar. Care must be taken in repointing to match the existing joint width and to overcutting of the joints. Joints should not be overfilled with mortar onto the face of the brick or stone. Replacement brick or masonry units and mortar should be carefully matched in size and color to the originals, and follow traditional brick or masonry coursing if visible from a public way. (For more on masonry, see CHIMNEYS)

If using brick as a cladding material in new construction particular attention should be paid to its detailing to avoid the appearance of a thin non-load bearing veneer.

The applicant may be required to provide a sample of proposed masonry materials.

New Additions or Structures

New construction, alterations, and additions to existing buildings within the Historic Districts are considered in this category. As in all cases of project review, the HHC will consider the project's compatibility with the Historic District and with these guidelines. As stated previously, an informal design review with the HHC early on in the design process will ensure that your project will be a successful addition to the Historic District.



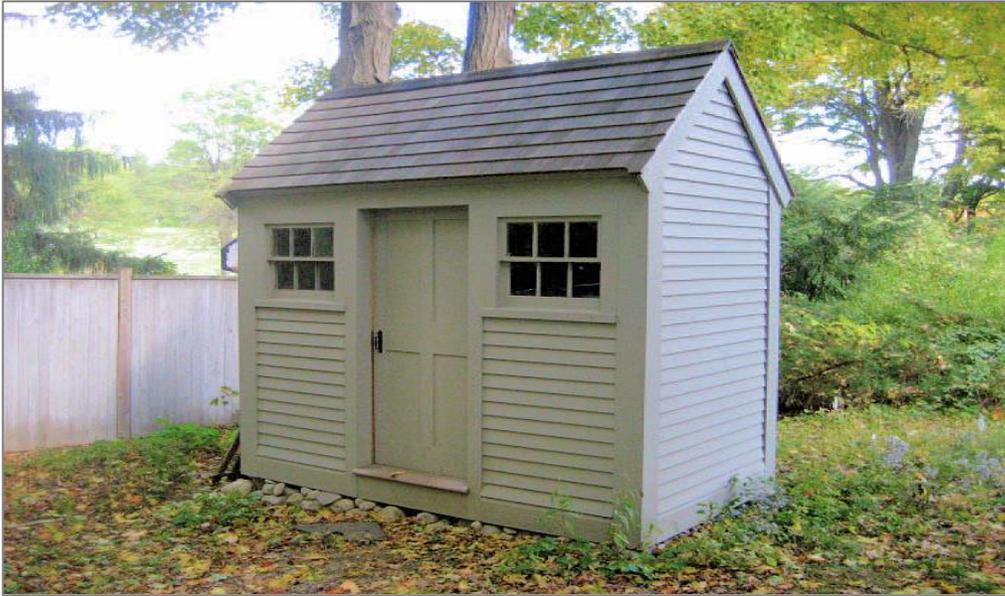
It is likely that several specific aspects of these guidelines will apply. Although setbacks and building height regulations are Zoning concerns (see Harvard's Zoning Bylaws before beginning your project), the HHC encourages applicants to walk around their neighborhood and see how other buildings address the architectural principles of window type and size, roof pitch and chimney size, massing, scale, foundation lines, and a building's relationship to its neighbors and the street. In particular, applicants should consider the fol-

lowing:

1. Over many generations, additions and alterations were made in a manner that was consistent with what had come before, but also reflected its own period.
2. Changes should not degrade or obscure the character of the existing building, nor should they overwhelm the original.
3. Additions to existing buildings and new buildings should respect the original building and its neighbors.
4. Additions might be differentiated from the existing building.
5. Additions and new construction should harmonize with the neighborhood.
6. Alterations should not injure the existing building's relationships to the street.
7. When possible, every effort should be made to understand the history of the site and the buildings that have existed there. There are usually rich clues that can be good starting points for design.

Outbuildings, Play Structures, Pools, etc.

Garden sheds, gazebos, above ground pools, play structures, and the like are elements that require careful siting in Historic Districts. Every effort should be made to site these elements out of view from the public way to the maximum extent possible, or screen them with plantings when it is not. In the case of sheds, gazebos and other structures, selecting ones that compliment the house in both architectural style and materials is desirable. A *Certificate of Appropriateness* is required for all of these items. When play structures and equipment occupy less than 100 square feet no *Certificate of Appropriateness* will be required.



