

# FAIRFIELD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

## DESIGN AND BUILDING ISSUES ~~GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES~~ REGULATIONS

Following public notice, The Fairfield Historic District Commission voted, on **September 11, 2008** to establish a revised set of **Design and Building Guidelines**. This **revised section** of the **The Fairfield Historic District Commission Handbook** – updated again on **January 14, 2010** (replacing pages 54-63 of the current handbook) provides Commissioners with the tools required to properly consider and act on each application heard. Each application is unique unto itself and must be considered as such. For several years, the Commission has worked to reorganize, simplify, yet expand the design criteria that are most common to most of the applications the Commission takes action on each month. Commission members, Thomas Dailey, Adam Klyver, and Pete Petron have taken material compiled by the Commission over several years and has brought verbal and visual clarity to these important issues. We have also inserted the latest revision of our **Regulations and Procedures**, which were updated on **January 14, 2010 and June 9, 2011**. The Commission continues to work on additional revisions to the Handbook, which will be made available as they are completed.

– *Ellen Gould, Chairman, The Fairfield Historic District Commission*

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# SITE ISSUES

## Introduction

While it is difficult to establish a set of rules applicable to all situations, there are certain basic concepts to guide the Historic District Commission and the property owners. Although no two historic houses are completely alike, these guidelines can basically assist in preserving the character of each Historic District.

In the following section, we have selected the most common issues to come before the HDC in reviewing Applications, and provided approaches which we feel are in keeping with the objectives of the Commission and most likely to be approved.

## Driveways, Aprons and Paths

Wherever possible, driveways should be constructed with materials appropriate to the historic character of the building, and placement made to follow original access ways on the site.

Materials generally considered **appropriate** for driveways are:

- a. Unpaved with native stone (grits) surface.
- b. Paved with "blacktop"
- c. "Blacktop" with native stone embedded.

Materials considered generally **inappropriate** are:

- a. Grits other than gray or brown native stone
- b. White marble chips
- c. Crushed bluestone or trap rock, etc.
- d. Concrete Pavers

If a new driveway is to be introduced, it should be designed recognizing historic prototypes, e.g. a circular drive might be appropriate to a Victorian house, while not so for a Colonial structure.

**Aprons** should match material of driveway or the adjoining street. The introduction of a different material is strongly discouraged.

## Curbing or edging for driveways, walks and paths

Generally, curbing and edging should be the minimum practical thickness. Examples of **appropriate** materials include but are not limited to:

- a. Wood edging as used by paving contractors (this however is not permanent), 1" or 2" redwood or pressure treated lumber
- b. (Ryerson) steel edging
- c. 2" or less bluestone (on edge)

Examples of **inappropriate** materials include but are not limited to:

- a. Belgian block
- b. Granite curbing
- c. Railroad ties
- d. Concrete curbing
- e. Composite edging

Paths and walks should not be of hard, modern materials such as concrete, but of brick, pebbles and pea stone, with flagstone popular in early 20th Century Tudor and Colonial Revival styles.

# Stone Walls and Driveway Entry Gates

## Stone Walls

The designer of stone walls should consider the following:

- a. Type of wall
- b. Scale, height & width
- c. Context and period of home
- d. Color
- e. Mortar joints

**Appropriate** types of stone walls: (Proposed deletion with addition. Addition- under score)

- a. Dry-stacked stone
- b. Mortared Stone wall
- c. Battered Stone walls
- d. Veneer stone walls that match one of the above.  
ONLY in the case of retaining walls requiring non-traditional materials for engineering reasons, veneer stone wall that match one of the above.

