



**36 Court Street
City Hall
Springfield
Massachusetts
01103**

What is the Springfield Historical Commission?

The Commission is the City agency responsible for the preservation and promotion of Springfield's historic assets. Its seven members are appointed by the Mayor for staggered three-year terms. The Commission must include residents of the historic districts, as well as members nominated by the Board of Realtors, American Institute of Architects, the Springfield Preservation Trust, and the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities. The Springfield Historical Commission meets on the first and third Thursday of each month.

What is the McKNIGHT HISTORIC DISTRICT?

McKnight (see Map) is Springfield's third local historic district, created in 1976. It is a Victorian neighborhood composed of architecturally fine houses. Although individual structures may not be significant, the relationship between the various buildings creates a whole which is greater than the sum of its parts. Built between 1870 and 1900, the district is still remarkably intact. To aid in preserving this architecturally delightful area, the Historical Commission, City Council, and the Mayor have declared it a historic district.

What does Historic District Status Mean?

The Springfield Historical Commission must approve any exterior work **PRIOR** to beginning any work. This review mechanism attempts to insure that changes are compatible with the character of the district. New construction and demolition are also controlled. Landscaping with plants, shrubs, and trees is not controlled.

The following can be approved through a certificate of nonapplicability, 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.
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. Light fixtures.
12. Fencing not lying between the foundation line or an extension thereof and the public way.
13. 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?

The following features **ARE** controlled and their guidelines have been adopted so that the individual character of each house will be respected, and that the integrity and visual cohesiveness of the neighborhood is retained:

<u>Features</u>	<u>Guidelines</u>
Fencing	To protect the street vista, fencing between the public way and the foundation line, or an extension thereof, is not allowed.
Steps	Replacement shall be in the shape, design, and location of the original; materials such as wood, brick, and concrete are preferred.
Roof	The shape or original roofing material should be retained if possible.
Building Additions	Additions should be confined to the rear of the building and the design will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Windows	Size, material, or design change shall require approval. Please see <i>Window Replacement Guide</i> . The Commission can provide examples of recently approved windows for your review.
Grillwork (on roofs and porches)	Grillwork should be retained unless it can be demonstrated to the Commission that retention would result in a safety hazard or an economic hardship.
Siding	Original clapboard, shingles, brick or stucco siding should be maintained whenever possible. Any change in type of material of siding requires approval on a case-by-case basis and should not result in the altering of the original appearance of the house (Wood clapboard to aluminum or vinyl clapboard IS permitted. Wood shingles to aluminum clapboard is NOT permissible.)
Trim	Trim features should not be removed or altered in design, i.e., corner board, window detail, cornices, etc. Please see <i>Window Replacement Guidelines</i> . The Commission can provide examples of recently approved windows for your review.
Doors	All doors, except storm doors, should not be changed in size, location, or design.
Porches (including Railings)	Porches are extremely important to Victorian houses. Porches should not be changed in shape, location, or design. They should not be enclosed. Temporary, seasonal screens are permissible.
Chimneys	Any change in shape or design shall require approval.
Awnings	Rigid permanent awnings are not allowed. Canvas or other fabric is recommended. Rollable aluminum awnings will be considered.
Signs	Size, shape, and design of signs larger than one 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 brick, brownstone, or other masonry.

Satellite Dishes Please see the *Satellite Dish Guidelines*.

What Procedures are to be Followed in Requesting Approval for a Change?

1. Call Springfield Planning Department (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 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 may be fined not less than Ten Dollars (\$10.00) nor 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.