



TOWN OF EXETER HISTORIC DISTRICTS Guidelines Introduction



BENEFITS OF LOCAL DESIGNATION

The designation of local historic districts and landmarks has been found to:

- Increase neighborhood stability and property values
- Preserve the physical history of the area
- Promote an appreciation of the physical environment
- Foster community pride and self-image by creating a unique sense of place and local identity
- Increase the awareness and appreciation of local history
- Increase tourism
- Attract potential customers to businesses
- Create local construction jobs employing skilled tradesmen

These *Guidelines* were developed in conjunction with the Town of Exeter's Historic District Commission (HDC) and the Building Department. Please review this information during the early stages of planning a project. Familiarity with this material can assist in moving a project forward, saving both time and money. The Building Department is available for informal meetings with potential applicants who are considering improvements to their properties.

Guidelines and application information are available at the Town Office and on the Commission's website at exeternh.gov/bcc/historic-district-commission. For more information, to clarify whether a proposed project requires HDC review, or to obtain permit applications, please call the Building Department at (603) 773-6112.

WHY IS HISTORIC PRESERVATION IMPORTANT IN EXETER?

The Town of Exeter recognizes that the character and quality of life enjoyed by its citizens depend in great measure upon the Town's rich architectural heritage and the importance of the natural and designed landscapes in our community. This historical, cultural, archaeological, social and economic heritage is entrusted to each generation, enriched and passed on to future generations. The Historic District Commission (HDC) of Exeter is charged with safeguarding this heritage as represented by the Town's historical and architectural value.

EXETER'S HISTORIC PROPERTIES

The Town of Exeter currently regulates three locally designated Historic Districts:

- **Front Street Historic District** - Established 1971
- **Downtown Historic District** - Established 1978
- **High Street Historic District** - Established 2006

The Town of Exeter regulates properties in current and future locally designated Historic Districts, as well as the proposed full or partial demolitions of buildings or structures over 50 years old.

In addition, The Town of Exeter also has several individually designated National Register properties and currently two National Register Historic Districts:

- **Front Street Historic District** - Listed 1973
- **Exeter Waterfront Historic District** - Listed 1980



There are several notable institutional buildings that are located within the locally designated historic districts including Exeter Town Hall.

HISTORIC DESIGNATION & LISTING

Definitions

- **Historic Resource:** An individual building, structure, site, object or district that has been determined to have historical significance or associations and whose distinctive character conveys a unique architectural and cultural heritage.
- **Historic District:** A defined area that contains concentrations of historic resources. A district can include as few as one historic resource or hundreds of resources.

Local Designation

Local designation of a historic property or district provides a tool for local communities to determine what is architecturally and historically important to their community and a mechanism for the regulation of proposed changes to those properties.

The National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is the United States government's official list of districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects identified as worthy of preservation. The National Register is administered by the National Park Service, a division of the Department of the Interior.

Listing in the National Register does not eliminate or restrict property rights of individual owners. Projects involving federal or state permits, licenses or funding are reviewed for their potential effects on significant historic properties, including those listed in the National Register. Having a property listed on the National Register could make its owners eligible for federal and state tax credits for expenses incurred rehabilitating an income-producing property. National Register information is available from the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources. (Refer to *Preservation Organizations*, page 01-11.)

PRESERVATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

There are federal and state incentive programs available for historic properties. The submission and review requirements are rigorous and it is highly recommended that applicants contact the applicable agency at the early planning stages of a potential project.

The Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentive Program rewards private investment in rehabilitating historic income-producing properties such as offices, rental housing and retail stores. The Program, established by the Tax Reform Act of 1986, is jointly administered by the U.S. Department of the Treasury and the U.S. Department of the Interior's National Park Service. Owner-occupied single-family residences are not eligible for the program. If eligible, up to 20 cents on every dollar spent on qualified rehabilitation work (including most architectural and engineering fees) would be available as a credit against federal income taxes. The 20% tax credit is available to buildings that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places, either individually or as a contributing building in a National Register Historic District, or as a contributing building within a local historic district that has been certified by the Department of the Interior. To be eligible for the 20% tax credit, project work must be certified as meeting *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*. (Refer to *Preservation Resources*, page 01-11.)

Preservation Easements are a tool often used to insure the preservation of the character defining features of a property for the public's benefit. The New Hampshire Preservation Alliance and Historic New England maintain easement programs to protect historic resources. The extent of the protection of the property is dependent on the strength of the easement. Some easements protect just the façade of a building. Other easements protect the larger preservation values including but not limited to the exterior and interior architectural features, materials, landscape features, outbuildings, fences and archeological resources of a property.

The Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive (RSA 79E) has been adopted by Town of Exeter to encourage revitalization of underutilized buildings. Program information is available at www.exeternh.gov.

SUSTAINABLE BENEFITS OF PRESERVATION

Historic buildings are intrinsically "green," as reusing an existing building has substantially lower environmental impact than building a new one. Preservation and rehabilitation minimize the wasteful loss of materials while maintaining a distinctive sense of place. Sustainable benefits of preservation include:

- The historic building or structure already exists, and the energy required to fabricate the lumber, bricks, windows and doors was expended long ago
- New construction often includes demolition of an existing building (construction waste comprises approximately 25% to 30% of landfills), and the fabrication of new construction materials creates additional waste, while preservation of an existing building conserves landfill space
- The most appropriate materials for the majority of preservation projects are often historic materials rather than non-biodegradable manufactured products, such as vinyl and/or plastics

PRESERVATION REGULATORY REVIEW

To maintain the character of properties within the Historic Districts, most proposed exterior changes require review and the issuance of a Certificate of Approval (COA) from the HDC prior to commencing work, or if deemed to be an exempt activity or a minor application by Building Department Staff, the approval process can be addressed administratively. The type of work requiring a COA includes:

- **Exterior Alteration** - Installation, modification and/or removal of materials or features from sites, buildings or structures including sign modification or installation
- **New Construction** - New building, structure or site feature and/or expansion of an existing building, structure or site feature
- **Demolition** - Complete or partial removal of a building, structure or site feature
- **Relocation** - Moving of a building, structure or site feature

Certificate of Approval applications are reviewed by the HDC at their monthly meetings. During their reviews, the HDC references the criteria set forth in the Historic Preservation sections of the Town's Zoning Ordinance. Review by the HDC ensures that any proposed changes will be compatible with the character and design of the individual property and/or Historic District.