**Appropriate** materials:

- a. Granite
- b. Gneiss



**Appropriate:** Dry stacked stone wall



**Appropriate:** Cap on dry stacked stone wall



**Appropriate:** Mortared stone wall

## NOTES

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**Inappropriate:** Color too light and stones too round



**Inappropriate:** Too much mortar showing at joints



**Inappropriate:** Color too uniform and joints are too tight

**Inappropriate** materials include but are not limited to:

- a. Stone that is not indigenous to New England
- b. Sandstone
- c. Limestone
- d. Manufactured stone

### **Entry Gates**

The designer of entry gates should consider the following:

- a. Historical precedence
- b. Type of gate
- c. Scale, height
- d. Context and period of home
- e. Material of gate
  - a. Wood
  - b. Iron
- f. Gates should be set within the stone wall not in front of or behind.
- g. Gate height should be equal to or slightly lower than adjacent stone walls.

### **Stone Piers**

The designer of stone piers should consider the following:

- a. Historic precedence
- b. Scale, height
- c. Context, period of home

## Fences

A number of factors should be considered in selecting a fence:

### 1. Location of the fence

- a. More attention should be given to authenticity and neighborhood context where the fence faces the street.
- b. In the case of interior lot fencing an unobtrusive utilitarian fencing material may be appropriate.

### 2. Is there an established neighborhood fence style to be respected, i.e. stone walls, picket fences?

### 3. Architectural styles generally considered appropriate include but are not limited to:

- a. Solid board fences used by Colonial builders.
- b. Open board and rail fences, 18th Century to the present day.
- c. Painted pickets, 18th Century to the present day.
- d. Fences of one-inch square sticks with pyramidal tops, flanked by heavy, pedestal-type posts, late 18th Century and well into the 19th Century.
- e. Paneled posts with elegant, urn-shaped finials, Federal style.
- f. Ornamental head or a cut-work pattern in a picket fence, Victorian style.
- g. Trefoil or quatrefoil cutouts decorating a fence, Gothic revival.
- h. Ornate cast iron fencing.

### 4. Fences considered inappropriate include but are not limited to:

- a. Synthetic fiber or polymer fences
- b. Chain link
- c. Stockade
- d. Split Rail
- e. Deer fence
- f. Aluminum
- g. Garden fence

## Screen Planting

The commission may require planting to screen items that if visible from a public way would be considered inappropriate.

Items in this category are included but not limited to:

- a. Swimming pool enclosures.
- b. Air conditioning condensers
- c. Electric transformers installed on grade.
- d. Generator housings
- e. Basement access doors.
- f. Gas meters
- g. Handicap access ramps
- h. Interior lot fencing

The commission may specify the type, height and density year-round of the planting and may require that the planting plan be submitted and approved prior to issuing a Certificate of Appropriateness. The commission may also require a periodic inspection of the planting to assure that it continues to meet the screening requirements.

## Playground, Sporting & Entertainment Equipment

It is recommended that all moveable equipment should be stored out of public view when not in use.

Playground, sporting and entertainment equipment which is non-portable or affixed to the ground regulated by the Historic District Commission includes but is not limited to:

- a. Permanently installed swing sets
- b. Permanently installed or non-portable playhouses
- c. Tree houses
- d. Multi-use sports courts
- e. Tennis courts
- f. Basketball courts
- g. Bocce courts

- h.** Hockey rinks
  - i.** Trampolines
  - j.** Non-portable basketball hoops
  - k.** Permanently installed goal posts, cages and nets.
  - l.** Outdoor kitchens & entertainment areas
  - m.** Outdoor fireplaces
  - n.** Permanently installed outdoor art work

## Swimming Pools

Considerations for swimming pool installations:

### 1. Types:

- a.** In ground (**Appropriate**)
- b.** Above ground (**Inappropriate**)

**2. Location:** Pools should be placed out of sight of a public way.

**3. Screening:** Utilized in such a manner so as to blend into the natural environment. (e.g. vine covered metal mesh fencing, or tall plantings)

Historic fence treatment such as cast iron or ornamental wood is generally inappropriate.

## Lighting (rev. 1/10)

The selection of exterior lighting fixtures should be consistent with regard to style and scale for the period of the structure or building.

