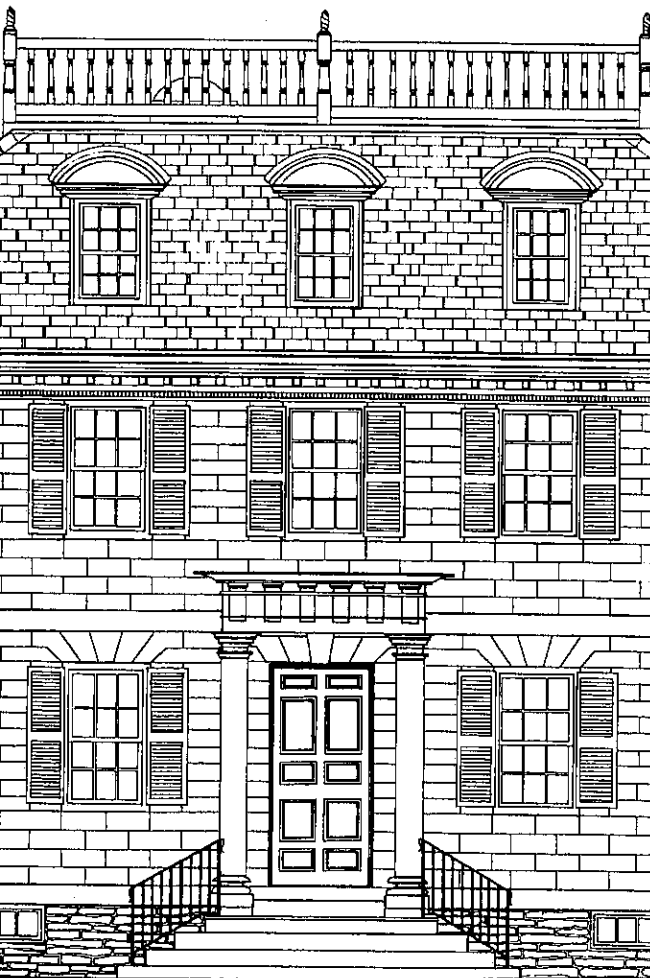


Newport Historic District Commission



Newport Historic District Commission
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www.cityofnewport.com
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What is a Historic District?

The Newport Historic District was created to preserve and protect special areas of historical and architectural value. The district's buildings and structures reflect elements of Newport's distinctive history.

The Newport Historic District Commission (HDC) carries out the provisions of historic district zoning. The Commission's nine members are appointed by the City Council and have a demonstrated interest in historic preservation. By guiding construction activity, the Commission safeguards Newport's unique architectural and historical legacy.

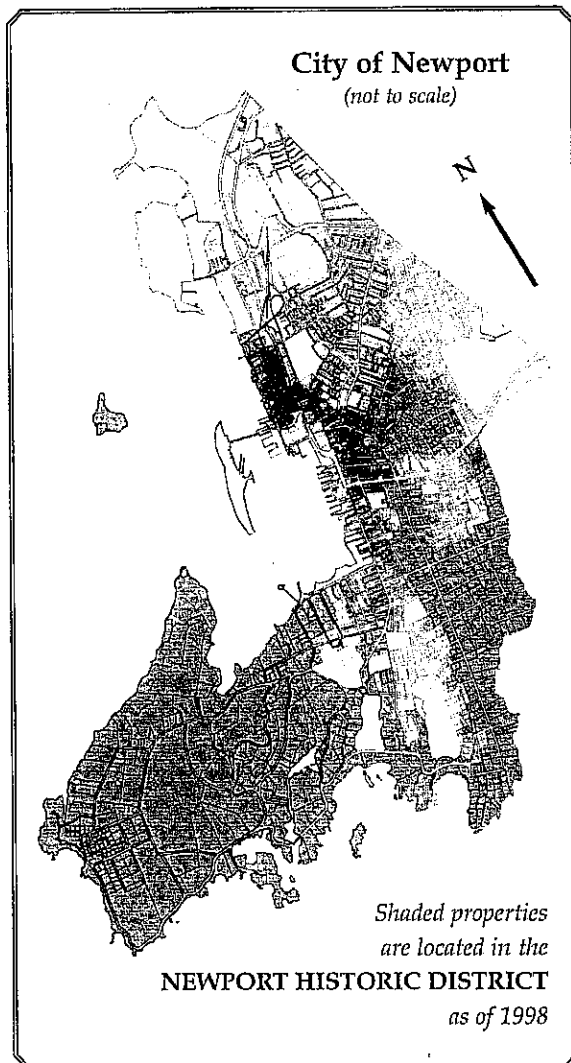
How is my project reviewed?