The process of applying for a COA requires the project representative to provide sufficient information on the HDC's application form and to include drawings, sketches, photographs, a survey, product brochures or samples for certain building features that will be modified. The applicant is encouraged to consult with Building Department staff to ensure that all the information is included in the application. Once the application has been determined to be complete, it will be placed on the HDC agenda. The applicant or a project representative should attend the HDC meeting for COA reviews to answer any questions the HDC may have regarding the application, or the application could be tabled pending clarification and/or the submission of additional information as requested by the HDC.

DEMOLITION REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Demolition Committee is a subcommittee of the Exeter Heritage Commission charged with the review of the proposed demolition of:

- Any building or structure within the Town limits that is more than 50 years old (with the exception of manufactured homes)
- Any building or structure that is listed or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places
- Any building or structure within a locally established Historic District

If a building or structure is found to be historically significant, the Demolition Review Committee will work with the owner to encourage alternatives to demolition. If alternatives are not agreed upon, the Demolition Review Committee will photographically document the building or structure.

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Established in 1970, the HDC has oversight of the Town's preservation activities and regulatory review within the bounds of the Exeter Historic Districts. The HDC is comprised of seven members and four alternates, including a Selectman and a member of the Planning Board. Although the HDC's primary responsibility is to conduct to review applications for COAs, the HDC also provides recommendations to the Town Council regarding historic preservation activities in the Town including the documentation of historically designated properties.

The HDC can take one of four actions following the review of a COA application:

- **Approval as Submitted** - The Certificate for Approval will be issued
- **Approval with Conditions** - A Certificate for Approval will be issued pending review for compliance of required conditions
- **Continued** - The applicant provides additional information or clarification as requested by the HDC
- **Denial** - It is determined that the project does not meet the requirements for the granting of a COA - The applicant can work with Building Department Staff to bring the project into compliance with the ordinance using the *Guidelines* and resubmit to the HDC for re-review or appeal to the Zoning Board of Adjustment

WORKING WITHOUT A COA

The Building Department will inspect all work for compliance with an approved Certificate of Approval (COA). If any changes are proposed after the issuance of a COA, please contact the Building Department at (603) 773-6112 for additional required reviews. Work completed without an approved COA is subject to possible fines, removal and restoration of the site, building or structure to its appearance prior to the violation.

APPROVALS REQUIRED FOR WORK

HDC review and approval is triggered by the application for a building permit. This includes the replacement of signs, awnings, windows, doors and roofs. HDC approval is necessary but may not be sufficient for the granting of a building permit. Each property is subject to review for compliance with applicable zoning, building and safety ordinances and codes. The property owner is responsible obtaining all necessary approvals prior to commencing with work.

HERITAGE COMMISSION

The Exeter Heritage Commission is advisory to other local boards and commissions; conducts inventories; educates the public on matters relating to historic preservation; provides information on historical resources; and serves as a resource for revitalization efforts

DESIGN OF ALTERATIONS

In balancing the desire for a change to a historic property with regard to the historic integrity, the HDC encourages property owners to retain as much historic building fabric as possible. As such, the following guide can be used, listed in preferential order:

1. Maintenance
2. Repair and In-Kind Replacement
3. Alterations and Renovations
4. Adaptive Reuse
5. Additions and New Constructions

If demolition is considered, property owners should refer to the *Demolition Review Committee* process (page 01-3). Demolition of designated historic buildings is rarely appropriate.



The symmetry of this twin residence is one of its character defining features that should be preserved.

GUIDELINES FOR HDC DECISIONS FOR ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING BUILDINGS

When reviewing a proposed project for alteration to a historic building, the HDC's review is guided by principles contained in *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, and more specifically, *The Standards for Rehabilitation*. *The Standards for Rehabilitation* provide property owners and tenants common-sense guidelines to allow sensitive contemporary uses for their sites while retaining their architectural and cultural heritage. In reviewing projects, the HDC encourages sensitive rehabilitation involving the least amount of intervention or change as identified in the following guidelines:

- **Identify, retain and preserve** the overall form, materials and details that are important in defining the architectural and historical character of the building and site.
- **Protect and maintain** historic materials and features. This involves protection from other work that may occur in proximity to the historic materials, and also protection through regular maintenance. A regular program of protection and maintenance usually involves the least degree of intervention, and can prevent or postpone extensive and costly work.

- **Repair** rather than replace deteriorated historic materials and features. Repairs maintain the building in its current condition while making it weather-resistant and structurally sound. Repairs should involve the least intervention possible, concentrating specifically on areas of deterioration. When repair is not possible, the HDC encourages replacement in-kind, reproducing by new construction the original feature exactly, including the original material, finish, detailing and texture.
- **Replace** missing or deteriorated historic materials and features in-kind when the extent of deterioration precludes repair. Similar to repair, the preferred approach is to replace the entire feature in-kind to match the original material, finish, detailing and texture. Since this is not always technically or financially feasible, substitute materials are sometimes acceptable when they convey the appearance and finish of the original feature.
- **Reconstruct** missing historical features if adequate historical, pictorial and physical documentation exists so that the feature may be accurately reproduced. The addition of features from other historic buildings or addition of historical elements for which there is no documentation is not appropriate.
- **Alterations and additions** are sometimes needed to ensure the continued use of a building. An alteration involves returning a building to a useful condition while saving those parts that represent its historical, architectural or cultural significance. It is important that alterations do not radically alter, obscure or destroy character-defining spaces, materials, features or finishes. An addition is new construction at the exterior of an existing building and should be carefully considered. New additions should be differentiated but also compatible with the historic building in terms of size, mass, form, fenestration, material, detailing and style, and should be constructed at a less visible side or rear elevation, so that the character-defining features are not radically obscured, damaged or destroyed.

TOWN OF EXETER - DESIGN GUIDELINES

The following *Guidelines* were prepared in this project:

- 01 *Guidelines Introduction*
- 02 *Guidelines for Roofing*
- 03 *Guidelines for Exterior Woodwork*
- 04 *Guidelines for Masonry & Stucco*
- 05 *Guidelines for Windows & Doors*
- 06 *Guidelines for Site Elements*
- 07 *Guidelines for New Construction & Additions*
- 08 *Guidelines for Commercial Buildings*

Further information is available at the Building Department and on Exeter's web site at www.exeternh.gov. These *Guidelines* serve to cover the topics most typically addressed by the HDC. Any work under the jurisdiction of the HDC that is not specifically covered in these *Guidelines* is subject to HDC review and approval.



The replacement of deteriorated roofing is potentially dangerous work that often requires the access of workers and materials by ladders. Consideration should be given to hiring a professional for any work that is unfamiliar or potentially unsafe.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

Repair and maintenance of a building can potentially be dangerous work. It is recommended that all manufacturers' recommendations be followed and appropriate safety precautions with ladders, tools, materials and processes be taken. Property owners should consult a professional for work that is unfamiliar or potentially unsafe.