**Appropriate** fixtures include:

1. Original to the period or style of the building;
2. Historically accurate reproduction fixture(s) based on old photographs, prints and pattern books;
3. Contemporary lighting fixtures which are diffuse, hidden, and/or unobtrusive in scale and intensity; and
4. Path lighting 16 inches high or less above adjacent grade.

Lighting should not intrude on adjacent properties, including pool lighting, court, and driveway lighting, particularly near lot lines.

Street lanterns should have relevance to lighting on adjacent lots and/or along the street.

Use of spotlights and/or other intense lighting is generally discouraged at private buildings. Such lighting of inappropriate wattage and/or intensity has the effect of focusing attention on certain buildings and thereby reducing the visual integrity of the historic district as a whole. There would have been no high intensity lighting in the period when most of the structures in historic districts were built and introduction of it in some cases and not others tends to distort the view of an entire historic district. Where low intensity spotlighting at private structures is needed for security or safety reasons, it should be recessed (soffit) lighting, or hidden amongst the landscaping. Where low intensity spotlighting at private structures is needed for evening illumination of an American flag, the lighting should be of appropriate intensity and focused on the flag and not the surrounding property. Spotlighting of low intensity is not discouraged at public buildings. The Historic District Commission recognizes that such structures often have parking areas and large numbers of people attending public gatherings in the evening hours.

## Signage

Although the size and location of signs is generally regulated by Town's zoning regulations, inappropriate formats, lettering or materials can have an adverse impact upon the appearance of an Historic District. A few general concepts should be kept in mind:

- 1. Location:** the sign should not obscure or compete with significant architectural features. Brackets should be simple and minimal in size, and not cause damage to building fabric.
- 2. Materials:** the Commission may favor traditional material, usually wood or metal. No internally-lit, moving, or neon

signs will be permitted. Signs should use as few colors as possible, and be compatible with the basic architectural character of the structure, for example avoid an ornate Victorian sign on a Colonial-era building.

**3. Graphics:** Lettering and ornamentation should be plain and of appropriate historic style. Logos are generally not acceptable.

## BUILDING ISSUES

### Outbuildings

There are a number of structures which fall into the definition of an “outbuilding.” These include barns, carriage houses, garages, pool houses, sheds, gazebos or greenhouses. These can be either existing, proposed or temporary structures.

**1. Existing:** Existing outbuildings should retain their essential architectural character, including design elements such as degree of ornamental or basic configuration. An anachronistic appearance should be avoided, e.g. a Victorian greenhouse on a modern house. See the New Openings section for recommendations on windows and doors.

**2. Proposed:** The goal of any new outbuilding is to create a structure which is not disruptive to the historic character of the existing building(s). New accessory buildings can be based on historic examples, or be of contemporary design clearly related to the basic configuration of the main building. It should be subsidiary in nature, clearly less important than the original structure. New construction should be sited so as not to disturb an established streetscape, preferably not within sight of a public way.

**3. Temporary:** such as tool sheds, greenhouses, tents and marquees have a tendency to become permanent and must therefore be reviewed.

### New Construction (Proposed Addition- underscore)

An Historic District is not frozen in any one particular time and should reflect both current and historic changes in architectural style. Established rhythms in location, height and bulk of structures along the street should be maintained. New construction, therefore, shall be set back from the street and side yards in proportion to setbacks of adjacent buildings. In the extremely unlikely event that a new construction is replacing a demolished or otherwise removed structure, the new construction should roughly match the previous structure in mass, scale, height and dimension in order to maintain the historic visual qualities of the streetscape. If there is a common roof pattern, e.g. gabled roofs to the street, that roof style and configuration should be maintained. This also applies to materials, where an effort should be made to maintain characteristic materials of the surrounding area. In general, the creation of a “sore thumb” in the District should be avoided.

### Construction Techniques

In accord with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards 5 and 7, construction techniques used in making alterations to buildings and structures shall be undertaken in such a way as to preserve existing historic qualities. For example, application of paint or other surface treatments should be done in the manner best suited to preserve the original surface material. As another example, spray painting a historic wood structure would be strongly discouraged as it does not afford the same protection of historic surfaces as brush painting.

