

LENOX HISTORIC DISTRICT GUIDELINES



Lenox Historic District Commission

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INTRODUCTION

The Lenox Historic District was created to preserve and protect buildings and spaces significant in the history and architecture of the village of Lenox. These Guidelines, to be used by the Historic District Commission during the review of applications, are intended to ensure that alterations and new construction within the District occur in a manner that preserves and respects Lenox's unique heritage.

The Lenox Historic District is a village that is characterized by a variety of streetscapes made up of buildings of many different types, styles or designs, sizes, and settings. Its architecture reflects a range of historical developments, from the early period of Lenox as the County seat through the Gilded Age with its "summer cottages" and attendant residential and commercial architecture, to the late 1930s when Tanglewood furthered Lenox' reputation as a cultural destination. The result is a District that is characterized by its diversity, not its uniformity.

This diversity within the village center is evident in the variety of building *styles*; the early Federal style public and residential buildings of the late eighteenth century; Greek Revival architecture of the early to mid-nineteenth century; the occasional Queen Anne and Italianate styles during the Victorian era in the late nineteenth century, and the Colonial Revival of the early twentieth century. Within each style are found examples that are both High Style and vernacular (everyday architecture) in expression.

The diversity is also evident in the variety of building *types*. In each period of the village's development, and for each architectural style, different types of buildings are found; public buildings, simple residences and grand cottages, commercial buildings and commercial blocks. The diversity of the District is found in the variety of building *sizes*; residences are large and small, commercial buildings vary, and public buildings were scaled to meet the needs of the time. Finally, the diversity is represented in the *settings* or the spatial relationships within each streetscape and on each property. As a result, each building must be understood as a record of its particular time, place, and use.

Alterations to each building must be respectful of that building's contribution to the District overall. The District's architecturally and historically significant buildings were constructed by 1923. Maintaining the integrity of buildings dating up to this period is, therefore, a major goal of the District. However the appearance and use of some buildings continued to evolve in the following decades, as Lenox increasingly emerged as a cultural and tourist destination. Many residences along Church Street, for example, had the first floor converted into commercial storefronts. Large summer cottages were converted to inns. Changes that occurred after the 1920s may not be historically or architecturally significant but should be compatible in design and use of materials to the District's period of significance.

Principles of Design

In reviewing each proposal, the Lenox Historic District Commission should consider the design or style and the setting of the building or structure. Within this context the Commission should consider the size, scale, and shape or massing, of the building and its elements. Consideration of these principles of design together within the context of how these design principles are manifested in the historic resources will guide the evaluation of appropriateness within the context of the Lenox Historic District. Consider these principles of design as guidance on how to look at a building – how to read a building.

Style or design is expressed in the character-defining features which make up each architectural style. The combination of features that represent particular styles and periods of development should be recognized in existing buildings so that these features can be preserved.

Setting refers to the location of buildings, and structures on a property, within a streetscape and within the district. The arrangement of resources on a site can provide important information for understanding the development pattern of the site and the district.

Size refers to the volume of a structure created by the height, length and depth of a structure. It also relates to the size of the individual elements of a structure such as windows, doors, chimneys, and architectural elaboration. The size of new construction, additions, and elements of a building should relate to the prevailing periods of development and architectural types and styles of the resource and surrounding resources.

Scale refers to the proportions, balance and relationship of the parts to the whole. Appropriate scale should consider the relationships of an individual building to its streetscape, additions to an individual building, and the size of fenestration and other architectural details to the existing resource.

Massing refers to the shape of the building and its parts. Additions to a historic resource should consider the preservation of the existing resource, so that additions are subordinate and defer to the original structure. The original structure should maintain its pre-eminent relationship to the site, adjacent resources and view from a public way. New construction should be informed by the surrounding properties. The impact of overall size can be controlled by the way in which the massing is developed and distributed over the site.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. In the District, the Commission shall determine whether the proposed construction, reconstruction, alteration or demolition of an exterior architectural feature will be appropriate to preserve the character and appearance of that resource and the District.
2. In the District, each building or structure shall be recognized as a physical and cultural record of its time, place and use. Character defining features of a building or structure shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features that characterize a building or structure should be avoided. Deteriorated historic features should be repaired rather than replaced whenever possible.
3. All architectural changes shall be appropriate either to the original style of the building or structure, if it has not been significantly altered, or to its altered style, if it has been significantly altered to reflect characteristics of a later style or period of development. Changes to a building or site which have taken place over time are evidence of its history and development. Those changes that have acquired architectural or historic significance in their own right shall be recognized and preserved.
4. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a character-defining feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color (for new construction, additions or reconstruction), texture, and material.
5. Replacement of missing features is appropriate only if substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.



SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

The following specific guidelines are arranged in alphabetical order and address key defining features found on buildings and structures in Lenox or address issues that often are raised by applications in this local historic district.

1. Access

Achieving handicap accessibility for persons with disabilities is an important social policy goal. In Massachusetts, the Architectural Access Board (AAB) governs the need and method of creating accessibility for public buildings. Public buildings are buildings constructed by a public entity, as well as privately financed buildings that are open to and used by the public. The AAB has promulgated regulations for how to achieve accessibility, but has included the ability to obtain variances from full compliance for historic buildings. Their definition of historic buildings includes all properties within a local historic district.

The goal in reviewing a proposal for accessibility in an historic district is to ensure that significant character defining features of the building, including front stairs, porches, doors and door surrounds are minimally impacted. Where creating accessibility in the primary entrance or façade will obscure or destroy significant character defining features, the Commission has the authority to require the applicant to seek alternate means of accessibility, including secondary entrances, in consultation with the AAB and the MHC. The AAB can be reached at 617-727-0660, the Massachusetts Historical Commission at 617/727-8470. Ad Lib Inc. is a local advocacy group located in Pittsfield that can provide assistance as well: 413/442-7047.

2. Additions

A. Existing Additions to Historic Buildings

Many buildings within the District have been altered over time. It is important for the Commission to determine whether existing additions have obtained significance in their own right. Significance can result from an addition reflecting characteristics of a later style, e.g. an Italianate porch added onto a Greek Revival façade. Significance can also be the result of an addition that reflects important historic developments, e.g. residential facades altered for commercial use. If the Commission determines that an addition has gained significance, it should be reviewed in the same manner as other historic or character defining features within the District. An addition may have gained significance because it was built after the original building but prior to 1923 or after this date but is in a style that is consistent with the original structure and tells of a period of development important to the original structure or the district.

B. New Additions to Historic Buildings

The District has evolved over more than 150 years. The purpose of creating the District is not to stop all future changes within the District, but to manage those changes so that new structures will be in harmony with existing historic buildings, and their settings preserved.

New additions should conform to the following guidelines:

- i. **Setting:** Additions to the main façade, particularly the elevation that fronts on a public way, are generally prohibited. Additions should be located on elevations that are minimally visible from a public way. If an addition is to be a side wing it should be stepped back from the façade of the main block.
- ii. **Scale:** The scale, shape, and size of the addition should be subordinate to the primary building.
- iii. **Design:** An addition to any elevation that significantly alters, obscures or destroys character-defining features of the building is generally prohibited. The use of ornament, window and doors, siding, and other materials should be carefully chosen to reflect the character-defining features of the primary building, including rhythm, pattern and scale, while maintaining a clear delineation between the “old” and “new” portions of the building.

C. New Additions to Non-Historic Buildings

Additions and alterations to modern buildings or buildings that are not historic should maintain the same principles of design. Whether the building is historic or modern, the addition should remain subordinate to the existing structure in size and scale. Materials should be consistent with materials of the existing structure and in the district.

3. Awnings

A. Commercial Buildings

Canvas awnings were an important design element in historic storefronts, and served as a transition between the storefront and upper facades. Awnings for commercial buildings should comply with the following Guidelines:

- i. A standard street level awning should be mounted so that the valance is 8’ above the sidewalk and projects out approximately 4’ from the building.
- ii. Awnings must be installed in a manner that does not obscure significant architectural detail. The awning should be attached above the display windows and below the cornice. The awning should reinforce the frame of the storefront and not cover the space

between the second-story window sills and the storefront cornice, nor should it be sized larger or smaller than the storefront opening.

- iii. Location of the awning should be limited to the width of the storefront, and may incorporate the entrance if integral to the storefront design.
- iv. Awning material should be canvas or canvas-like in appearance.
- v. Awnings may be designed with a valance, scaled appropriately to the overall size of the awning. The valance should be loose and not fixed by a frame.
- vi. Signage on an awning or awning valance must be reviewed in the context of an overall sign plan – please refer to the Sign Guideline.

B. Storefronts in Residential Style Buildings

- i. In general, the size and location of awnings on former residential facades should not visually dominate the building. Awnings should be limited to storefront window and/or door openings and not span across other components of the residential façade, or be sized larger or smaller than the window opening.



- ii. Awnings should be installed in a manner that does not obscure significant architectural detail.
- iii. Awning material should be canvas or canvas-like in appearance.
- iv. Awnings may be designed with a valance, scaled appropriately to the overall size of the awning. The valance should be loose and not fixed by a frame.
- v. Signage on an awning or awning valance must be reviewed in the context of an overall sign plan – please refer to the Sign Guideline.