Work on older buildings can uncover hazardous materials such as asbestos, lead, radon and mold. Property owners should familiarize themselves with these materials and their building's conditions prior to beginning work. Property owners who are unfamiliar with how to properly handle or work around potentially hazardous materials are strongly encouraged to consult with a trained or certified contractor.

Information about common hazardous materials can be found on national and state organizations web sites, including:

Asbestos

US Environmental Protection Agency Hotline
(800) 368-5888 www.epa.gov/asbestos

Lead

National Lead Information Clearinghouse
(800) 424-LEAD www.epa.gov/lead

Radon

The National Safety Council's Radon Hotline
(800) SOS-RADON www.epa.gov/radon

Mold

Indoor Air Quality Information Clearinghouse:
(800) 483-4318 www.epa.gov/iaq/molds/index

BUILDING CODES

All construction projects in the Town of Exeter must comply with the Zoning Ordinances as well as the International Building and Residential Codes as amended. The intent of the Ordinance and Code is to protect the public health, safety and welfare of citizens against the hazards of inadequate, defective or unsafe conditions. The Code addresses the interior and exterior conditions of buildings and structures, building systems and the surrounding property.

For specific information regarding the applicable ordinances and code sections for a project, please contact the Building Department at (603) 773-6112. Applicants are also welcome to meet with an Inspector who can assist with permit applications and regulatory questions.



All proposed exterior alterations, including the modification or installation of signage and awnings, is subject to HDC review and requires a Certificate of Approval (COA).

HDC REVIEW

It is important to remember that all exterior changes to a building or structure within the boundaries of a locally designated Historic District are required to receive a prior approval from the HDC. (Refer to *Preservation Regulatory Review* on page 01-3 or contact the Building Department at (603) 773-6112 for review requirements for proposed work.)

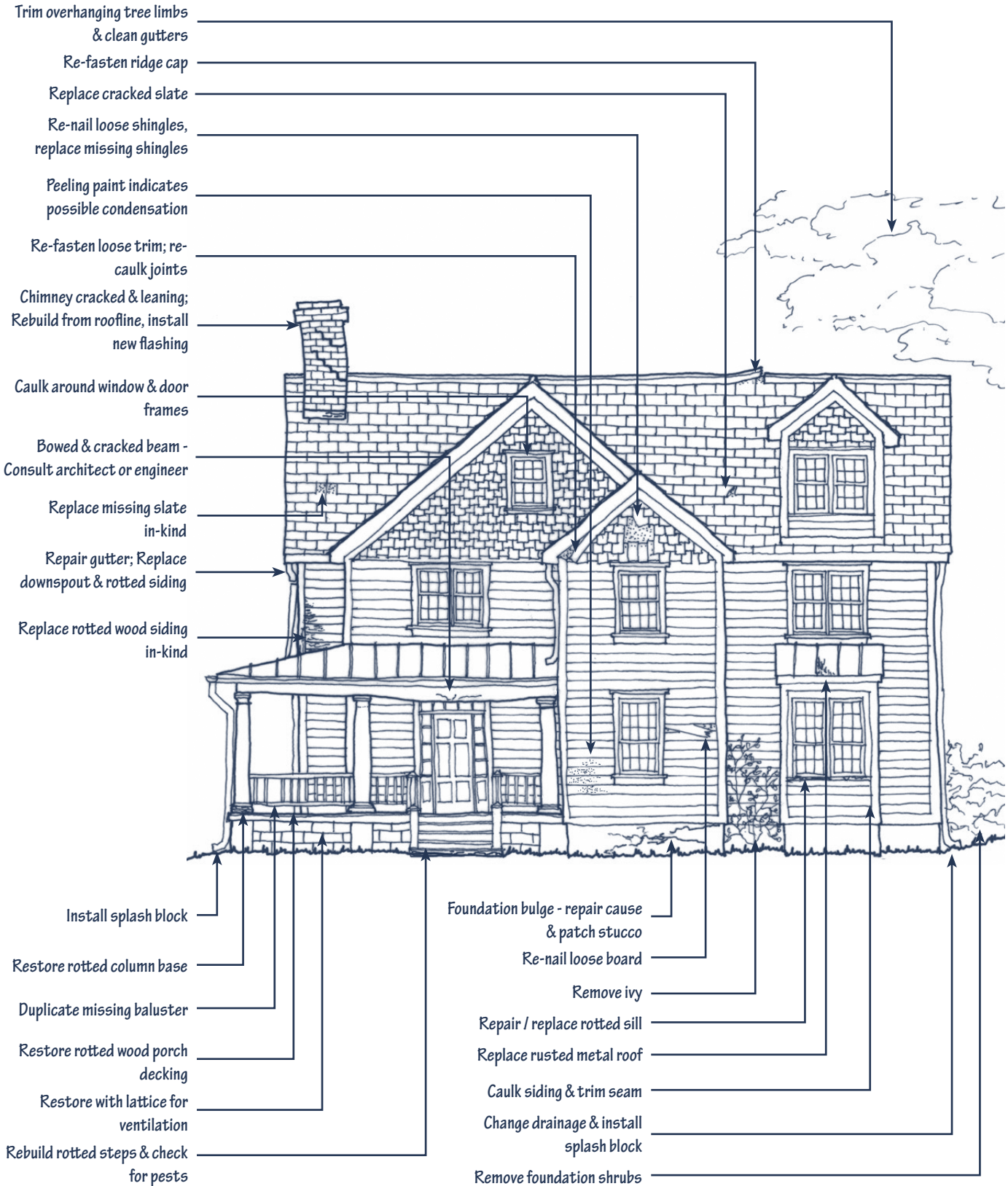
COST VS. VALUE-ADDED

While some of the recommendations in these *Guidelines* do not represent the least expensive options, the HDC strongly believes that selecting a better quality option will be less costly in the long-term.

An immediate benefit is that using traditional materials and construction methods tends to be more historically appropriate and sustainable. (Refer to *Benefits of Historic Preservation*, page 01-2.) Another benefit is that traditional materials generally have a longer life-cycle because they are appropriate for the local climate, requiring less frequent replacement. Additionally, traditional materials tend to reduce associated landfill waste and replacement costs, as well as potentially increasing a property's value associated with authentic, higher quality construction.