Paint

Exterior color is within the Harvard Historical Commission's jurisdiction. Given the advancement in documentation of true historic colors, and the ever-expanding palette of paint colors available in the marketplace, the HHC is flexible on color changes. It is important for homeowners to consider the color of adjacent houses, the house's age and style of architecture when selecting exterior colors. Please supply both the color names and numbers along with a sample painted on wood. The HHC may also wish to view a sample painted on an inconspicuous area of the house itself.

For those interested in authenticity in Shaker Village, the Shakers initially painted only their meeting house white; wood frame dwelling houses were painted light colors such as yellow. By 1833, however, a map of the village shows that many dwellings had been painted white. Almost all secondary buildings - barns, workshops, etc. were traditionally painted red, brown, or lead color. A good source for selecting colors is the Historic New England website, color pallid for historic homes. It provides period correct historic colors.

If you wish to repaint the exterior of your house or outbuilding with its current color, no application to the HHC is required.

Porches, stoops, decks, hoods and balconies

Existing porches, stoops, hoods and balconies should be preserved and repaired. If they are open, they should remain so. Enclosing them with windows or walls alters their original condition and is not desirable.

Wooden boardwalks and porches have been part of New England landscape and architecture for centuries. Contemporary wood decks are associated with modern American architecture which requires great sensitivity when adding one to a historic home. Placing of the deck in a location that is not visible from a public way is most preferable. When this is not possible, the design of the deck is extremely important. The shape and size of the deck should complement the design of the existing home. Select wood and finishes that were available at the time the house was built. Details such as railing, balusters and trim should be selected to fit the period of the original building construction.

Roofs

The roof shape and slope is an important contributing element to the historic character of any building. Whenever possible the original shapes and slopes should be maintained. The preservation and repair of slate roofs is encouraged wherever possible. Any decorative patterns or textures of roofing material should be maintained. All roof trim such as cornice trim, fascia's and rake boards or decorative material including iron cresting, finials and weathervanes should be retained.

Signs

The basic design, color, size and scale of a sign help to determine whether it integrates with the architectural character of a building and the streetscape. Variety and creativity are appreciated. Applicants should note existing signs in the vicinity, and historical signage types (if photographs are available and relevant), to retain visual harmony and enhance the visual integrity of the area. Wooden signs are appropriate in the historic districts as are more durable synthetic and composite materials that, once painted, are deemed to be indistinguishable from wood as seen from the public way. In some cases, other materials might be appropriate -- e.g., there might be historical evidence for metal signs. Applicants are encouraged to bring any question to the Commission as early in the design process as possible. Note that the Protective Bylaw, in Section 125.41, also governs signs, and applicants will have to comply with its provisions as well.

If proposed, sign lighting should be in keeping with the style of the sign and appropriate to the business it represents. Lighting should illuminate the sign with as little spillage as possible. Up lighting and colored lights are not appropriate.

Materials to submit with a sign application:

1. Scaled drawings for proposed signs ½" = 1 foot minimum, including thickness of sign, specifications for materials, colors, and typeface to be used
2. Actual sample of sign material with actual samples of paint and finishes proposed
3. Photographs or elevations of building showing exact locations of proposed sign
4. Details and specifications for proposed brackets or hangers, colors, installation methods, light fixtures, etc.
5. Lighting plan, if appropriate.

Shutters and Awnings

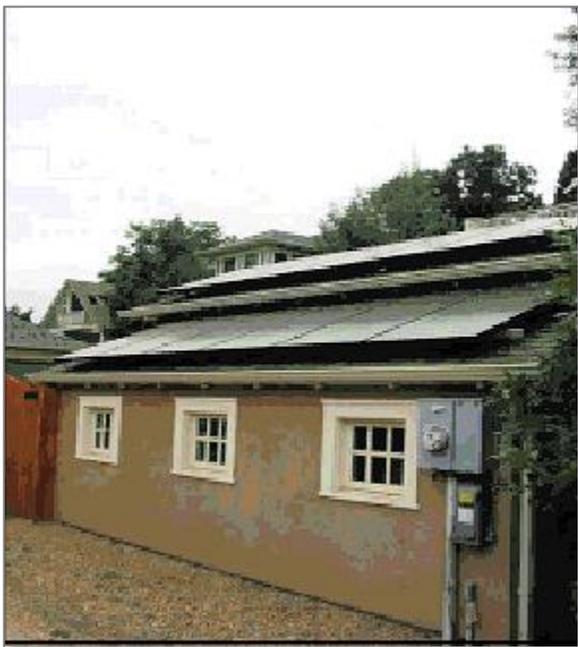
If appropriate for the building, existing shutters shall be retained and repaired whenever possible. Shutter removal does require approval of the HHC. Where replacement is necessary, new shutters shall match original or be of an appropriate type for the building. Shutters should be made of wood, composite materials that closely simulate wood may also be considered. Vinyl, aluminum or metal shutters are not desirable.