### Additions

In general, additions should be undertaken in such a way that the least amount of historic material is lost or damaged. Where possible, the addition should be designed so that it could be safely removed at a later date.

#### Scale

Generally speaking, additions should be smaller in size and less prominent than the primary building. Window and door openings of the addition should replicate the basic scale and configuration of the original.

## Massing

The basic configuration of the addition should be compatible with the proportions of the existing building, i.e. the ratio of height to width. Further, the addition should typically be set back from the front plane of the building including the construction of additional stories. This will help differentiate new construction from the existing historic structure. The addition should also respect the basic symmetrical or asymmetrical character of the original architecture. For example, Georgian and Federal buildings tend towards symmetrical facades, while Victorian period buildings typically have freer plans and elevations.

## Materials (Proposed Addition- underscore)

Materials should be harmonious with those of the original building or a material which might have been used for an addition in that particular period. For example, a Shingle Style house of stone might have had an addition constructed of wood shingles. In accord with the Secretary of Interiors Standards, replacement or additional materials should be the same as the original being replaced or should be of a kind that might have been used at the time of original construction.

## Detailing

In general, period detail should be replicated, although, in some cases, in a simplified form. In no case should an incompatible style be allowed, for example, Post-Modern or historical styles without existing precedent, or a Salt Box addition to a later house. Significant details to be respected include window and door configuration, glazing pattern and ornamentation, and cornice details including brackets.

## Window and Door repair/replacement

In this era of energy conservation, there is a temptation to remove historic windows and replace with more energy efficient units. This has resulted in the loss of important historic fabric. Old windows should not be replaced unless totally deteriorated. Modern epoxy fillers and hardeners, wood splicing and patching can often repair seemingly hopeless conditions. If no alternative exists, the window should be accurately replicated. Current manufacturers offer several standard and custom reproduction units, many double-glazed. However, care must be taken to maintain the original muntin profile.

**Muntin thickness** is a critical aspect of building design, and any alteration to the configuration, however minor, can be visually disturbing. Snap-ins are permissible, provided they respect the original muntin configuration, however, the Commission will review the application and act on it as though there were no muntins. An alternative is the installation of seasonal single-pane storm window panels mounted from the interior of the building. Standard metal storms painted the color of the window are permissible. Surprisingly enough, the old-fashioned kind of wooden, exterior storms (while a nuisance to store, install and maintain), are quite energy efficient.

In addition, architraves, hoodmolds, sashes and sills should be repaired rather than replaced. Missing elements can be replicated using existing features on the building or copied from nearby unaltered structures, historic photos, or pattern books. In a similar fashion, historic doors should be repaired and conserved wherever possible. If replacement is unavoidable, the style of the new door, including hardware should be compatible with the historic character of the building. If adequate proof of its appropriateness is available, a salvage door is acceptable. Use of wooden storm/screen doors, is preferred to aluminum, a modern material.

## Changes in Openings

In order to meet today's building codes or a change in an interior building plan, or even the desire for a brighter interior, may cause the need for new openings. Every effort should be made to keep these new openings in context with the existing structure. Existing scale and symmetry should be respected. Classical-derived styles preferred symmetry, while those such as Craftsman influence were more inclined towards asymmetry. In addition the glazing pattern and level of ornamentation should be respected e.g. a Palladian window would be unsuitable on a modest Federal-era farmhouse, even though Palladian windows were in use on grander homes at that time.

The location of the main entrance to an historic building is highly significant and should not be relocated.

In cases of converting the use of an accessory building, it may be necessary to alter existing openings to service the new use. Every effort should be made to keep the original openings intact so as not to disrupt the historic character of the structure. For example, in converting a barn to a dwelling, the windows and doors could be placed on the side and rear elevation, leaving the characteristic barn door configuration intact. If possible, glazing should be placed into existing openings. If additional wings or stories are contemplated, refer to the section entitled Additions above.