C. Residential Buildings

Awnings are discouraged on residences except where marginally visible from a public way. If approved, they should be limited to the size of the window opening and not obscure architecturally significant detail.

4. Barns

See Outbuildings.

5. Chimneys

Chimneys are an important character-defining feature of many building types and styles. Existing historically significant chimneys must be preserved. If re-pointing is required, refer to the Masonry Guideline for mortar specifications. If a chimney requires replacement, the new chimney must reuse the existing brick where possible, or otherwise match the original brick in color, shape, and size. Replacement chimneys should match the original in size, shape and design, including ornamental detail such as corbelling and other brick patterning.

6. Commercial Storefronts

Within the Lenox Historic District, commercial storefronts have been built as original components of historic buildings as well as later alterations to historically significant residential buildings. Each storefront, therefore, must be analyzed as a record of its time, style and place.

The following Guidelines shall be considered:

A. Historic Storefronts

Historically or architecturally significant storefronts shall be preserved or restored to the greatest extent possible, including material and design of windows, doors, and storefront surround detail.

B. Non-Historic Storefronts

Alterations to non-historic storefronts shall use design and materials that are compatible with the immediate historic commercial context and the District as a whole. If the storefront is part of a commercial style building, reference should be made to historic storefronts in historic commercial style buildings. If the alteration is part of a residential style building, reference should be made to historic storefront alterations in historic residential style buildings.

C. New Storefronts

The addition of new storefronts in historic façades is generally discouraged. If permitted, new storefronts shall be designed in a manner that retains the character-defining features of the building as originally designed, or as altered if such alteration has gained architectural or historical significance. The new storefront shall also use design and materials that are compatible with the immediate historic context and the District as a whole.



Residential buildings - now commercial



Commercial block

7. Decks

See Porches, Balconies and Decks – including projecting decks on roofs or off the second story.

8. Demolition and Removal

Demolition, or partial demolition, of architecturally or historically significant buildings or structures is prohibited except when in the opinion of the Commission it is warranted for extraordinary circumstances. Demolition or partial demolition of later additions to an historic building that are not architecturally or historically significant, i.e. which date after 1923, may be permissible and are subject to review on a case-by-case basis. Where demolition of later additions is permitted, the applicant should provide plans for restoration of the building as it appeared prior to the addition

No demolition shall be approved until the plan for the reuse of the space has been reviewed and approved. An application for demolition must include a timetable and other guarantees and assurances that the Commission may require to assure that the plans, including completion and replacement of the building or structure will occur. In instances where the property to be demolished is of historical significance, the Commission may require documentation of a building or structure to be demolished using the standards of the Historic American Building

Survey (HABS) recording, or other professional standards of photography and drawing of plans.

9. Doors

Note: These Guidelines apply to residential and commercial doors.

A. Replacement of Original or Historically Significant Doors

Original or historically significant doors should be retained. Replacement of original or historically significant doors, if necessary, should match the existing in material, size, design and location. In addition to the door itself, original or architecturally significant surround details, such as frames, fanlights, sidelights, canopies, transoms and other decorative trim should be preserved or, if necessary, replaced in kind.

B. Replacement of Non-Significant Doors

If doors that are not original or architecturally significant are to be replaced, the replacement door should be appropriate to the style and use of the building in terms of material, design, size and location, and be appropriate to the context of the building and the District as a whole. In addition, the Commission must review and approve the scale, design and material of the surround details and other decorative trim.

C. Removal or Relocation of Existing Doors

Removal or relocation of architecturally significant doors is generally discouraged. Relocation of non-significant doors may be moved, provided they are not part of and do not contribute to an original or architecturally significant elevation (side) of the building.

D. Addition of New Doors

New doors may be added, provided they do not detract from an original or architecturally significant elevation.

10. Dormers

A. Existing Dormers

Dormers that are original to the design of the building, or architecturally significant from a later alteration, should not be altered. Replacement of original or historically significant dormers, if necessary, should match the existing in material, size, design and location.

B. New Dormers

Dormers may be approved on a case by case basis using the following criteria.

- i. A new or expanded dormer should not dominate the roof slope or obscure significant architectural detail visible from a public way.
- ii. The original roof slope should be preserved unchanged at either side of, and below, the alteration.
- iii. Materials that are compatible with the building, including roof shingles, siding, cornice and trim details, and windows should be used.*
- iv. The size of the dormer should be scaled appropriately to the roof slope and the building overall.
- v. The design of the dormer should be appropriate to the style of the building.

* See Window Guideline for new windows.