The Newport Historic District Commission meets on the third Tuesday of each month, unless otherwise announced. At the meeting, the HDC reviews proposals for any exterior alteration, new construction, repair, removal, or demolition of buildings, structures or their appurtenances located within the historic district. Properties subject to review include, but are not limited to, major buildings, secondary buildings (such as garages), structures (such as gazebos), fences, and retaining walls.

Before starting any exterior work within the historic district, the property owner must file an application and receive the approval of the HDC. The filing deadline is the first Tuesday of each month. If the HDC approves the project, they issue a Certificate of Appropriateness. You must have a Certificate of Appropriateness in order to apply for a building permit for exterior work in the historic district. A certificate is required whether or not a building permit is also required.

Is my property in the Historic District?

Probably. More than half of the City of Newport is located within the Historic District. All of the shaded properties on the map below are within the Historic District. If you are not sure if your property is in the district, contact the Office of Planning, Zoning, Development and Inspection.



What are the standards for review?

While exterior changes are inevitable, they can be made with respect for the character and integrity of the individual structure and of the district. Each application is individually reviewed in accordance with the following standards:

1. Recognize appropriate use

A property shall be used for its historic purpose or shall have a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building, its site, and its environment.

2. Retain historic character

The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alterations of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.

3. Avoid conjecture

Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its own time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding a conjectural feature or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.

4. Maintain significant alterations

Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.

5. Preserve character-defining features and workmanship

Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.

6. Repair before you replace materials

Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. When 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. Avoid damaging treatments

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. Consider archaeological resources

Significant archaeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.

9. Make alterations and additions compatible

New additions, exterior alterations, or related construction shall not destroy historic materials which 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. Make alterations reversible

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 shall be unimpaired.

How do I obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness?

1. **Contact the Office of Planning, Zoning, Development, and Inspection** to obtain an application and to get information about hearing dates and filing deadlines.
2. **File a complete application**, including the application form, \$20 fee, a detailed written statement describing the proposal, and accurate plans and scaled drawings depicting all proposed alterations. (*See What goes with the application?*) To get on the agenda for the next monthly meeting, file a complete application by the first Tuesday of the month.
3. **If the application is complete, it is placed on the HDC agenda** for review during the next monthly meeting. If the application is not complete, it cannot be reviewed.
4. **The HDC Inspection Committee will conduct a site visit** usually two Saturdays before the monthly meeting (the property owner is not required to be present).
5. **Attend the HDC meeting** to answer questions from HDC members.
6. **If the application is approved**, the HDC will issue a Certificate of Appropriateness. Failure to adhere to conditions of approval will invalidate the Certificate. If the application is denied, the HDC will send the applicant a written letter explaining its action. No building permit will be issued. The applicant may appeal the decision to the Zoning Board of Review.

What goes with the application?

For minor construction projects any addition smaller than 25% of the square footage of the existing structure or the replacement of windows, doors, steps, dormers, skylights, decks, etc. required materials include two copies of the following:

- Elevations of all sides of new construction at $\frac{1}{4}$ " = 1' minimum scale
- Specifications and drawings of all detailing at $\frac{1}{2}$ " = 1' minimum scale
- Site plans (of the addition)
- Materials list
- An additional set of above drawings reduced to $8\frac{1}{2}$ " x 11"

For major construction projects any addition larger than 25% of the square footage of the existing structure or any new freestanding structure-required materials include two copies of the following:

- Site plan illustrating the entire property to a scale no smaller than 1" = 50' including a footprint of the structure
- Elevations of all exterior walls/roofs showing existing conditions and proposed changes at $\frac{1}{4}$ " = 1' minimum scale
- Details of existing and proposed windows, doors, dormers, etc., at a ratio of $\frac{1}{2}$ " = 1' minimum scale
- Materials list
- An additional set of above drawings reduced to $8\frac{1}{2}$ " x 11"

For signs required materials include two copies of the following:

- Scaled drawings for the proposed signs at $\frac{1}{2}$ " = 1' minimum scale
- Elevations of building showing exact locations of proposed signs at $\frac{1}{2}$ " = 1' minimum scale
- Materials list for signboard, molding, brackets, hangers, posts, lettering
- Sections through signs showing details of molding, posts, brackets, hangers, and installation
- Details of light fixtures
- An additional set of above drawings reduced to $8\frac{1}{2}$ " x 11"

Frequently asked questions:

Is review required for ordinary maintenance and repair?