## Exterior Shutters and Blinds

The terms "exterior shutters" and "exterior blinds" are not interchangeable: shutters have solid panels, while blinds are louvered. Although both styles were employed to block out light and provide insulation, each was characteristic of different ar-

chitectural periods.

After choosing the appropriate shutter or blind for the period of the house, the key consideration is size and placement in relation to the window opening. The height of the shutters/blinds must fit within the window frame, and be wide enough so that when closed they meet in the center. Shutters/blinds should not be used where there is insufficient space for them to lie flat against the exterior wall, unless originally intended to do so. Arched window require curved shutters/blinds. Shutters can also provide additional protection for doors and act in place of a screen in the summer months. In a smaller doorway, a single, double-paneled blind is sufficient, while larger entrances can utilize a pair of blinds. Avoid the use of shutters on modern windows or in circumstances where they never historically would have been used, for example, a picture window.

### **Siding and Roofing**

Each style of historic architecture made use of characteristic siding and roofing materials, and every effort should be made to preserve or replicate authentic material. This holds true for additions and new construction, as well as for improvements to the original building since historic buildings are extremely sensitive to keeping the scale, profile and texture, of the original surfaces. In conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's New Standards for Rehabilitation (see appendix C), every effort should be made to either retain original siding material or replicate it if previously removed or beyond repair. Use of artificial siding, e.g. aluminum or vinyl is discouraged as historically inappropriate and a potential cause of damage to the underlying historic fabric.

Roof materials play a more noticeable role in some architectural styles than others. For example, patterned slate roofs are a significant feature of Second Empire houses, while Shingle Style buildings are defined by their all-over sheathing in wood shingles. In replacing roofs, every effort should be made to keep or return to the original roofing material, although property owners are permitted to replace existing asphalt shingle roofs.

### **Dormers**

New dormers are acceptable provided they are in keeping with the basic architectural style of the original structure. For example, shed dormers are a relatively modern feature and are compatible primarily with a post-1920 house. The pattern books listed in the Appendix provide guidance as to possible dormer styles. No dormer should be so large so as to obscure the roofline. Further, the overall size of its window may either match an existing gable window or be similar to, but slightly smaller than, the windows of the story immediately below.

### **Cupolas and "Widow Walks"**

Historically, it was not uncommon for shallower-roofed structures in the areas that would become Fairfield's historic districts to have small glazed cupolas and "widow's walks." Consequently new construction involving these features may be appropriate.

Small venting cupolas, however, were not a common characteristic of structures built during Fairfield's past and as such their use is discouraged on residential structures in the historic districts. Appropriately sized venting cupolas, however, were used on outbuildings and may be considered for inclusion on ancillary structures.

### **Skylights**

Skylights are generally not encouraged as they destroy historical material and detract from the appearance of the house. If permitted, they should be located so as to be as unobtrusive as possible from the street. Low profile skylights are preferable to "bubble type."

### **Porch Enclosures**

While it is tempting to acquire additional floor space by enclosing a porch, this has an extremely adverse impact on the historic character of the house. Enclosures must be seasonal in nature, and reversible without damage to the historic fabric.

## **Color (rev. 1/10)**

As it is truly temporary in nature, the choice of paint color is expressly unregulated by the Historic District Commission and no certificate of appropriateness is required. Color, however, plays a critical role in the appearance of the district. Although the tendency is to paint all older houses white, whether or not this was the case at the time they were built, the history of color in America is far more complex. As more knowledge of historic paint technology is acquired, we are constantly surprised at the diversity and intensity of 18th and 19th century house color.

If one looks upon a historic house as an integrated work of art, expressive of its time period and lifestyle, it becomes important to know something about the original color scheme. With some research and perhaps expert help, one may be able to determine these colors, or at least be able to make an educated guess. You might begin by removing a small section of paint,

preferably in an inconspicuous spot where paint tends to accumulate. The edge of the chip can be sanded smooth until it reveals what may be up to twenty layers of paint. You can examine this edge with a microscope or strong lens, but remember that what you see is deceptive. The original colors may have faded, or the linseed oil darkened over time. Organizations such as SPNEA, the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, located in Boston, Mass., have experts on their staff who do scientific color analysis.