11. Fences

A. Existing Fences

Historically, fences have been used in a variety of contexts within the District. For most 19th century houses, fences were located at the front perimeter of the property, constructed of wood pickets between 30" and 48" high, and of a simple and linear design. For later summer cottages, fence designs and sizes became more elaborate, and also utilized other materials such as cast iron. In commercial settings, there do not appear to be fences unless the commercial use is a reuse of originally residential property.



In all cases, historically or architecturally significant fences should be maintained, repaired and restored. Where replacement is necessary, new fences should match the original in material,

design, size and location. Wrought iron fences were typically black or dark green. New iron fences should replicate that color palette. Wood fences should be natural wood (gray) or painted white in color.

Historically or architecturally significant fences may be altered where necessary to accommodate architectural access, provided the overall size and design of the fence is not compromised.

B. New Fences

New fences may be added provided they are appropriate to the style and type of property in terms of material, design, size, and location. Privacy fences, such as solid board fences, are generally discouraged in the District, but may be allowed if minimally visible from a public way and do not obscure visibility of a significant structure from a public way.

Stockade, chain link, light gauge metal and concrete block are not appropriate materials for fences and generally will not be approved.

12. Fire Escapes

If necessary, fire escapes should be located to minimize visibility from a public way. In all cases, fire escapes should be designed to have a minimal impact on the appearance and integrity of the building.

13. Foundations

A. Existing Foundations

In both residential and commercial buildings, the typical foundation material is unpainted brick or granite. In all cases, the material and design of original or architecturally significant foundations should be preserved. Where repair or re-pointing is necessary, refer to the Masonry Guideline for mortar specifications.

B. New Foundations

Guidelines for New Construction set forth principles for use of materials, scale and massing. Often new foundations are substantially higher than historic foundations. This construction technique can alter the appearance of the entire building. Every effort should be made to design a low foundation and to screen a foundation that must be high due to building code conditions.

14. Gutters, Downspouts and Drainage

Typically, historic gutters and downspouts are constructed of wood or copper. Original gutters or downspouts should be preserved and repaired rather than replaced. Replacement gutters or downspouts should match the original in material, design and configuration, particularly the profile. In particular, if the original gutter was built into the eave profile, such a gutter design should be replicated. In all cases, installation of new gutters and downspouts shall not remove or obscure significant architectural details, such as cornice trim, brackets and corner board profiles. New gutters should be constructed of wood, copper, or painted aluminum.

15. Landscaping and Parking

In addition to fences and stone walls, other visible “hardscape” features of a yard require review and approval by the Commission, including the use of paving, stone terraces, walkways or patios, flagpoles, other fixed yard furniture, berms or any other form of designed topography. In all cases, the material, design and location of such elements should complement and not obscure historically or architecturally significant buildings or structures, or should not otherwise dominate a yard or site.

The size, location and material of parking areas can have a dramatic impact on the setting of an historic building. The Commission generally will not approve the paving or resurfacing of front or side yards to accommodate increased parking. If parking surfaces are required beyond the primary access driveway, alternate materials should be considered, including crushed gravel or pavers, to reduce the overall impact of the decrease in green space.

16. Lighting

New light fixtures installed on a property in the historic district are subject to review by the Commission. Lighting of historic buildings and structures can have a dramatic, and sometimes inappropriate, impact on the setting of the building within the district. In general, the historic buildings of Lenox village were minimally lit. When lighting is used, it should mimic the low lumens of warm incandescent light. Fluorescent, sodium vapor, or neon lights should not be used.

A. Existing Light Fixtures

Where original or architecturally significant light fixtures remain (whether electrified gas fixtures or early electric fixtures), they should be repaired and maintained rather than replaced. Where replacement is required due to deterioration, replacement should match the original in material and design.

B. New Light Fixtures – Historic Buildings

Light fixtures were traditionally located at entrances and gates, and were otherwise rarely used to illuminate facades, yards, plant material, or architectural details. New light fixtures, therefore, should be limited to such traditional locations. The design, materials, and size of the fixtures should be appropriate to the style of the building and not overwhelm or obscure existing architectural details. Where entryways are recessed, fixtures should be located in the ceiling of the recess and shielded to direct light downward. Avoid exposing electrical conduit and junction boxes. The Commission may allow illumination of facades, yards, plant material or architectural details, provided that the light fixtures and related equipment are minimally visible and shielded from the street, and the lumens of the fixture should be low. Bare flood lights will not be approved. Flood lights and back lighting are discouraged, but may be approved if the location of the fixture is not visually intrusive and the lumens are low similar to a warm incandescent light.

C. New Light Fixtures – Non-Historic Buildings

New light fixtures in non-historic buildings should be simple, unobtrusive fixtures, in terms of materials, size, and design. Where possible, recessed lighting fixtures should be employed to direct light downward.

