

Design Review Board

Applicability and Process

APPLICABILITY: The Commercial Design Guidelines specifically apply to development proposals in the C District for projects that require a building permit for new construction, an addition, or exterior alteration, or are subject to site plan review and/or a special permit granted by the Planning Board or the Zoning Board of Appeals. Note that guidelines are non-binding for by-right development but may be made a requirement for any development requiring a special permit. The Commercial Design Guidelines can be downloaded from the Harvard Planning Board page on the Town of Harvard website located at <http://www.harvard.ma.us/planning-board>

DEFINITIONS:

1. **APPLICATION** – A complete application packet including plans and all other materials required in Section 3. below.
2. **MAJOR APPLICATION** – All projects exceeding minor application thresholds.
3. **MINOR APPLICATION** – A minor design review application is for building additions of ten percent (10%) or less additional floor area added or <1000 square feet, whichever is the greater number, major façade renovations visible from the road right-of-way, or major site or landscaping renovations visible from the road right-of-way.
4. **RENDERING** – An architectural rendering is the process of creating three-dimensional images of a proposed architectural design. The purpose is to illustrate a lifelike experience of how a space or building will look before it is built, accurately representing design intent.
5. **SITE PLAN** – A formal plan, to scale, developed by a registered engineer or landscape architect, showing as applicable, uses and structures proposed for a parcel of land as required by the Protective Bylaws. Site plans shall show information in sufficient detail to allow the Board to determine compliance with the Protective Bylaw, §125-38D, Content, related provisions of law, and any additional requirements included in this Chapter. A landscape plan shall be included with the site plan submission and meet the requirements of §125-38G.
6. **SITE PLAN SKETCH** – A site plan sketch is a general or conceptual site plan of a development. It must include the approximate location of all lot lines and streets, the approximate location and exterior dimensions of all structures, the approximate location, size, and circulation pattern of all parking areas, and the approximate location and dimensions of all landscaped areas and buffers.

PROCESS: The Design Review Process consists of the following basic steps:

1. **Initial consultation and project discussion with Staff.** It is recommended that prospective applicants first discuss their designs and application with Land Use Boards Staff. This will not only assist the applicant in filing a complete application but may also provide some initial feedback that the applicant can incorporate into their designs.
2. **Development of plans.** Plans shall include the following:

a. Major Application Plan Set

- [1] Engineered site plan as per definition above
- [2] Landscape and grading plan sheet
- [3] Lighting and signage plan sheet
- [4] Three-dimensional rendering and/or model (including existing building if applicable)
- [5] Scaled elevation drawings
- [6] Building floor plans

b. Minor Application Plan Set

- [1] Site plan sketch as per definition above
- [2] Scaled elevation drawings

3. **Application submittal and evaluation.** Plans and application shall be submitted to the Land Use Boards Staff for a completeness review and time stamping. Applications shall include the following:

- a. Completed application
- b. Plan set as per Section 2. above.
- c. Project Narrative describing the project and how it meets the Guidelines.
- d. Color Photographs of the existing site and buildings and buildings on adjacent properties.
- e. Appropriate fee

4. **Design Review Board meeting and determination.** The Design Review Board shall meet to hear an application no more than 30 days after submittal. The Board shall make a decision no more than 60 days after submittal.

5. **Final plan submittal** (if revisions or conditions are required), **and**

6. **Certification of Design Review Board action.** Final plans shall be submitted for the file and a Certification of Action (CA) is issued.

If the Design Review Board approves a project, the action and any conditions of approval are recorded in a CA which is a memorandum of findings that will be promptly sent to the applicant, owner, and the applicable review board. If the approval is subject to conditions, the applicant must submit revised plans for the file and for building permit application.

Approval by the Design Review Board does not entitle any grading or building to occur until all required permits are secured from the appropriate board or department. A project which is approved subject to conditions must reflect these conditions on final plans, but is not required to go back to the Design Review Board unless specifically required to do so by the Design Review Board.

Typically, applications will only have to be reviewed again if the Board's action is to require significant amendments or a redesign of the project because it does not meet the criteria established in the Commercial Design Guidelines. From time to time, the Board may require additional review of a project if more information is needed by the Board to adequately understand the development proposal. Submittal of a complete application which clearly and accurately depicts a development proposal will normally avoid continuation of an item. In addition, an item may be

continued with the Board's consent if the applicant wishes additional time to revise or restudy a project submittal.