TYPICAL BUILDING MAINTENANCE NEEDS

General: Scrape all loose paint; sand to smooth surface; prime bare wood and metal; re-paint with historically appropriate colors



BUILDING ENVELOPE DETERIORATION

The exterior envelope of a building is made up of various components that typically include roofing, walls, windows and doors. Each of these building components can be executed in various materials within the same building envelope, such as a combination of shingle roofing at sloped surfaces and rolled roofing at flat surfaces, with metal flashing at the intersections.

These components of various materials act together as a system to protect the interior from exterior environmental extremes. Some of the environmental influences affecting the exterior building envelope include:

- Moisture including rain, snow, ice, humidity and groundwater
- Wind
- Sunlight
- Temperature variations
- Atmospheric chemicals and acid rain
- Insects, birds and rodents
- Vegetation, molds, algae and fungi

All building materials, new or old, will deteriorate over time. Each of the environmental influences listed above, individually and in combination, has the potential to react differently with the materials that comprise a building's exterior envelope and cause deterioration. The potential reactions are further complicated by the way the materials are installed and joined together, and their relative locations. However, by implementing a regular maintenance and repair program, the rate of deterioration can be dramatically slowed, allowing the Town's historic buildings to last for centuries.

MAINTENANCE IS PRESERVATION

Regular maintenance helps to preserve buildings and property, protect real estate values and investments, and keeps Exeter an attractive place to live, work and visit. Lack of regular upkeep can result in accelerated deterioration of building elements and features. In the case of historic buildings, these features often represent character defining elements that are difficult and costly to replace. Long-term lack of maintenance can impact a building's structure, resulting in expensive repairs.

It is prudent to regularly inspect buildings, structures and landscape elements to identify potential problems. If problems are detected early, minor maintenance may not only improve a property's overall appearance and value, but also can prevent or postpone extensive and costly future repairs. Regular maintenance can include a variety of tasks such as cleaning gutters and downspouts, and painting of exterior woodwork. It is important to keep in mind that if completed in a timely fashion, regular maintenance can prolong the life of a historic building or structure, while enhancing its long term value, authenticity and cultural value.

EXTERIOR PAINT AS MAINTENANCE

Paint is one of the most common ways to protect exterior materials from the elements, particularly wood without natural or chemical preservatives, and metals that would otherwise rust. When the painted surface has been compromised, moisture and the elements can infiltrate the underlying material and substrate, accelerating deterioration. Exterior paint provides a layer of protection to a building by limiting moisture infiltration and damage from the sun, pests and other forms of deterioration. Exterior woodwork without natural or chemical preservatives is susceptible to moisture-related wood deterioration of the exterior envelope and underlying framing. Many metals are susceptible to rust. Although paint is an important protective layer that improves the longevity of a historic building element, it must be viewed as a temporary barrier that is subject to deterioration through cyclical temperature and humidity changes. It requires re-application to maintain its shielding properties.

In addition to providing a protective layer, paint colors can highlight a building's architectural features and style, visually tie parts of a building together, and reflect personal taste. A building's style, period of construction, materials and setting can all help identify appropriate paint colors. (A list of historic exterior color selections for buildings styles located in historic districts is available on the Town's web site at www.exeternh.gov.)

In general, exterior surfaces should be repainted every 5 to 8 years, with intermediate touch-ups of high traffic, worn or deteriorated areas. If a building requires frequent repainting, it might be an indication of another problem including moisture, inadequate surface preparation and non-compatible paint.

Encapsulating paints can be problematic as they can trap moisture in woodwork and promote rot. These are often referred to as "liquid siding," "liquid stucco" or "liquid ceramic coatings." Painting of previously unpainted masonry is strongly discouraged. (Refer to *Removing Paint from Masonry, Guidelines for Masonry & Stucco, page 04-7*.)

PROPERTY MAINTENANCE

Properties should be maintained in a manner that allows them to be safe and contribute to the Town culturally and economically. The Town and the HDC encourages the regular maintenance of any building or structure to prevent a hazardous or unsafe condition from occurring. Potential examples of hazardous or unsafe conditions include cases in which:

- All or part of the building may fall and injure people or property
- Structural elements are deteriorated such that they can no longer safely carry imposed loads
- A defect or condition makes the building susceptible to water damage, including unmaintained paint on exterior wood surfaces and openings in roofs or walls



An example of an adaptive reuse project is the conversion of a firehouse into a restaurant. If considering a change of use for a building, it is important to have a clear understanding of which uses are permitted under the Zoning Ordinance for a particular parcel, and those that would require a variance. In addition, other modifications, such as the installation of an accessible ramp, may be required.

ALTERATIONS & RENOVATIONS

Alterations and renovations are sometimes needed to ensure the continued use of a building, but have the potential to alter the character of historic properties. When considering alterations or renovations, careful attention should be given to the original building and its relationship to the alteration or renovation.

When considering changes to historic properties, applicants should strive to:

- Identify, retain and preserve the character defining features of the historic building
- Minimize alteration to the original design, materials and features
- Use design elements, materials and techniques that are compatible to the historic building and setting
- Maintain the appropriate historic contextual setting



HDC review is required for all alterations of exterior building materials including roofing, siding and windows. In addition the HDC reviews any proposed structure, including garages, fences and walls at properties within the locally designated Historic Districts.

ADAPTIVE REUSE

Similar to alterations and renovations, adaptive reuse projects might be necessary to use a building for a different purpose from which it is currently or was originally designed, if permitted under the Exeter Zoning Ordinance. Similar to alterations or renovations, great care should be given to the original building and its relationship to the alteration or renovation. In addition, careful attention should be taken with required alterations such as the modification or addition of window and door openings to accommodate the new use.

Examples of Adaptive Reuse:

- Conversion of a house to multi-family residential or offices
- Conversion of industrial/commercial buildings into housing
- Conversion of institutional buildings into commercial space
- Conversion of mill buildings into office space or residences

Benefits of Adaptive Reuse:

- Retention of historic character and high quality historic materials and craftsmanship
- Promotes stability of ownership and occupancy of historic resources
- Potential cost savings versus new construction
- Maintains and utilizes the established neighborhood and existing infrastructure

REPAIR VS. REPLACEMENT

When it is no longer feasible to maintain a historic feature due to its condition, repairs or replacement in-kind may be necessary. Repairs maintain the building in its current condition while making it weather-resistant and structurally sound, concentrating specifically on areas of deterioration. When repair is not possible, the HDC encourages replacement in-kind. Similar to a regular maintenance program, these activities can prevent or postpone extensive and costly future repairs.

