



70 Tapley Street
Springfield, Massachusetts

WHAT IS THE SPRINGFIELD HISTORICAL COMMISSION?

The Springfield Historical Commission is the City's agency responsible for the preservation and promotion of Springfield's historic assets. The Commission is comprised of seven members who are appointed by the Mayor for staggered three-year terms and confirmed by the City Council. Members must include residents from historic districts, as well as members nominated by the Board of Realtors, American Institute of Architects, Springfield Preservation Trust, and Historic New England.

WHAT ARE THESE SPECIFIC GUIDELINES AND WHAT DISTRICTS DO THEY APPLY TO?

The State of Massachusetts allows for the creation of two types of Historic Districts – Single-Building Local Historic Districts, which are comprised of a single-building or property, and Multi-Building Historic Districts, which are comprised of multiple buildings and/or properties. Almost all of the Multi-Building Historic Districts contain specific guidelines for the underlying district;¹ however many, if not all, of the Single-Building Historic Districts do not contain guidelines other than delineated exemptions. Therefore, the guidelines provided below are to provide general guidelines and expectation for those districts that do not specifically contain guidelines that control development. Accordingly, these guidelines should apply wherever a local historic district in the City does not contain delineated guidelines for the district subject to review.

WHAT DOES HISTORIC DISTRICT STATUS MEAN?

The Springfield Historical Commission must approve any exterior work **PRIOR** to beginning any work. Review by the Commission attempts to ensure that any proposed changes are compatible with the character of the underlying district and/or historic character from the building's/property's past. New construction and demolition are also controlled, while landscaping with plants, shrubs, and trees are not controlled.

WHAT QUALIFIES AS NON-APPLICABILITY?

The following types of projects can be approved via a Certificate of Non-Applicability, which does not require a public hearing:

1. Ordinary maintenance, repair or replacement of any exterior features which does not involve a change in design, material, or outward appearance thereof.
2. Work which cannot be seen from any public street or park.
3. Temporary signs or structures subject to conditions such as duration and location.

¹ Apremont Triangle, Local Historic District, Colony Hills Local Historic District, Federal Square Local Historic District, Fore Park Heights Local Historical District, Lower Maple Local Historic District, Maple-Hill Local Historic District, McKnight Local Historic District, Quadrangle-Mattoon Local Historic District, and Ridgewood Local Historic District.

4. Terraces, walks, driveways, and sidewalks provided they are substantially at grade level.
5. Storm windows, screens, window air conditioners, antennae [satellite dishes are regulated; please see *Satellite Dish Guidelines*], and similar appurtenances.
6. Color of paint (control is retained over the painting of any previously unpainted features).
7. Color of roof material (roof colors should be generally medium to dark in tone, but not black).
8. Signs of not more than one square foot.
9. Reconstruction, substantially similar in exterior design, of a building, structure, or exterior architectural feature damaged by fire, storm or other disaster.
10. Gutters and down spouts (such features should be as unnoticeable as possible and painted to match the trim or siding on which they are attached).
11. Fencing not lying between the foundation line or an extension thereof and the public way.
12. Screen and storm doors (storm doors should be un-elaborated and contain as much glass as possible; colonial-style doors are especially inappropriate for non-colonial houses).

WHAT RESIDENTIAL CONTROLS AND GUIDELINES ARE BEING ADOPTED?

Features

Guidelines

Porches

Any change in shape, location or design, including enclosures, shall require approval.

Doors

All doors, except for storm doors, shall require approval for changes in size, location or design.

Steps

Replacement shall be in the shape, design and location of the original; change in material, e.g. wood to concrete, is permissible, but requires review.

Awnings

Rigid permanent awnings are not allowed. Canvas or other fabric is recommended. Rollable aluminum awnings will be considered.

Windows

Size, material or design change shall require approval. Please see *Window Replacement Guidelines*. The Commission can provide examples of recently approved windows for your review.

Fences

To protect street vistas, the property between the street and foundation line should be kept open. Only under special circumstances and on a case-by-case basis will fencing in front of the foundation line be approved.

Cornices

Cornices should be maintained in their original form and should be painted the color of the original masonry, masonry trim, or wooden trim.

Utility Equipment

Please see *Outdoor Mechanical Equipment Guidelines*.

Roof

Change of roof shape or material shall require approval.

Dormer Windows	Dormer windows should be maintained and repaired in their original design.
Light Fixtures	Must be approved on a case-by-case basis.
Satellite Dishes	Please see <i>Satellite Dish Guidelines</i> and <i>Outdoor Mechanical Equipment Guidelines</i> .
Building Additions	Design to be approved on a case-by-case basis.
Grillwork (On Roofs and Porches)	Shall be retained unless it can be demonstrated to the Commission that retention would result in a safety hazard or economic hardship.
Siding	Original wood, clapboard, or shingle siding will be maintained whenever possible. A change in type or material of siding shall require approval on a case-by-case basis. Any change should not affect trim or other decorative features.
Trim	Removal of corner boards, window casings, cornices, and trim features should be retained or replaced in kind if deteriorated or missing. Alternative materials may be considered on a case-by-case basis.
Chimney	Any change in shape, location, or design shall require approval. When repointing mortar should match the original in appearance and composition.
Signs	Size, shape and designs of signs larger than one (1) square foot shall require approval.
Garages	Changes in shape or design subject to approval, feature by feature, as listed above.
Paint	Color of paint is not controlled; however, approval must be sought prior to painting any previously unpainted masonry.

WHAT PROCEDURES ARE TO BE FOLLOWED IN REQUESTING APPROVAL FOR A CHANGE?

1. Call the Springfield Office of Planning & Economic Development (413-787-6020) and ask for the staff person for the Historical Commission to determine if the proposed change is controlled by the Commission.
2. If it is controlled, request an "Application for a Certificate" to proceed with the change.
3. The Historical Commission, after receipt of the application form, will schedule a public hearing to discuss the request. Notices will be sent by mail to abutters fourteen (14) days prior to the hearing.
4. The Commission must decide on all requests within sixty (60) days of receipt of the application; otherwise, the request is automatically granted.

WHAT KINDS OF CERTIFICATES ARE AVAILABLE?

1. Appropriateness – issued for those changes that are in conformance with guidelines and/or are acceptable for the district.

2. Hardship – issued for those changes that are not appropriate, but which may be necessary due to economic, physical, social, or other special conditions.
3. Non-Applicability – issued for those changes which affect features not controlled by the Commission.

WHAT ABOUT FURTHER RECOURSE?

If a petitioner disagrees with a ruling 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 may be fined not less than Ten Dollars (\$10.00) and nor more than Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00).

WHERE CAN MORE INFORMATION BE OBTAINED?

Call the Commission Staff Person at the Springfield Office of Planning & Economic Development at (413) 787-6020 or visit the City's website at: <https://www.springfield-ma.gov/planning/historic-comm>.