No, work such as caulking and repainting does not require review so long as there is no change in design, architectural features, or type of material.

Does the HDC review paint color?

No, paint color, which does not change the integrity of a structure, is not reviewed. However, the HDC does review paint removal methods beyond hand scraping and sanding as well as the painting of previously unpainted surfaces and repairs required before painting. The HDC also reviews the colors of signs and of specific building materials (like roof shingles). The HDC can provide advice on period paint colors.

Can I sandblast my building?

No, sandblasting is extremely damaging to wood and brick surfaces and will not be approved. The HDC can provide advice about gentler cleaning methods.



View of Thames Street



Typical turn of the century home

Can I replace the windows?

Generally, an original window sash can be repaired and retained. If the sash must be replaced, the replacement should match the historic sash in size, operation, materials, configuration, number of lights, and muntin detail. Window manufacturers offer a wide variety of factory-made windows appropriate for historic buildings.

Can I make changes to exterior siding?

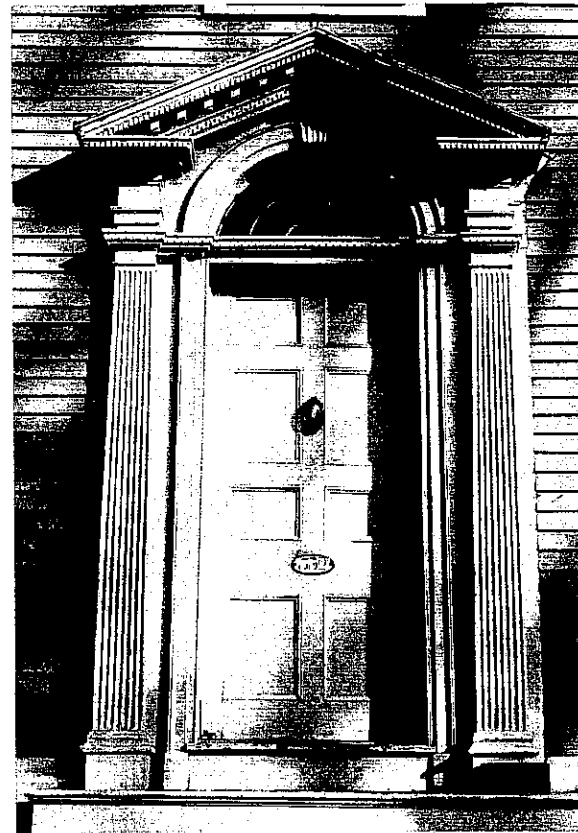
The exterior siding must conform with the structure's historic materials, textures, and appearance. Vinyl, aluminum, or other modern composition sidings can substantially alter the appearance of a building and can obliterate or hide details such as window and door surrounds, brackets, moldings, and other elements. Artificial sidings are not appropriate for historic buildings.

Does the HDC review interior alterations?

The HDC reviews only the interior renovations and repairs that change the exterior of the building—for example, the relocation of doors and windows.

What if my project has zoning issues?

Any project that requires a zoning variance must have a Certificate of Appropriateness prior to seeking zoning relief. Include the copy of the approved Certificate of Appropriateness for zoning relief. Direct questions about zoning to the Department of Planning, Zoning, Development, and Inspections.



Samuel Durfee House

Can I save money by preserving my building?

Yes! The RI Historical Preservation Commission offers five programs to help you preserve your historic building. Contact the Commission at 401-222-2678 or www.rihphc.state.ri.us.

- **Rhode Island Historic Homeowner Tax Credit:** a 20% state income tax credit for renovating a 1-, 2-, or 3-family, owner occupied historic house. The house must be listed on the National Register or in a local historic district.
- **Federal Commercial Properties Tax Credit:** a 20% federal income tax credit for rehabilitating a commercial, industrial, or residential rental building. The building must be listed on the National Register.
- **Rhode Island Historical Preservation Loan Fund:** low-interest loans for preserving properties listed on the National Register.
- **Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission Easement Program:** federal income, state, and gift tax benefits for donating a preservation easement to protect a historic building, archaeological site, or land.
- **Rhode Island Historical Preservation Investment Tax Credit:** a 30% state income tax credit for renovating a commercial, industrial or residential building. The building must be listed on the National Register, or in a local historic district.



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