Shutters should reflect their original use. That is, their size should be such that they cover the entire window when closed. Arched windows should have arched shutters for example. As a matter of historical interest, shutters did not appear on buildings until the end of the Federal period (1790-1820), and shutters were likely added to many colonial-era houses during the mid-1800's.

Awnings may be allowed for seasonal sun screening but residents must present to the board the awning design. No awnings with writing or advertising will be allowed on a residence. Awnings with writing or advertising, on commercial properties, must be approved by the commission.

Solar Installations

While historic districts exist to maintain a sense of the past, they must work with innovations now considered essential – paved roads, electrical and electronic (cable TV, networking, telephone) lines, and sewage treatment systems are examples. A new addition to this list is emerging in the use of



solar energy, which the Commonwealth is encouraging

This guideline discusses only those systems that employ the direct use of sunlight. Other renewable energy systems that are sometimes called “solar” because they are traceable ultimately to sunlight (e.g. wind power, water-power) are not included.

Solar heating, hot water, or photovoltaic installations are “structures” by the definition given in MGL40C, and hence are subject to regulation by the Historical Commission. A *Certificate of Appropriateness* is required if the proposed installation is visible. Both ground-mounted and roof-mounted systems require *Certificate of Appropriateness* if potentially visible or *Certificates of Non-Applicability* if not.

Integrating solar panels into historic buildings can be challenging and requires a great deal of

care and planning. Solar panels may not be appropriate for every site or structure. In reviewing proposed installations, the Commission will consider the building's architectural and historical importance, prominence, significance, and visibility within the district, as well the visual impact of the proposed system, including solar glare, on the surrounding streetscape. Property owners should consider how the solar panels can be installed to avoid negatively impacting the integrity of both the building's architectural features and the property's surrounding streetscape. Solar panel installations which alter the building's historic fabric or its defining architectural features are inappropriate and are strongly discouraged. In general, it is not permissible to remove or significantly alter any historic feature of a structure, such as a chimney or a gable, to reduce shadowing or facilitate installation of a solar collector. There could be exceptions for example a chimney that is a later addition to an earlier structure might be removable – but an applicant considering a change of this sort would do well to seek the advice of the Commission early in the design cycle. It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide evidence that the installation will not be detrimental to the historic fabric of the structure or the district.

Solar panels should be installed in the least publicly visible area possible, not on the street facing roof of the principal structure, and ideally in an area which has no visibility from any public way(s). This is typically accomplished by locating the panels on rear ells, subordinate wings, secondary massing, accessory outbuildings, or on a free standing, array. The Commission encourages the use of any modern structures on a site in preference to a historic structure -- a garage, other outbuilding,

or relatively modern addition with appropriate roof orientation is a better choice than an old house, barn, shop, or other significant historic building.

Any required framing, piping, or other mechanisms should be designed to blend in with the building's existing roof surface and where possible, installed in areas that are entirely concealed from view. It is preferred that panels be installed on structures separated from the historic structure or additions to historic structures rather than on the original structure itself. 2nd floor low sloping roofs raised above the main roof, such as shed dormers are preferred to the main roof. Roof-mounted systems must be in, or very nearly in, the same plane as the roof on which they are mounted and no more than 3 inches above its surface, and both the collectors and associated plumbing, wiring, mounts, should be as unobtrusive as possible. Associated electrical wiring, inverters, meters, plumbing, pumps, etc. depending on the type of system, should be as inconspicuous as possible. On historic structures in particular, the roof should be visible with a margin of at least two feet on all four edges of the (presumed rectangular) collectors. The Commission may however grant an exception to this rule for a smaller non-contributing structure such as a detached garage or shed.

Freestanding solar installations avoid the complications associated with altering an historic structure and will be considered but may be visually inappropriate within the Historic Districts depending on the proposed placement. Care should be taken to install these systems in areas where they will either not be visible from the public way(s) or the impact is minimized. Screening with fencing may be an option for these installations and will be considered in the context of its suitability to the historic district and the specific streetscape.

The photograph at left shows a photovoltaic solar array on a low non-historic outbuilding not close to or oriented toward the road; note that the main structure is “behind” the shed from this angle, and the road beyond that. This allows using almost the whole roof, and plain-sight installation of metering, inverter, wiring, etc.



