
Plymouth Historic District Commission

**History of the Plymouth
Historic District**

The conservation, protection, and enhancement of our historic resources is also a form of conserving economic values. Residents and property owners, or those contemplating purchase of property in Plymouth's historic district, should have confidence that the area will remain stable, attractive both culturally and economically, through the preservation of its historic character.

The Plymouth Historic District Commission was established by Town Meeting in 1974 and added to in 1977 and again in 1990 and is comprised of some 286 properties.

The Plymouth historic district comprises the major portion of the first townscape to be established as a permanent English settlement in the United States. Streets in the district were laid out as early as 1621 and form the major visual evidence of the early period of Plymouth's history. Although none of the first structures survive, the continued vitality of this neighborhood through the mid-19th century is indicated by its high-quality residential architecture several churches and parsonages.

Dept. Planning and Development
Town of Plymouth 26
Court Street
Plymouth, MA 02360



**Plymouth
Historic District
Commission**

<https://www.plymouth-ma.gov/historic-district-commission>



Obligations of Owners and Tenants

A historic district applies to physical changes to the exterior of a building where visible from a public way. Such changes are subject to review and approval by the Plymouth Historic District Commission.

If a property owner or tenant wishes to modify the exterior of any building, structure, or site located within the district, they **must apply to the Plymouth Historic District Commission for review before undertaking the work.**

NOTE: It is important to understand that if any portion of your building or structure is within an historic district, then the whole building or structure is deemed to be in the district.

Meetings Of The Commission

The Plymouth Historical District Commission meets the second and fourth Wednesday of every month and the meetings are open to the public. Applicants or their representatives should be present at the meeting at which their application is being heard.

Application Process

The process of applying to the Plymouth Historic District Commission for work within the district is a simple one. Approval may consist of a Certificate of Appropriateness, a Certificate of Non-Applicability, or a Certificate of Hardship. The first step is to consult with Commission staff in order to find out which certificate is necessary and if a public hearing is required. In order to allow required legal notice in a local newspaper, completed applications, application materials and fees must be submitted to the staff of the Historic Commission at least five weeks prior to the formal meeting. The owner of the property or their representative must sign the application.

The Historic District Commission approval process is separate and independent from all other state and local approval processes. Approval by other boards or town departments do not guarantee Commission approval.

Items Subject to Review

The Commission has the authority to review the following in the district:

1. Changes of any kind to any exterior portion of a building that is visible from a public way.

2. Terraces, walks, driveways, sidewalks, and similar structures, provided that any such structure is substantially at grade or street level.
3. Walls and fences.
4. Storm doors and windows, screens, lighting fixtures, antennas, and similar appurtenances.
5. The color of paint.
6. The color and type of materials used on roofs, exterior walls, patios, and fences.
7. All permanent signs and banners.
8. Temporary structures or signs, and similar matters as the Commission may reasonably specify.

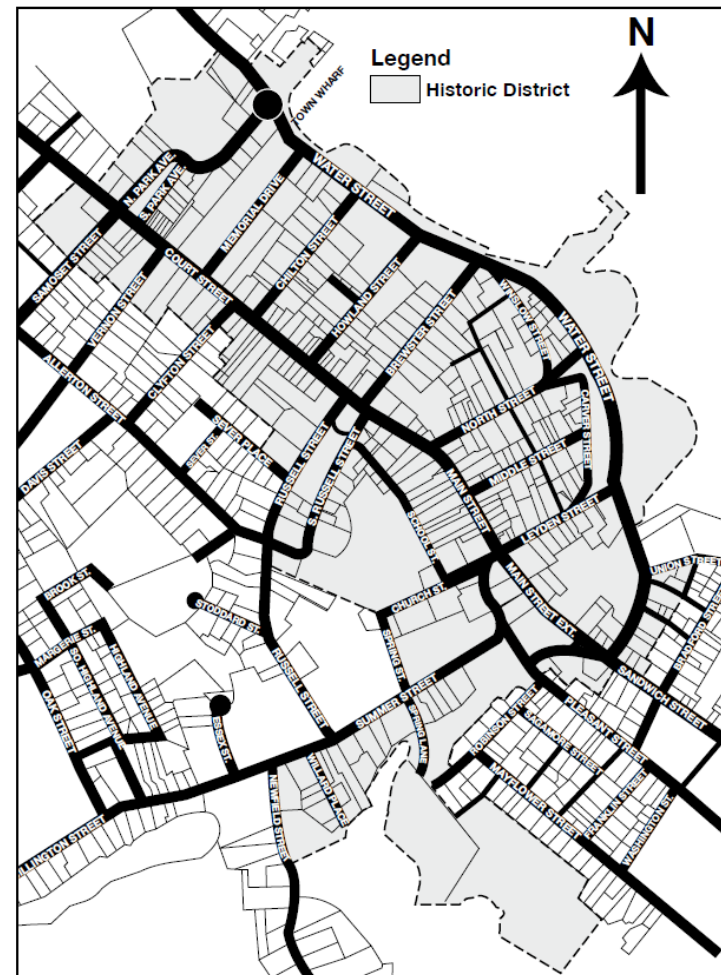
Examples of Items Subject to Review

The following list of examples of the most frequent items subject to review should be considered to be a guideline only. It is not intended to be all-inclusive.

- additions/demolitions • air conditioning units • attachments to houses • chimney caps • construction of a building • exterior lighting fixtures • garden houses/storage sheds • landscaping (fencing, walls, drive/pathways) • mechanical and plumbing vents • lights • painting your house • shutters and hardware (adding or deleting) • siding • signage • skylights • solar panels • storm windows/doors/screens/awnings • street furniture • street numbers • swimming pools • windows

Demolition Delay

Property owners filing a demolition permit for a structure that is determined to be 75 years or older (or undetermined) must file a demolition delay application with the Plymouth Historic Commission.



Enforcement

Failure to apply for proper Commission approval for work in the historic district constitutes a violation of Massachusetts Law and will be punished to the extent of the law, which specifies fines of up to \$500 per day for unapproved work.

Applicants who receive Historical Commission approval must follow plans as approved. Failure to follow approved plans may also delay or prevent the issuance of Building Permits or Certificates of Occupancy and fines.

If you have any further questions, contact the Commission c/o the Department of Planning and Development (508) 747-1620 ext. 10138