D. Lighting for Signage

Refer to Sign Guideline.

17. Modern Equipment

Modern equipment includes equipment and utility boxes located outside a building and visible from a public way that has come into common use in the modern era and without which most property owners are willing to live. Although the world of modern mechanical equipment is ever changing, there are certain items that one may encounter on any property such as utility meters, HVAC equipment, ducts, fans, solar panels, antennas, cellular towers, satellite dishes, propane and other tanks, and dumpsters. Because there is no historical precedent for these types of equipment, there is no form or style in which they should appear. Modern equipment should, in general, be located to minimize visibility from a public way, and should not be located in a front yard. Visible elements should be designed or use colors to blend the equipment into its surroundings and/or be screened by an appropriately designed and scaled fence or plant material.

18. New Construction

Design guidelines for new construction or additions are intended to ensure that such work occurs in a manner that respects Lenox's architectural heritage and sense of place.

A. Location

The location on a lot is the first critical characteristic to consider. Review the site plan to analyze the appropriateness of the location. In certain instances the Historic District Commission may impose setback and height requirements which may be more restrictive than those found in the Zoning Bylaw in order to maintain a degree of scale with the surrounding context. The most common example is the front yard setback which should be consistent with surrounding structures. The Commission does not have the authority to dictate a less restrictive set back than the Zoning bylaw - only a more restrictive set back in order to preserve the streetscape.

B. Massing and Scale

The massing and the scale, which are relationships of the parts to the whole, and the relationship of one building to another, should be compatible with other similar village buildings. The building elements to consider when understanding the scale are: the height of the structure; the size of windows and doors and their openings; the level of detail of trim or other architectural elements such as porches and bays, ornamental or plain; and the size of the building's footprint. Massing refers to the way in which the parts become the whole - how the secondary parts such as wings, ells, garages or barns are arranged in relationship to the main block: each with its own distinctive but related form. Massing is an important design element in that the arrangement of the parts can reduce the apparent scale of a large structure, by breaking down the overall mass and arranging it in smaller pieces. Thus the Commission will review an application by considering the scale and the massing of the subject property in relation to other similar types in the immediate area. Principles of scale and massing should be combined with other specific guidelines for building parts such as windows, doors, roofs, and trim.

C. Design

The scale and the proportions of the various elements should be consistent with local historic fabric; yet it is important that the design of new construction should reflect its time of construction. False reproductions of architectural styles diminish the value of authentic examples within the district.

D. Materials

The use of materials should be compatible to the District as a whole, and to the type of building in the District. For example, if the location, massing, and scale of the new building reflect an historic commercial building, the material should be similarly compatible. If the location, massing, and scale of the new building reflect an historic house, the choice of materials should be compatible with the materials used on the historic house.

19. Outbuildings

A. Existing Outbuildings

Outbuildings, such as barns, garages, sheds, greenhouses, and gazebos are subject to review and require approval if they are visible from a public way or place. Outbuildings which date to the District's period of significance should be retained and restored, and are subject to these Guidelines. Particular attention will be given to siding, roof, windows and doors.



B. New Outbuildings

The construction of a new outbuilding may be approved by the Commission provided it is designed and located in a manner that respects the style of the other building(s) on its site, and respects the development pattern and siting of other historic outbuildings in the District. The Commission will consider the size, scale, design, and location of new outbuildings. A site plan should be provided to indicate the relationship to other buildings and structures on the lot and neighboring lots.

20. Painting

Paint color is within the jurisdiction of the Commission, if it is part of new construction, additions, or reconstruction. For new construction, the color should be compatible with the district as a whole. For additions, the paint color should be compatible with the existing building. For reconstruction the color should reflect what a paint color scheme would have been for the style and period of the reconstructed building.

The choice of paint color for unaltered historic buildings, while not subject to review by the Commission, should reflect the style and period of the building. Where possible, paint colors should be determined by employing either historical documentation or paint analysis.

21. Parking and Paving

See Landscaping and Parking.

22. Porches, Balconies and Decks

A. Existing Porches

Porches can be an important character-defining feature, and the ornamentation is often a clue to the style of the building. Original or architecturally significant porches should be retained and restored. Where replacement of deteriorated elements is necessary, the replacement should match the original in appearance, material, and design. Replacement of decorative elements with simpler design or synthetic materials generally will not be approved. Replacement of missing porches, or decorative elements on porches, should be documented by physical or pictorial evidence.

B. New Porches

The addition of new porches onto architecturally significant building generally is discouraged. Restoration of a missing porch is permitted provided there is adequate photo or other documentation of its prior appearance.