In order of preference, the HDC encourages the following approach:

1. Non-intrusive repairs, focused at deteriorated areas, stabilizing and protecting the building's important materials and features
2. When repair is not possible, replacement in-kind to the greatest extent possible, reproducing by new construction the original feature exactly, matching the original material, size, scale, finish, profile, detailing and texture
3. When replacement in-kind is not possible, the use of compatible materials and techniques that convey an appearance similar to the original historic features, and the use of materials similar in design, color, texture, finish and visual quality to the historic elements



This 2-story side elevation addition is subordinate and diminutive in scale when compared to the side gable roofed main block. It is stepped back from the front elevation, and utilizes similar but larger windows, trim and siding. It is compatible but clearly identifiable as an addition to the historic building.

ADDITIONS

Additions to a building within a Historic District can dramatically alter the appearance of the individual property, the District and the surrounding landscapes. Exact reproduction of historic buildings is discouraged, while both traditional or contemporary design compatible to the context of the historic resources and their surroundings is encouraged. Because of the sensitivity of the area, the property owner should take great care when proposing an addition to a designated property.

When considering an addition to a historic building or structure, applicants should:

- Preserve the cohesive ambiance of historic resources with compatible, sympathetic and contemporary construction
- Use compatible siting, proportion, scale, form, materials, fenestration, roof configuration, details and finishes to the existing building
- Construct additions at secondary elevations wherever possible, subordinate to the historic building, and compatible with the design of the property and neighborhood
- Construct additions so that the historic building fabric is not radically changed, obscured, damaged or destroyed
- Reference the *Guidelines for New Construction & Additions*

NEW CONSTRUCTION

More dramatically than additions, new construction within a Historic District can dramatically alter the appearance of the individual property, the District and the surrounding landscapes. All new construction should be compatible within the property's surrounding context. As a result, those areas that are highly cohesive with strong historical integrity, will likely be more limited than those areas with a variety of building types, scales, materials and designs such as those found in some of Exeter's commercial corridors.

When considering a new construction or development project, exact reproduction of historic buildings is discouraged, while both traditional design or contemporary design compatible to the context of the historic resources and their surroundings is encouraged. Because of the sensitivity of the area, the property owner should take great care when proposing new construction or a new development within a Historic District.

When considering new construction within a locally designated historic district or historic context, applicants should:

- Preserve the cohesive ambiance of historic resources with compatible, sympathetic and contemporary construction
- Use compatible siting, proportion, scale, form, materials, fenestration, roof configuration, details and finishes
- Reference the *Guidelines for New Construction & Additions*



This house is sited in a manner similar to its neighbors. The multiple gable and hipped roof break down the overall mass and scale to be similar to its neighbors. The fenestration pattern includes punched window openings, avoiding a front-facing garage door.

RESEARCHING HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Property owners seeking information regarding the history of their property can consult with the Exeter Historical Society as well as reference historic property designation information, town atlases, Town Directories and potentially historic photographs. (Refer to *Preservation Organizations*, page 01-11.)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Where should I begin the process?

A: It is often helpful to begin by understanding what makes your property historically or architecturally significant (see below.) Contact the Town's Building Department at (603) 773-6112 for a review of your property's significance. Obtain the *Guidelines* section applicable to your proposed project and consider whether the proposed changes are appropriate for the property.

Q: How can I find out about the history of my neighborhood or property?

A: The Exeter Historical Society is the best resources for local history, (refer to page 01-11), including historic photographs, National Register Nominations and survey forms on historic buildings. Links to information on local history are also available on the Town of Exeter's website. Additional information regarding historic properties is available from the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources, and on its website. There are also numerous reference organizations and resources, a few of which are listed on page 01-11.

Q: How do I make it more likely that my project is approved?

A: It is helpful to have an understanding of what makes your property architecturally or culturally significant when considering a project. This will allow you to make informed decisions about the proposed project with an understanding of some of the issues considered by the HDC. Each section of the *Guidelines* outlines what is and is not likely to be approved by the HDC. If considering a complex application, particularly those that include an addition or new construction, it is often helpful to informally consult with the HDC in a conceptual review prior to submission of a Certificate of Approval (COA) application. The conceptual review process can provide feedback to guide an application towards a design that may be approved by the HDC prior to expending a lot of time and money in the development of detailed plans or Construction Documents.

Q: Is the review process expensive? Do I need to hire an outside professional?

A: The HDC does not charge a fee for a reviews; however, other City departments may assess fees, such as notification fees, based on the nature of the project. Carefully review of the applicable *Guidelines* and the application requirements for an approval prior to hiring a design professional or contractor can assist in the early planning stages of your project. If not required by Code to receive a building permit, you are welcome to submit applications for work without the assistance of a design professional. However, for complex proposals or those that requires the submission of scaled drawings, consultation with a professional may be required and may expedite the review process. If you are retaining the services of a professional, it is helpful to work with architects, contractors and others familiar with the requirements of working with the HDC. Before submitting your application, confirm that it is complete with the Building Department.

Q: I am planning a complex project. When is the best time to talk to the HDC?

A: If your project is complex or requires review from multiple land use Commissions and Boards, the best time to talk to the HDC is as early in the project as possible, before you invest significant time and money into the design process. This initial informal informational review can help move a project more quickly through the review process. Please contact the Town's Building Department at (603) 773-6112 for an appointment.

Q: Is there a way to expedite the review process?

A: It is important to thoroughly complete the application and submit all required materials to the HDC for review. It is recommended that you contact the Town's Building Department directly to understand what submission materials are required for your project; whether Commission review is required or a conceptual review is recommended; and the specific submission requirements, deadlines and meeting dates. Contact the Town's Building Department to determine what other reviews are required; if multiple reviews are necessary they can often be pursued simultaneously.

Q: Does my project require HDC review?

A: Proposed changes to any building, site or structure within the boundaries of a locally designated Exeter Historic District are required to receive an approval. This includes all work that might be considered ordinary maintenance and repair with the exception of repainting. Refer to applicable *Guidelines* sections for clarifications regarding types of work that is subject to review. Most applications for maintenance and in-kind repair are reviewed at the Staff level within 7 to 10 days of a completed application filing.

Q: How do I apply for HDC review?

A: The specific submission requirements for HDC review will vary based upon whether the submission is for a conceptual review or a Certificate of Approval. In most instances, the submission materials are typically similar to those required for a building permit review. For specific information regarding the submission requirements for your proposed project please refer to the applications available on the Town of Exeter website at www.exeternh.gov or contact the Town's Building Department at (603) 773-6112.

Q: Can I begin construction immediately after I get the HDC approval?

A: The HDC review is not necessarily sufficient for the granting of a building permit. Each project is also subject to review by all departments having jurisdiction over compliance with zoning, building and safety codes. HDC review is just one step in obtaining a building permit. You must complete all necessary reviews and obtain all necessary permits applicable to your project prior to proceeding with any work. However, you cannot receive a building permit without obtaining an approval from the HDC.

