



## EXPLANATION SHEET FOR HISTORIC DISTRICT CERTIFICATE APPLICATIONS

### **What is a Historic District?**

A historic district is an area of the city declared to be of historic and/or architectural significance. Districts can be created only after a study by the Historical Commission, a 2/3 vote of City Council, and approval of the Mayor.

### **What does Historic Status mean?**

Properties within a historic district are given architectural protection by the Historical Commission. Any exterior architectural feature visible from the public street or park is protected. Before any change may take place, approval must be sought from the Historical Commission.

### **How can a change take place?**

The Historical Commission can issue three types of certificates to allow changes within historic districts:

#### **APPROPRIATENESS:**

Issued for those changes that are in conformance with the guidelines and/or acceptable for the particular district.

#### **HARDSHIP:**

Issued for those changes that are not appropriate but which may be necessary due to economic, physical, social, or other special conditions that apply to the individual property but not to the overall district.

#### **NON-APPLICABILITY:**

Issued for those changes that affect features that are not controlled by the Commission. (This certificate simply informs other city agencies that work can proceed.)

### **How can a certificate be obtained**

Applications for certificates can be obtained from the Historical Commission (in the Planning Department, Room 300) City Hall and can now be downloaded from this Springfield Planning Department web site. Fill out the application and return it with supporting information to the Historical Commission. The application must include:

1. Address of property to be altered
2. Name of owner of property
3. Address of owner of property
4. Written description of the proposed change (if a change of siding is requested, fill out the reverse side of the application sheet.)
5. The reason for a Certificate of Hardship (if that is being requested)

**Additional required information:**

NO APPLICATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED BY THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT WITHOUT THESE MATERIALS.

1. Drawings for alterations and/or additions to existing structures, or for new constructions. Drawings shall be plans or elevations drawn to scale with sufficient detail to show the architectural design of buildings, including proposed materials, textures and colors. Samples of materials or colors, and the plot plan or site layout, indicating all improvements affecting appearances such as walls, walks, terraces, plantings, accessory buildings, signs, lights, and other elements, shall also be included.
2. Photographs required with application to demolish existing structures. Applicant shall submit photos showing all sides of property and contiguous properties on either side and across the street.
3. Photographs required with application for new construction. Applicant shall submit photos adjoining properties on either side and across the street.
4. Photographs required with application for repair, alterations, and/or additions to existing structures. Applicant shall submit photos of all sides of structure to be affected by proposed action.
5. Sample of materials and designs.
6. If applying under the category of hardship, applicant shall submit sufficient materials to support hardship claim. Photographs, financial records, energy ratings, and health records are some suggested supporting materials.

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**What should you expect after your application is accepted Commission?**

Once the Commission receives an application form, it follows one of three procedures depending upon the type of Certificate that is applied for, as required in Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 40C, Section 11:

1. In the case of Certificates of Appropriateness and Hardship, the Commission will schedule a public hearing, giving abutters of the property written notification by mail 14 days before the hearing.
2. In the case of Certificates of Appropriateness and Hardship, should an applicant obtain signed waivers of the abutters right to notification from all of the surrounding property owners the Commission may hear the matter at the next scheduled meeting.
3. In the case of a Certificate of Non-Applicability the Commission will waive the public hearing and as long as the change is found to be non-applicable the Certificate will be sent to the applicant.
4. The Commission must reach a decision within 60 days of the filing of the application form, otherwise the Certificate is automatically granted.
5. For further information contact the Historical Commission at the Planning Department- (413) 787-6020

### **What About Further Recourse?**

If a petitioner disagrees with a ruling by the Commission, he or she may, within twenty (20) days after the filing of the notice of such ruling with the City Clerk, appeal to the Superior Court (Housing Court may also have jurisdiction). On the other hand, the Historical Commission may, through Superior Court (or Housing Court), seek an injunction against any violation to the historic district. The Court may order the removal of any such violation or the restoration of any building or feature altered or demolished in violation of the historic district. Persons found guilty of violating the district ordinance may be fined not less than Ten Dollars (\$10.00) and no more than Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00).

### **Where Can More Information Be Obtained?**

Call the Commission staff person at the Springfield Planning Department (413) 787-6020.



**For a valid application, it must contain the following information:**  
**--Type of Certificate petitioner is seeking must be indicated**  
**--Owner's signature must appear on the Application**  
**-- PHOTOS, MATERIALS, and PLANS specified on the Application instruction sheets**

**Incomplete applications will NOT be accepted.**

CITY HALL  
 36 COURT STREET  
 SPRINGFIELD  
 MASSACHUSETTS  
 01103

APPROPRIATENESS \_\_\_\_\_  
**APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATE OF:**    HARDSHIP \_\_\_\_\_  
 (check one only)                   NON-APPLICABILITY \_\_\_\_\_

For Historical Commission Use		
Address of Property	Date Received	Waived by Abutters
Owner	Date Notice Posted	Waived by Commission
	Date Notice Mailed	Date Discussed/No Hearing
Address of Owner	Hearing Date	Decision/Date

**Proposed Change (describe in detail below):**

**Justification for Certificate of Hardship:**

.....  
 Property Owner's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Daytime Telephone Number

(Please attach additional information to this sheet)

## INFORMATION FOR SIDING CHANGES

Please Circle the type of siding that is to be changed:

Clapboard

Wood Shingles

Non-Wood Shingles

Brick

Stucco

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Please Circle the following exterior features that will be changed and give their existing and proposed width, in inches

<u>Feature</u>	<u>Existing Width</u>	<u>Proposed Width</u>
Siding		
Window Casings		
Door Casings		
Corner Boards		
Cornices		
Shutters		
Frieze Boards		
Other _____		