Even with accurate documentation, repainting a house in historic colors is not easy. 18th and 19th century colors tended to be extremely rich but muted. Victorian houses were painted in up to four, or even five complex colors, many of which used pigments which are no longer available. The so-called historic paint colors manufactured today lack the intensity of the originals, and re-creating them is a time-consuming process on the part of the paint store. In addition, a multi-colored application of paint may run into considerable expense.

Whether or not to paint a structure at all is something to consider. Early Colonial houses were sometimes left unpainted and allowed to weather, as was also the case for early twentieth century Shingle style houses and bungalows. Brick buildings should be re-painted if they presently are painted, however, a coat of paint should not be applied to unpainted brick in lieu of cleaning and repointing. If a brick building was historically painted, it is best to leave it that way as it often meant the brick was of a lesser, more porous quality. In any case, removing paint from brick, even by the gentlest of methods, can damage the brick and should be avoided wherever possible.

In the following section of the handbook, we have set down some historic color suggestions. Please remember that they are very general, and that color preferences often changed over the years within the same style. For example, an Italian villa built in the 1840s, would have been painted in far softer, paler colors than a villa built in the 1860s.

## REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES (rev. 1/10,6/11)

All the following regulations and procedures apply both to Historic Districts and Historic Properties.

### 1. MEETINGS

Regular meetings of the Historic District Commission ("the Commission") shall be held monthly. The schedule of meetings and deadlines for filing applications shall be prepared at the beginning of each year and shall be filed with the Town Clerk and the Building Department. Three members or seated alternates of the Commission shall constitute a quorum. Minutes of all public hearings and regular or special meetings of the Commission shall be kept.

All meetings of the Commission must conform to the requirements of the Connecticut Freedom of Information Act.

### 2. OTHER MEETINGS OR EXECUTIVE SESSIONS

Special Meetings and meetings where the Commission is acting as a study committee for Historic Properties or forming new districts may be called by the Chairman or at the request of any three members of the Commission.

### 3. PRE-HEARING PROCEDURES

Any architect, builder, property owner, or any other person with an interest in a property located in an Historic District is encouraged to meet with the Commission to discuss contemplated work before preparation of detailed plans and prior to submission of a formal Application for Certificate of Appropriateness. Pre-application discussions on matters that will require a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals are discouraged. To determine if a structure is within an Historic District, the applicant must consult the maps in the Building Department in Independence Hall. There are three districts, Southport, Greenfield Hill and Old Post Road, Fairfield. Historic Properties, which are listed with the Building Department, also require an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness.

### 4. APPLICATIONS

Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness shall be filed with the Building Department of the Town of Fairfield. All work requiring approval of the Historic District Commission shall have final approval of other Federal, State and Municipal agencies prior to submitting application. An application to the Commission shall include:

a. One (1) copy of the Application Form for a Certificate of Appropriateness which shall contain the following:

1) Names and addresses of all owners/applicants. If the owner or applicant is a trustee or a business entity the name of the beneficial owner(s) or principal(s) of the business entity shall be disclosed. Where fences and walls are located on property lines, owners of both properties shall be included as applicants.

2) Location of the property affected by the application, if different from the applicant's address.

3) Assessor's map and lot numbers.

4) A description of the work proposed.

5) Signature of the property owner or his attorney-in-fact is required, together with a permit for an on-site inspection by the members of the Commission.