C. Balconies

Where balconies are original or historically/architecturally significant to a building, they should be preserved and repaired. The addition of new balconies on historic buildings is inappropriate unless documentation shows that they previously existed. Balconies on non-historic or new buildings may be allowed provided they do not dominate the elevation or detract from a significant streetscape. The number of balconies and the design should be consistent with balconies on other buildings in the district.

D. Decks

Decks projecting off a building façade are not permitted on primary elevations, but may be permitted on side or rear elevations provided they do not obscure significant architectural details, and are designed in a manner that compliments the architectural style of the building.

E. Roof Decks

Roof decks are generally discouraged, but may be permitted under the following criteria:

- i. The size and location of the roof deck should not dominate the roof.
- ii. Roof decks should be located to minimize visibility from a public way.

- iii. Railing design should consist of wooden railing with captured balusters.

23. Public Improvements

The Lenox Historic District Commission must review and approve alterations or additions to the publicly owned components of the Historic District, including sidewalks, signage, lighting fixtures, and street furniture such as benches and trash receptacles. MGL 40c allows in-kind replacement of existing components. While many public improvements are governed by other regulatory requirements, the Commission retains authority over the appearance of such improvements. The choice of sidewalk material, including concrete, pavers and curbstones, the design and lumens of lighting fixtures, and the material, design and location of benches and trash receptacles should reinforce the historic character of the District. Where possible, methods and materials of public improvements should be guided by historical documentation.

24. Roofs and Roof Cladding

The shape of a roof is a key feature of an historic building and relates to the period of development as well as the style. There is a variety of roof shapes in Lenox Village from gabled roofs as the most common form to hipped or flat roofs as seen on several of the three-story commercial structures. A key factor of the shape is the pitch of the roof slope. Roof shape and slope should be retained on historically significant buildings. Additions should be designed with a compatible roof shape and slope.

Roofing material also reflects the style and the period of development of a building. Traditionally, most roofs were clad in cedar shakes or slate, depending on the style and prominence of the building. Characteristics of roofing include material, size, shape, and exposure of the individual shingles, pattern and color. Each of these characteristics will be considered when determining appropriateness of roofing material changes. Where slate is intact, it should be retained and repaired, rather than replaced. Where replacement is necessary due to severe deterioration, slate roofs should be replaced-in-kind, including size, shape, color, and pattern or closely simulated. Where wooden shake shingles should be replaced, they must match the existing if original or architecturally appropriate, including shape and size. Where roof cladding has been replaced with asphalt shingles, it is encouraged, but not required, that traditional wood shakes or slate be used, depending on documentation of the original cladding material and pattern.

25. Shutters

- A. Existing Shutters

Shutters were an important decorative and practical element of many residential styles. Original or architecturally significant shutters should be retained and restored where possible. If replacement is required due to deterioration, the replacement should match the original in material, size, and design, including shutter hardware, such as shutter dogs and pintles.

B. New Shutters

New shutters, including replacement of missing shutters, may be added to windows provided shutters are appropriate to the style of the building, and are designed in an historically appropriate manner. The size of the shutters should equal the height of the window and one-half the width of the window opening. Historically appropriate shutter hardware should be used.

26. Siding

Siding materials and patterns are an important character-defining feature of many architectural styles. In particular the majority of historically significant buildings in the district have wood siding, either clapboards or shingles. There are several prominent multi-story brick buildings and two stone buildings – the church and chapel. Original or architecturally significant siding material should be retained and restored whenever possible. Where replacement is necessary due to severe deterioration, the replacement should match the existing siding in material, size, and design.

The replacement with wood of existing non-appropriate siding materials, such as vinyl and aluminum, is encouraged. All siding, other than brick or stone, must have the appearance of painted wood. Sample shall be presented for approval.

All original or architecturally significant trim boards, cornerboards, rakes, friezes, cornices, brackets and other decorative or structural elements of building facades should be retained and restored where possible. Where replacement is necessary due to severe deterioration, the replacement should match the existing in material, size, and design.

27. Signs

A. Lenox Zoning Bylaw

All applications to the Lenox Historic District for signs must first be submitted to the Building Inspector to ensure compliance with Section 7 of the Lenox Zoning Bylaw: Signs and Outdoor Lighting.

B. General Considerations

The Lenox Historic District includes buildings that were constructed for commercial purposes and residential or other buildings types that have been converted to commercial use. In reviewing signage, the Commission shall consider the appropriateness of the signage plan for the scale of the building that shall receive the signage. The overall goal is to create signage which complements the architecture without creating visual clutter, and which reflects the historic use of signage in the District.