The solar array on the house at left, is in the plane of the roof, at an angle to the public way, on the back part of the roof, and partially screened from view by the adjacent building, and the dormer is not disturbed, all contributing to its approval.

Stairs and Steps

Steps, stairways and railings are important features of entryways and porches. Where possible, original features and detailing should be retained or repaired in the same design and material. When existing features are not original, replacement design and materials should be appropriate to the style of the building.

Deteriorated or missing elements and decorative ornamentation shall be replaced with materials and elements to match original, or be appropriate to the original. Stonework may be repaired, replaced or extended using the existing type of stone or brick. New work should be appropriate to the period and character of the building.

If a new railing design is desired, a scale drawing showing details of the new design must be provided.



Walls, Siding and Trim

Original siding material should be retained whenever possible and deteriorated materials repaired or replaced with new material that duplicates the original as closely as possible.

Siding materials used on historic homes of the 18th and 19th centuries were wood clapboard, rusticated boarding, shingles, brick and stone, both field and cut.

Painted wood trim is found on nearly all the buildings in our historic districts and its continued use is strongly encouraged. Property owners considering renovation should preserve existing trim if possible, and replace it in kind if necessary. In the case of additions and new construction, careful attention should be placed on neighboring historic structures in the vicinity to determine the appropriate application and proportioning of trim.

Expanded options now available in siding has resulted in an expanded discussion on siding for homes in the Harvard Historic Districts. When repairing or replacing siding on historic buildings every effort should be made to replace material with the same. Several 20th century siding options have already fallen out of favor and are rarely used such as asbestos siding, T-111 plywood and aluminum siding and are highly discouraged. New materials, such as cement composition clapboard, thin stone, man-made stone as well as rigid (solid) vinyl trim boards are available. For new buildings, modern siding options should be carefully considered in context of surround homes. For additions to existing homes traditional siding materials should be used. Vinyl siding should never be used on historic homes.

The removal of non-original siding materials, trim and imitation wood clapboards such as vinyl and aluminum is encouraged. Neither of these materials is appropriate for our historic districts and will not be approved for new structures or buildings under renovation.

Windows

Since many buildings in the historic districts have, over the years, lost some of their original windows and have had them replaced with incompatible versions, it is important to understand which window is most appropriate for your building. The HHC will work with you to help make the best determination.

Windows are particularly important contributors to a building's appearance, establishing the scale and rhythm of the facade. The HHC recommends repairing original wood sashes in kind whenever possible, particularly on the façade(s) facing the public way. While many homeowners may be tempted to install replacement vinyl or metal replacement windows, the HHC strongly encourages retaining original divided light windows and adding weather stripping and storm windows to improve their thermal characteristics.

Like windows, doors and their sidelights, transoms and surrounds should be preserved and repaired to match the original condition. Replacements, when repair is impractical, should reproduce the original. Replacement window elements should reproduce all visible details of the original window features.

Interior storm windows are exempt from the HHC review. Also, large single frame exterior storm window that cover the entire window with a single sheet of glass and have the same frame color as the existing window are exempt. However, the HHC encourages homeowners to investigate storm window styles whose profiles do not obscure the original windows. Many new products are on the marketplace, and HHC members can offer assistance to those seeking help in selecting an appropriate storm window. Aluminum 'triple track' windows must have the same frame color as the existing window and must not visually obscure the original window when closed.

Modern Equipment

Electrical, air conditioning, phone, television and internet systems were not widely available before the 20th century. Where possible, homeowners are encouraged to place equipment items where they will have the least visual impact on the home and neighborhood. This can be accomplished by careful placement of equipment, use of landscape screening and paint color that make items less visible.

Appendix

List of Recommended Resources:

Preservation Mass: A statewide organization with a website listing consultants in various historic preservation and restoration specialties: www.preservationmass.org

A Field Guide to American Houses by Virginia & Lee McAlester. Alfred A. Knopf New York 1997

The Architecture of the Shakers by Julie Nicoletta. The Countryman Press, Woodstock, Vt. 1995

Old House Journal Magazine and publications

Landscape resources:

Restoring American Gardens, an Encyclopedia of Heirloom Ornamental Plants 1640-1940 by Denise Wiles Adams, Timber Press, Inc. Portland, OR. 2004

Landscapes and Gardens for Historic Buildings, Rudy J. Favretti and Joy Putman Favretti. Second edition, revised. AltaMira Press, CA. 1991

Tower Hill Botanic Garden and library, 11 French Drive, Boylston, MA www.towerhillbg.org