PRESERVATION RESOURCES

Reference

- Belle, John, John Ray Hoke, Jr., Stephen A. Kliment (eds.). *Traditional Building Details for Building Restoration, Renovation, and Rehabilitation*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1998.
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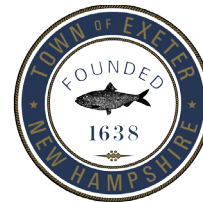
PRESERVATION ORGANIZATIONS

Local Organizations

- Town of Exeter Building Department
Historic District Commission (HDC); Heritage Commission
Town Hall; 10 Front Street, Exeter, NH 03833;
(603) 773-6112; www.exeternh.gov
- Exeter Historical Society
47 Front Street; Exeter, NH 03833;
(603) 778-2335; www.exeterhistory.org

State and Regional Organizations

- New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources
19 Pillsbury Street; Concord, NH 03302
(603) 271-3483; preservation@dcr.nh.gov
- New Hampshire Preservation Alliance
7 Eagle Square; Concord NH 03302
(603) 224-2281; www.nhpreservation.org
- Historic New England
Otis House; 141 Cambridge Street; Boston, MA 02114
(617) 227-3956; www.historicnewengland.org



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Julie Gilman, Vice-Chair, Selectboard
Nancy Belanger, Clerk, Selectboard
Don Clement, Member, Selectboard
Anne L. Surman, Member, Selectboard
Russell Dean, Town Manager

Historic District Commission

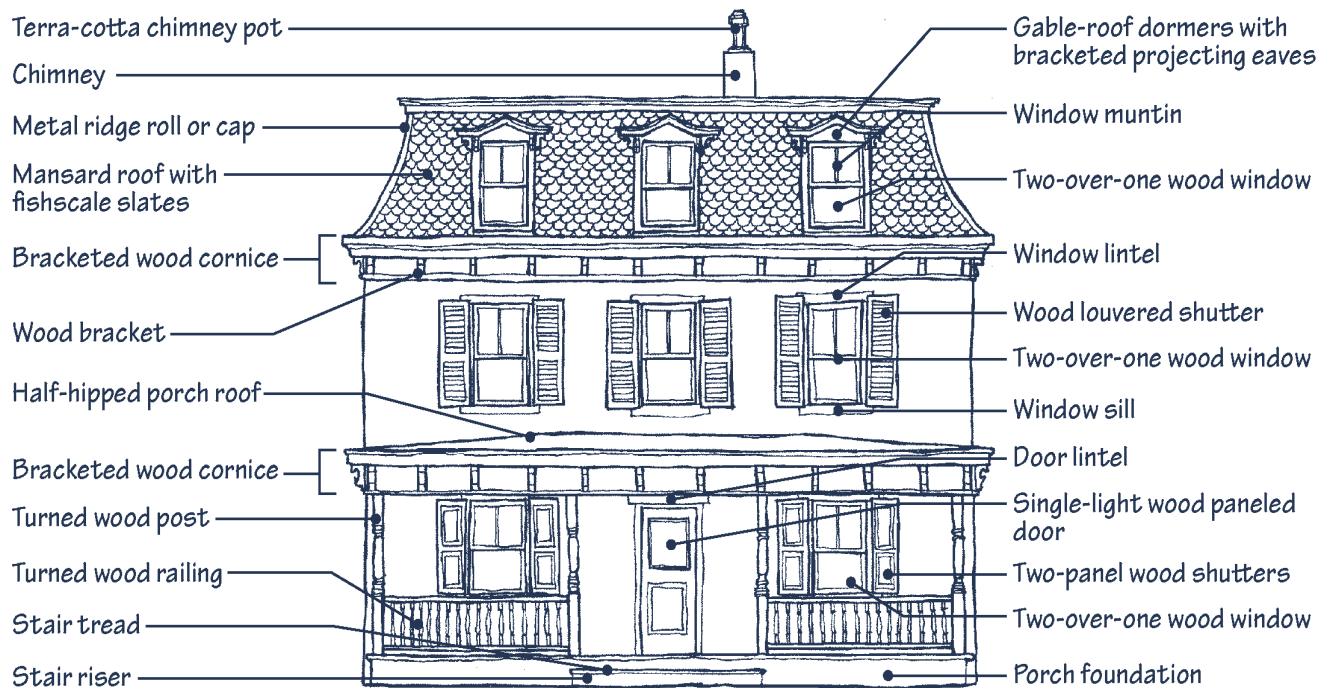
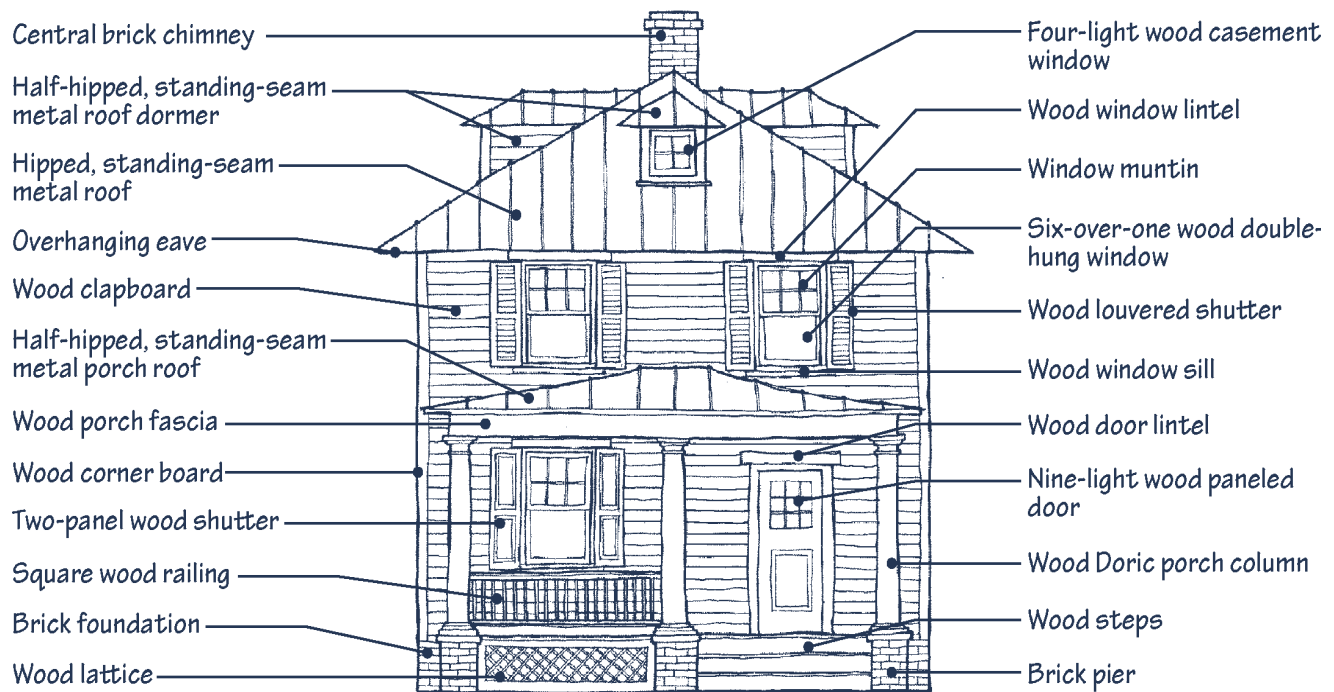
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Pam Gjettum, Clerk
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Nicole Martineau, Member
Valerie Ouellette, Member
Pete Cameron, Planning Board Representative, Alternate