C. Design Standards

All signs within the District shall be constructed of wood or a wood-like material. The shape of the signs should be simple geometric forms such as squares, rectangles or ovals. The graphic content of the sign should be limited to the name of the business and the business logo. A few additional descriptive words may be appropriate.

D. Number of Signs

In general, signage shall be limited to a single sign per business except for businesses located on a corner lot or behind another building. Any interior window sign visible from a public way is subject to commission review. Additional information pertaining to the business, including hours of operation and telephone numbers may be placed within the storefront windows (see Window Signs below).

E. Projecting Signs

The size of a projecting signboard shall not exceed 6 square feet. Multiple businesses are permitted to utilize a single projecting sign. The Commission must review and approve the design of the bracket supporting the sign. The bracket should be constructed of iron or other dark metal and designed in a simple manner that complements but does not compete with the decorative elements of the building.

F. Freestanding Signs

Freestanding signs must be no more than 6 square feet. The top of the sign shall be a maximum of six feet above the ground. Sign posts, if not left natural wood, must be painted white, black, or Essex green.

G. Building Mounted Signs

Signs mounted on building elevations should be located so as not to obscure significant architectural detail. For buildings that were constructed as commercial storefronts, sign locations were typically built into the design of the building. These historic locations should be used.

H. Window Signs

The design, scale and size of a sign in a storefront window must be approved by the Commission. Such signage must not dominate the storefront window, and should be limited to no more than 25% of the window opening and must be professionally painted. One such window sign is permitted per business. Informational signage e.g.: store hours, "open" is limited to 10% of the storefront window, may only be stated once, and may not be illuminated. Signs placed against the inside of a store window fall within the jurisdiction of the Historic District Commission.

I. Neon, Internally Illuminated Signs

Neon, gas-filled tube type illuminated signs and internally illuminated signs are not in keeping with the historic character of the Lenox Historic District and should not be used.

J. Replacement or Transfer of Existing Signs

Any replacement of an existing sign must be reviewed and approved by the Commission unless the replacement sign matches the existing in material, verbiage, design and all other visual qualities.

The Commission must approve the transfer of an existing sign by one owner to another that results in any visual changes to the sign. The transfer of a sign from one business location to a new location for the business must be reviewed and approved by the Commission to ensure that the size, scale and design of the sign is appropriate in the new location.

K. Lighting of Signage

Lighting of signs must conform to Section 7.6.1-2 of the Zoning By-law. In addition, the lighting of signs must be limited to indirect shielded light sources. For signboards or other wall-mounted signs, historically appropriate gooseneck light sources may be used. The design, material, and location of such light sources must be reviewed and approved by the Commission to ensure that such lighting does not dominate the storefront or adversely effect historically significant features. Indirect or downward-directed lighting may be used to illuminate projecting signs.

28. Skylights

Skylights are not allowed on primary elevations (those which face a public street), but may be allowed on other elevations, under the following conditions:

A. Size and Shape

The size and shape of a skylight should be appropriate to the size of the roof.

B. Number of Skylights

The number of skylights should not dominate the roof slope.

C. Visibility

Skylights should be minimally visible from a public way.

D. Profile

The skylight should have a low profile. Skylights with plastic dome scuttles will not be approved.

30. Solar Panels

Solar panels, collectors or similar mechanical equipment will not be permitted on the roof of elevations that front on a public street. Such equipment may be allowed on other elevations, under the following conditions:

A. Size

The size should not dominate the roof slope. A minimum of 2 feet of the existing roof should be visible surrounding the equipment.

B. Profile

The profile should be kept as low as possible, and the related piping and other materials are located out of view to the greatest extent possible.

31. Steps, Stairways, and Railings

A. Existing Steps, Stairways, and Railings

Steps, stairways, and railings can be an important character-defining feature, and their ornamentation is often an important clue to the style of the building. Original or architecturally significant steps, stairways, and railings should be retained and restored. Where replacement of deteriorated elements is necessary, the replacement should match the original in appearance, material, and design. Replacement of the full set of missing steps, stairways, and railings should be documented by physical or pictorial evidence. Where railings or other decorative elements are deteriorated and require replacement, they should be replaced in kind, including material, design, and size.

B. Steps, Stairways, and Railings

The addition of new steps, stairways, and railings onto architecturally significant buildings is generally discouraged, but may be permitted if such additional features do not significantly alter an architecturally significant elevation or pattern of features.

C. Egress Stairs

New stairs required to accommodate egress must be located to minimize visibility, and designed to complement the architecture of the building.

32. Stonewalls

A. Existing Stonewalls

Stonewalls are an important feature of rural New England landscapes. Stonewalls which date to the period of Lenox Historic District's significance must be retained and repaired.