- b. Four (4) copies of Plot Plan, drawn to scale. One copy must bear the stamp "Approved for Zoning Compliance" issued by the Town Plan and Zoning Commission. This is required for ALL Applications.
- c. Four (4) COLLATED sets of drawings, to scale, and a description of materials to be used. The drawings should be as complete as possible and should show both existing and proposed conditions. Each page should be identified with the owner's name, address and phone number; each page MUST include a page number and date of preparation and/or revisions.
- d. Four (4) sets of photographs or tear sheets must be included if applicable to the to the application. Each page should be identified with the owner's name, address and phone number.
- e. Submission of a), b) c) and d) shall be made to the Building Department prior to the filing deadline. The Building Department shall forward all copies to the Commission.
- f. At the public hearing, the property owner, his attorney or agent, and/or the architect or the builder must be present to present and explain all exhibits regarding the application to the Commission.
- g. After the Commission has taken action on an application, the applicant shall be notified in writing as to the results of said action. If approved, one copy of the Certificate of Appropriateness, application, and drawings will be returned to the applicant, one copy will be given to the Building Official and one copy will be retained for the Commission files. If an application is approved with (stipulations) conditions, a Certificate will be issued only upon receipt of revised drawings that are approved by two members of the Commission. Nothing will be forwarded to the Building Department until an application meets the above requirements.
- h.. "Receipt" of an application by the Commission is defined as the date of the first regular meeting after the physical receipt by the Clerk of the Commission of the complete application with exhibits in quadruplicate. The statutory 65 day decision period shall run from such date.

**5. NOTICE OF HEARING**

Notice of the date of such hearing shall be mailed postage prepaid to the applicant at least one week before the date set for the hearing. The Commission shall cause a notice of the hearing to be published in newspaper having circulation in the Town of Fairfield not more than fifteen (15) days or less than five (5) days before the date set for the public hearing

**6. DECISIONS**

a. All decisions of the Commission granting or refusing a Certificate of Appropriateness shall be made within 65 days of the date of "receipt" of the application by the Commission. Decisions shall be in writing and a copy thereof sent to the applicant and to the Building Official.

**b. Decisions granting or refusing an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness shall be made by a vote of not less than three members of the Commission. If a matter must be tabled, written consent must be given by the applicant prolonging the statutory 65 days to a date certain. No application may be withdrawn after notice of the application has been published when it has been placed on the agenda as the subject of a public hearing. Applications may be approved as presented, approved with one or more stipulations or conditions, denied without prejudice, or denied.**

**7. APPROVAL OF CERTAIN TYPES OF WORK**

The Historic District Commission may from time to time rule on certain applications and issue a statement to the effect that an application is not necessary, nor is the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness necessary. Approval will be given on this work under a separate notice to the Building Official, a copy of which will be issued to the property owner.

Examples of such approval may occur where the structural change cannot be seen from a public way and where the change constitutes merely a repair.

In the event only repairs to a property are anticipated, one copy of the application fern only, (no drawings or plot plan are required) shall be filed with the Building Department. The application shall describe the work to be done and shall certify there will be no change in appearance when completed. Approval can be given by the Chairman or any member designated by the Commission without a public hearing or action by the full Commission.

**8. REVISIONS TO CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS**

After the issuance of Certificate of Appropriateness, the Commission may consider requests for revisions to approved drawings, provided that such revisions are minor in nature and in general conformity with the original application and the Commission's prior ruling. In such cases, the requirements for notice and hearing may be waived, but any revision will require approval by the Commission at a duly called public meeting. If the Commission determines that any requested revision is not determined to be minor, the applicant must file an application for Certificate of Appropriateness.

## **9. CONSIDERATIONS OF APPLICATIONS FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS**

**a.** The purpose of Historic District Commission deliberations is to control the erection or alteration of buildings, structures or parking which are incongruous with the historic or architectural aspects of the historic district. In passing on appropriateness as to exterior architectural features, buildings or structures, the Commission shall consider, in addition to other pertinent factors, historical and architectural significance, type and style of exterior architectural elements and structures, architectural style, size, mass, scale, kinds of exterior materials, textures and ornamentation, site layout and overall visual exterior appearance of the building, as well as its visual effect on surrounding buildings and the immediate neighborhood. The Commission shall also consider the general design, arrangement, texture, and material of the architectural features involved and their relationship to the exterior architectural style and pertinent features of other buildings and structures in the immediate neighborhood.