Building Department

- Doug Eastman, Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Officer
Barbara McEvoy, Deputy Code Enforcement Officer

GLOSSARY OF ARCHITECTURAL TERMS

The following diagrams represent composite buildings, and provide a basic vocabulary of architectural elements and terms. Please refer to the individual *Guidelines* for additional information.



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TOWN OF EXETER HISTORIC DISTRICTS Guidelines for Site Elements



Granite, which is readily available in Exeter, is a very durable material that is ideal for the construction of landscape walls. This dry-laid granite wall includes larger stones held in place by smaller ones, all topped by a relatively flat capstone.

EXETER'S SITE ELEMENTS

Site elements frame the architecture of a streetscape. In some areas, established features such as sidewalks, street trees, walls, fences, walkways and driveways provide a consistent setting that strongly defines the unique character of a neighborhood.

When considering alterations to a site, property owners are encouraged to develop an understanding of the environmental characteristics of the immediate surroundings of the site, and to allow that understanding to direct the design of the alterations. This will allow a more compatible relationship between a property and its neighborhood.

These *Guidelines* were developed in conjunction with the Town of Exeter's Historic District Commission (HDC) and the Building Department. Please review this information during the early stages of planning a project. Familiarity with this material can assist in moving a project forward, saving both time and money. The Building Department is available for informal meetings with potential applicants who are considering improvements to their properties.

Guidelines and application information are available at the Town Office and on the Commission's website at exeternh.gov/bcc/historic-district-commission. For more information, to clarify whether a proposed project requires HDC review, or to obtain permit applications, please call the Building Department at (603) 773-6112.

PAVING

Paving, which includes sidewalks, walkways, patios and driveways, has changed significantly with the development of new materials. Historic paving could be as simple as gravel or crushed shells, or hard materials such as brick or stone, laid in simple or ornamental patterns. Materials popularized in the 20th century include concrete and asphalt, and more recently cast concrete pavers, often colored and shaped to resemble brick or stone.

In an effort to retain the quality of the Town's historic properties and districts, the retention and maintenance of existing historic paving materials is encouraged. Property owners are also encouraged to minimize new paving, and to use porous paving whenever possible to minimize runoff onto neighboring properties and into storm drains.

Since the character and context of every property is unique, each application for changes in paving location and material is reviewed on a case-by-case basis. When submitting an application for proposed paving, applicants should provide detailed, dimensioned site plans indicating the size and location of all existing buildings, paving and proposed paving changes.



This brick walkway has a cobblestone border providing a formal entrance using traditional materials.

ZONING REQUIREMENTS

Lighting, fencing, walls and paving are all subject to the requirements of the Town of Exeter's Zoning Ordinance. The ordinances dictate the height and location of fences and walls, the amount of paving permitted, the level of illumination allowable, and other requirements. These are separate and independent from historic preservation review, and it is highly recommended that applicants contact the Building Department at (603) 773-6112 to review requirements prior to filing.

REQUIRED REVIEWS

In the Town of Exeter, vegetation and plantings do not come under the HDC's review.



The wood picket fence is supported by granite piers.

FENCES, WALLS, GATES & HITCHING POSTS

Fences, walls and gates are important elements of the overall character of a neighborhood. They:

- Identify boundaries
- Provide privacy and security
- Often represent a major element of a streetscape, separating public from private property
- Often relate to a building's design

Hitching posts are a symbol of arrival and are a reference to pre-automotive transportation.



Picket and horizontal board fences are located along the sidewalk, while a solid wood fence between the properties provides privacy, tapering down towards the street.

FENCES

Wood is a traditional fence material in the Town of Exeter. Some traditional metal fencing is also present. Traditional fencing types not only mark the boundaries of a specific space, but also allow visual access between the historic structures on a property and the street. To retain visibilities of historic properties, fences in front yards should be limited to 48" in height, and should use a picket style that is at least 30% open. There is greater flexibility for side and rear yards including solid wood and metal chain link fencing.

WALLS

Landscape walls are typically constructed of stacked granite, fieldstone or brick, and can include a stucco finish. Historically, the materials and style of walls were often related to a building's design.

The construction of walls that visually block primary building façades from the public way, particularly at historically important buildings, is discouraged. The recommended height limit of new walls in front yards is 36". While new walls that are stylistically compatible with the property may be appropriate, the construction of walls made of incompatible materials, such as concrete block, is discouraged.



The stone retaining wall includes integral steps and the driveway has a cobblestones along the sidewalk enhancing the historic character.

GATES

Pedestrian gates, traditionally along a walkway, are generally 3 to 3½ feet wide. Gates for residential vehicular access are generally 10 to 12 feet wide. When installed with a fence, gates tend to be of the same material and similar design as the fence, although often more elaborate. When installed with a wall, they are generally flanked by piers or gate posts that can be either wood, metal or granite.



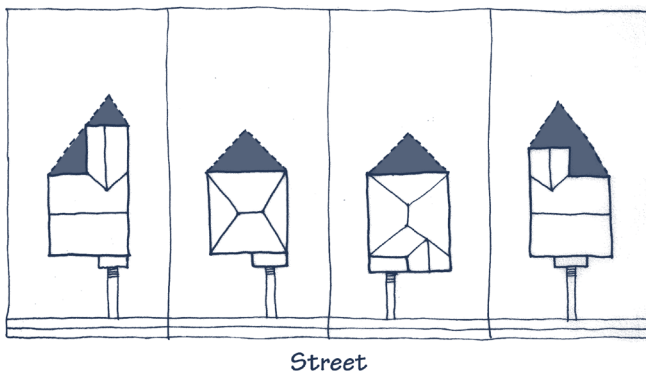
Gates at wood fences tend to reflect the pattern of the fencing. Paired gates are typically used at larger openings.