B. New Stonewalls

New stonewalls should be constructed in a manner that is in keeping with existing historic stonewalls in the District. Stonewalls that are uniform with regular joints or that are concrete with a stone veneer are not appropriate. Stone walls should not exceed 3 feet in height. A site plan showing the location of any new stonewalls as well as examples of the finished appearance should accompany the application.

33. Windows

Windows are one of the most distinctive character-defining features of a building. Original or historic windows shall be retained, restored or repaired where possible.

Replacement of windows should occur only if the existing windows are beyond repair. Wood windows are preferred. The use of vinyl-clad and metal-framed windows may be approved on a case by case basis. Only clear-paned non-tinted glass shall be used (except to replace original stained glass). Mirrored and tinted heat-reflective glass is not appropriate.

Where original or architecturally appropriate windows have been replaced by windows of a different pattern, the Commission encourages the restoration of the appropriate window patterns.

APPENDIX

I. Procedures and Administration of the District

The Lenox Historic District By-Law, which established the Lenox Historic District, and the five member Commission (plus 2 alternates), was adopted in 1975 at the Lenox Annual Town Meeting. The By-law was developed under the authority of the Massachusetts Local Historic District Act – M.G.L. Chapter 40C as amended. The bylaw also provides general guidance for design review within the district (By-law copies are available at Town Hall.)

A. Changes Requiring Review

The standard for determining which changes require Commission review and approval is based on visibility. Thus all changes to exterior architectural features that are visible from a public street, public way, or public park shall require Commission approval. Common types of work include:

1. demolition, new construction and additions;
2. type and style of windows, doors, lights, signs (excluding real estate “For Sale” signs) and other exterior fixtures.
3. change of the kind and texture of exterior building materials.

B. Changes Not Requiring Review

Certain changes do not require review and approval by the commission. The commission has no jurisdiction and shall not regulate the following items:

1. building interiors (However, see section 27 Signs)
2. exterior architectural features not visible from a public street, way or park.
3. landscaping with plants, trees or shrubs. (Large permanent containers holding trees and shrubs are subject to review.)
4. temporary signs, banners, streamers, or placards or temporary structures approved by the Selectmen, except that such items must be removed within three (3) days of the end of an event, sale or special occasion for which an approval was granted.
5. new storm doors, storm windows, screen doors, or screen windows installed in existing openings; removable porch enclosures; room air conditioners; TV antennas and similar devices except for those that are part of new construction, additions or reconstruction, which are subject to review.
6. ordinary maintenance, repair or replacement of any exterior architectural feature within a district which does not involve a change in design, material or the outward appearance.
7. paint color on existing buildings and structures.

C. Applications for Certificates

One must receive a Certificate of Appropriateness, Certificate of Hardship or a Certificate of Non-Applicability for proposed changes to properties in the Lenox Historic District. In order to receive one of the certificates from the commission a property owner or representative must file an application with the commission. Applications are available at Town Hall in the Land Use Department. Depending upon the scope of the proposed work, the application should include:

- completed application form,
- photographs of the building or site,
- historic photographs if available,
- plans and elevations at no less than 1/8" scale,
- specifications that include sizes and dimensions,
- materials samples and information,
- paint samples in the case of new construction or an addition, and,
- other pertinent information as is necessary.

Nine copies of the full application must be submitted as part of the application. Applications must be submitted to the Town Clerk at the Town Hall.

D. Public Hearings

The Commission will hold a public hearing to determine appropriateness of the application. The public hearing must be held in time for the Commission to file a decision within sixty (60) days of the date of filing of a completed application. Hearings will be held at regularly scheduled meetings and because there is a notification requirement in the Historic District Bylaw, applicants should assume that the hearing will be held at a minimum three weeks after filing an application. A typical format for a hearing is:

- * Presentation of application by petitioner
- * Questions from commission members
- * Questions of facts only by public
- * Arguments in favor and Arguments in opposition (public comment)
- * Discussion of application by the commission and vote.
(hearings may need to be continued; decisions may occur at a subsequent meeting)

E. Decisions - Certificates

All decisions, which require the concurrence of at least three Commission members, whether for approval or disapproval must be dated and signed by a Commission official and must be filed with the Town Clerk within sixty (60) days after the filing of a completed application for a Certificate. In the case of approval four (4) sets of plans are signed, one for the Commission file, one for the Town Clerk, one for the Building Inspector and one for the applicant. The Certificate must be filed with the Town Clerk.

F. Enforcement

The Commission can enforce its decisions through the Building Inspector and can impose a fine of not less than ten dollars and not more than five hundred dollars for each day during which the violation continues. No building permit and no demolition permit will be issued by the Building Inspector until the Commission has issued a Certificate confirming that the proposed alterations are appropriate.