**b.** In its determination as to appropriateness of applications, the Commission shall be guided by the considerations stated in this Handbook, as well as those expressed in the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for the Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings. The ten Standards are:

- (1) A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.**
- (2) The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.**
- (3) Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.**
- (4) Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.**
- (5) Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.**
- (6) 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. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.**
- (7) Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, 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) 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, exterior alterations or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.**
- (10) 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.**

**c.** Applications for enlargement and new construction shall be accompanied by explanatory line drawings and, where required by the Commission, drawings and/or pictures of the surrounding buildings, which shall clearly demonstrate the compatibility of the new structure with buildings in the immediate neighborhood. It is not the intent to limit new construction to any one period of architectural style, but to preserve the integrity of historic buildings and to insure the compatibility of any new work constructed in the vicinity. Where lighting changes or additions are proposed, the application must include drawings or pictures of the proposed fixture(s) as well as detailed specifications as to voltage and intensity of proposed lighting.

**d.** The terms "immediate neighborhood" and "immediate vicinity" as used in these ~~guidelines~~ regulations and procedures shall be defined as the historic district in which the structure under consideration is located.

**e.** A Certificate of Appropriateness shall not be issued if, in the judgment of the Commission, the proposed work is inappropriate to the building or the site, compromises the historical or architectural integrity of the building, or is incongruous with the appearance of the immediate neighborhood or the general neighborhood.

**10. CONFORMANCE TO CERTIFICATE**

All construction work performed under a Certificate of Appropriateness shall conform to such Certificate, and shall be so certified by the Building Official.

**11. LIMITATION ON VALIDITY OF CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS**

Any Certificate of Appropriateness issued by this Commission shall expire twelve (12) months from the date of its issue, unless work and/or construction covered thereby has been started and is continuing\*\*.

The Commission may, in cases of undue hardship, renew an "approved" Certificate for an additional period not exceeding six (6) months.

**12. ENFORCEMENT**

**i:** After notice to the owner of the property in question, and following a public hearing confirming violation of a certificate of appropriateness and/or the Fairfield Historic District Commission Guidelines Regulations and Procedures, the Agency may record on the Fairfield Land Records, with respect to the title of the property in question, a Notice of Violation including a description of the property, and a summary of the nature of the violation and the actions and time frames required for its resolution. A copy of such violation notice shall be sent by Certified Mail Return Receipt Requested to the violator.

**ii:** Following resolution of a violation in a matter where a Notice of Violation is filed on the Fairfield land records, the Agency (or its designated agent) shall clear the title by recording on the Fairfield Land records a Notice of Resolution of Violation.

**13. CONSIDERATIONS FOR SIGNIFICANT CHANGES**

Demolition or significant enlargement or reduction of buildings or structures in historic districts is discouraged. Historic districts represent a carefully selected group of structures that, taken together, are an expression of the growth and development of the area over time. The mix of structures and their architectural styles should be preserved in order maintain the integrity of the overall historic district.

For a variety of reasons, however, some structures within historic districts may be subject to significant change over time. In determining the appropriateness of demolition or significant enlargement or reduction in size of a building or structure, the Historic District Commission shall address, in addition to any other considerations it deems relevant, the building or structure's:

- historical importance;
- architectural importance (e.g. was its architect an important figure in the field nationally, in Connecticut, in Fairfield and its environs, or in the specific district?; is the structure an example of design or construction significant to the historic district?); and
- representation of a particular architectural style in the historic district (e.g. is the structure unique or one of few examples of its architectural style within the district?).

Demolition or significant changes to buildings or structures of historical or architectural importance, or that are representative of an architectural style or period of construction that is unique or rare within a district are strongly discouraged.

**For more complete details on the procedures of the Commission, consult the Connecticut General Statues, Municipalities, Section 7-147a through 7-147k.**

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**THE FAIRFIELD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**

**July 2011**

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