MODERN LANDSCAPE FEATURES, EQUIPMENT & SMALL STRUCTURES

Modern site amenities can greatly increase the enjoyment of a property as well as serve functional needs. However, many of these amenities can be visually obtrusive and are not appropriate within a historic context or setting.

- **Landscape Features:** Landscape features such as pergolas (appropriate at a few properties), fountains and sculpture, and play equipment such as jungle gyms, swimming pools, hot tubs and tennis courts can add to the outdoor enjoyment of our properties, but can be visually obtrusive in a historic setting.
- **Ground-Mounted Equipment:** Air-conditioner condensers, solar collectors, trash dumpsters and satellite dishes are all examples of modern, ground-mounted mechanical equipment that can affect the historic integrity of a site and its surroundings.
- **Small Structures:** Small structures can be functional and provide enjoyment for property owners. Generally less than 100 square feet in size, they include tool or garden sheds, play houses, dog houses, permanent sun shading canopies, building or wall-mounted awnings and gazebos. These modern alterations can affect the historic integrity of a site and its surroundings. Small structures that are visible from the public way are generally more appropriate if their walls and roof are constructed of the same historic materials as those of the existing main building. The installation of pre-manufactured sheds visible from the public way, particularly those with metal or vinyl wall cladding, is strongly discouraged.
- **Refuse & Recycling:** Refuse and recycling bins can be enclosed in small structures and bins, as well as behind fences and shrubs to minimize their public visibility.

To minimize their visual impact, modern landscape features, equipment and small structures should be located in the rear yard and should not block the view of historic buildings or features from the public way.



The HDC's jurisdiction extends to all portions of a designated parcel, whether visible from a public right-of-way or not. This diagram illustrates the areas of a property that are out-of-view from a public right of way (concealed by buildings). Although still subject to HDC review, it is generally more appropriate to conceal modern landscape features, equipment and small structures from the public way, and to minimize their visibility.



Ground mounted equipment can often be screened with fencing or shrubs to minimize its visibility.

OUTDOOR LIGHTING

Outdoor lighting is an amenity of modern life that can essentially be thought of as two components, the luminaire (light fixture) and the illumination (light). For a historic house, outdoor lights should highlight the architecture and be of a style appropriate for the historic building. A wide variety of wall-mounted or free-standing reproduction replica historic lighting is available to meet the lighting needs of historic properties.

Prior to installation of lighting please consult the Town of Exeter's Zoning Ordinance which regulates light pollution and illumination. Residential lighting should be installed to illuminate only pathways and access routes, limiting the spillage onto adjacent properties and the public way. Generally, lighting on one property should not extend onto the neighboring lots or into the night sky. To minimize light spillage, many lights are available that cast light downward where it is needed to illuminate walking surfaces. In addition, existing lights can often be fitted with hoods or shields to direct light downwards.

If security lighting is desired, it is recommended that it be located as discretely as possible, generally limited to side and rear elevations. The number of security lights should be limited, and they should be activated by motion sensors whenever possible.



Lighting should be compatible with the architectural style of a building. It should be installed in a manner that illuminates the needed areas, such as next to an entrance door, while minimizing spillover onto adjacent properties or into the night sky.

SITE ELEMENT REVIEW

The HDC encourages:

- Keeping views of historic buildings open to street
- Front yard development with traditional, simple arrangements, appropriate to the historic context
- Planting regionally native plants well-adapted to the site environment to minimize the use of water and chemicals in their upkeep
- Retaining, repairing and maintaining historic paving, wall and fence materials
- Minimizing the amount of paving on a site
- Installing permeable small-scale paving, such as gravel or oyster shells, instead of poured concrete or asphalt
- Installing patios instead of raised decks
- Using traditional materials for walls, fences, gates and other boundary markers in an appropriate manner
- Installing fence posts towards the interior of a property
- Unobtrusively locating landscape features, small structures and ground mounted equipment where they are not visible from the public way
- Screening landscape features, play equipment, small structures and ground-mounted equipment that might be visible from the public way with either dense planting, a wall or wood fencing
- Lighting fixtures that complement the building's architectural style and material
- Unobtrusive lighting of historic properties that limits light spillage onto neighboring properties and into the night sky

The HDC discourages:

- Removing historic paving materials, walls or fences
- Placing parking areas in the front yards of residences
- Installing asphalt at walkways
- Blocking views to historic buildings and settings with solid walls, or dense fencing materials or planting
- Front yard fences that are greater than 48" in height, or walls that are greater than 36" in height
- Use of non-traditional fencing materials such as vinyl
- Use of stockade and chain-link fencing at front yards
- Visually prominent landscape features, play equipment, small structures and ground-mounted equipment
- Obtrusive lighting of historic properties that illuminates neighboring properties
- Highly visible security lighting
- Security lighting that is constantly "on"

SITE MAINTENANCE

Exterior maintenance extends beyond a building's perimeter to include the surrounding property. Seasonal property maintenance also includes cutting grass, raking leaves and snow removal. Larger maintenance issues include: water management on the site, trimming trees, and regular repairs to fences, walls, walkways and paved surfaces. Specific maintenance might be required for specialized site elements including water features such as pools and ponds.

Keeping a site clear of debris will aid in drainage during a storm and reduce the potential for debris becoming airborne in high winds. In addition, if not promptly removed some types of debris, such as garden waste and wood items, can become a home for termites and other pests.

SITE DRAINAGE

Substantial damage to a building can occur through ground water. One of the best ways to mitigate damage from storm water is to establish positive site drainage away from a building to prevent standing water along or near foundation walls. In addition, the drainage pattern of a property should not be modified in a manner that increases storm water runoff to a neighboring property.

SNOW & ICE REMOVAL

The use of salt and chemical snow and ice removal techniques can damage stone and brick foundations and to be harmful to the environment. In addition, melting snow against wood elements such as building siding and fences can saturate woodwork. Removal of snow away from a building by shovelling or a snow blower is recommended.

SIDEWALKS

Property owners may, with Town approval, replace sidewalks and curbing at their own expense. If historic sidewalks and curbing require replacement, use of a compatible replacement material is recommended. Please contact the Building Department at (603) 773-6112 for additional information regarding sidewalk and curbing requirements including compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act.

SECONDARY STRUCTURES

For more information regarding secondary structures such as garages, larger sheds and carports please refer to the *Guidelines for New Construction & Additions, Page 07-1*.

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