



# 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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.epa.gov/asbestos)

### Lead

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

### Radon

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

### Mold

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

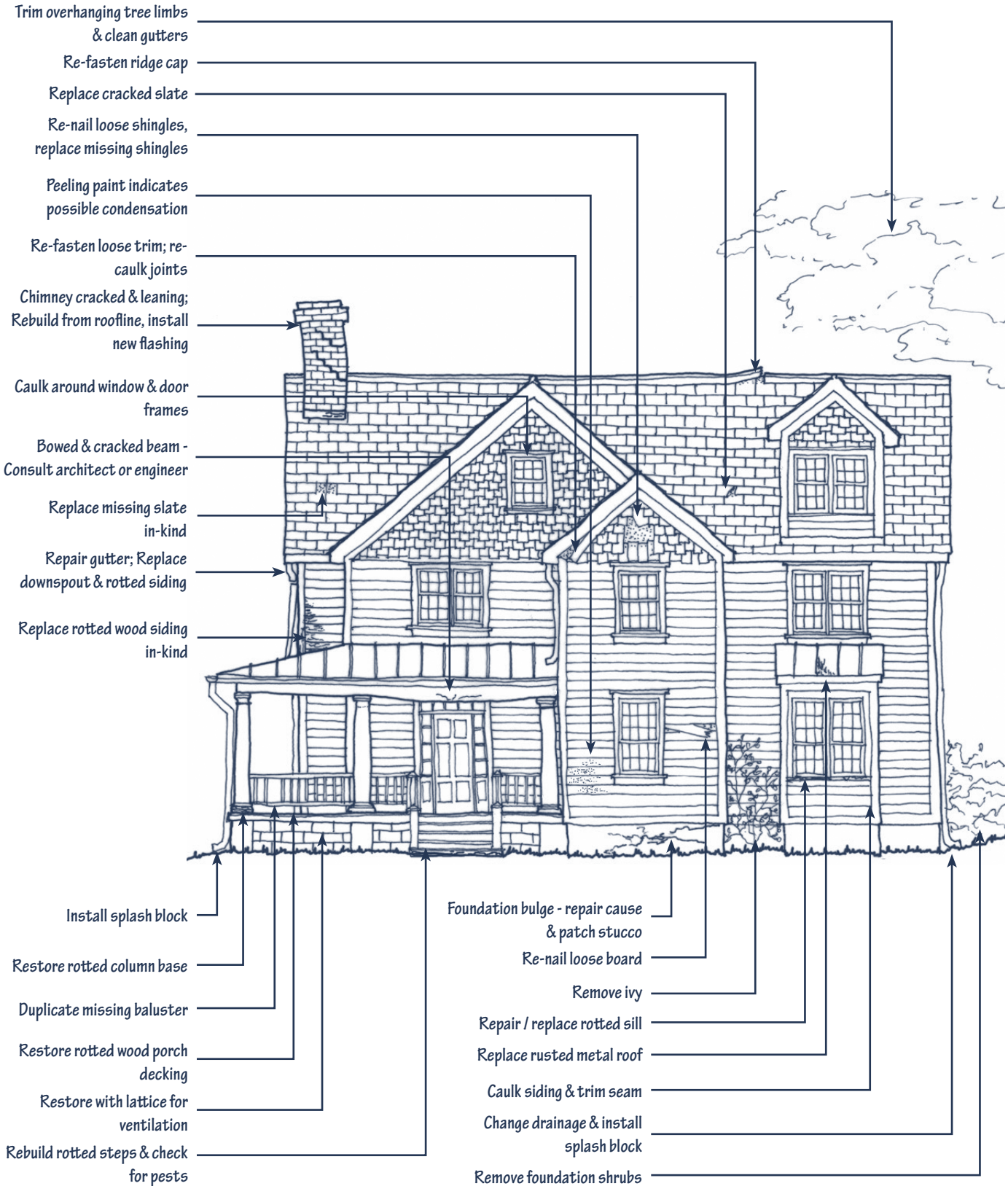
## COST VS. VALUE-ADDED

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



- Trim overhanging tree limbs & clean gutters
- Re-fasten ridge cap
- Replace cracked slate
- Re-nail loose shingles, replace missing shingles
- Peeling paint indicates possible condensation
- Re-fasten loose trim; re-caulk joints
- Chimney cracked & leaning; Rebuild from roofline, install new flashing
- Caulk around window & door frames
- Bowed & cracked beam - Consult architect or engineer
- Replace missing slate in-kind
- Repair gutter; Replace downspout & rotted siding
- Replace rotted wood siding in-kind
- Install splash block
- Restore rotted column base
- Duplicate missing baluster
- Restore rotted wood porch decking
- Restore with lattice for ventilation
- Rebuild rotted steps & check for pests

- Foundation bulge - repair cause & patch stucco
- Re-nail loose board
- Remove ivy
- Repair / replace rotted sill
- Replace rusted metal roof
- Caulk siding & trim seam
- Change drainage & install splash block
- Remove foundation shrubs

## 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](http://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](http://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.

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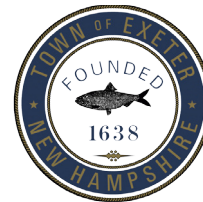
## PRESERVATION ORGANIZATIONS

### 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](http://www.exeternh.gov)
- Exeter Historical Society  
47 Front Street; Exeter, NH 03833;  
(603) 778-2335; [www.exeterhistory.org](http://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](mailto:preservation@dcr.nh.gov)
- New Hampshire Preservation Alliance  
7 Eagle Square; Concord NH 03302  
(603) 224-2281; [www.nhpreservation.org](http://www.nhpreservation.org)
- Historic New England  
Otis House; 141 Cambridge Street; Boston, MA 02114  
(617) 227-3956; [www.historicnewengland.org](http://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

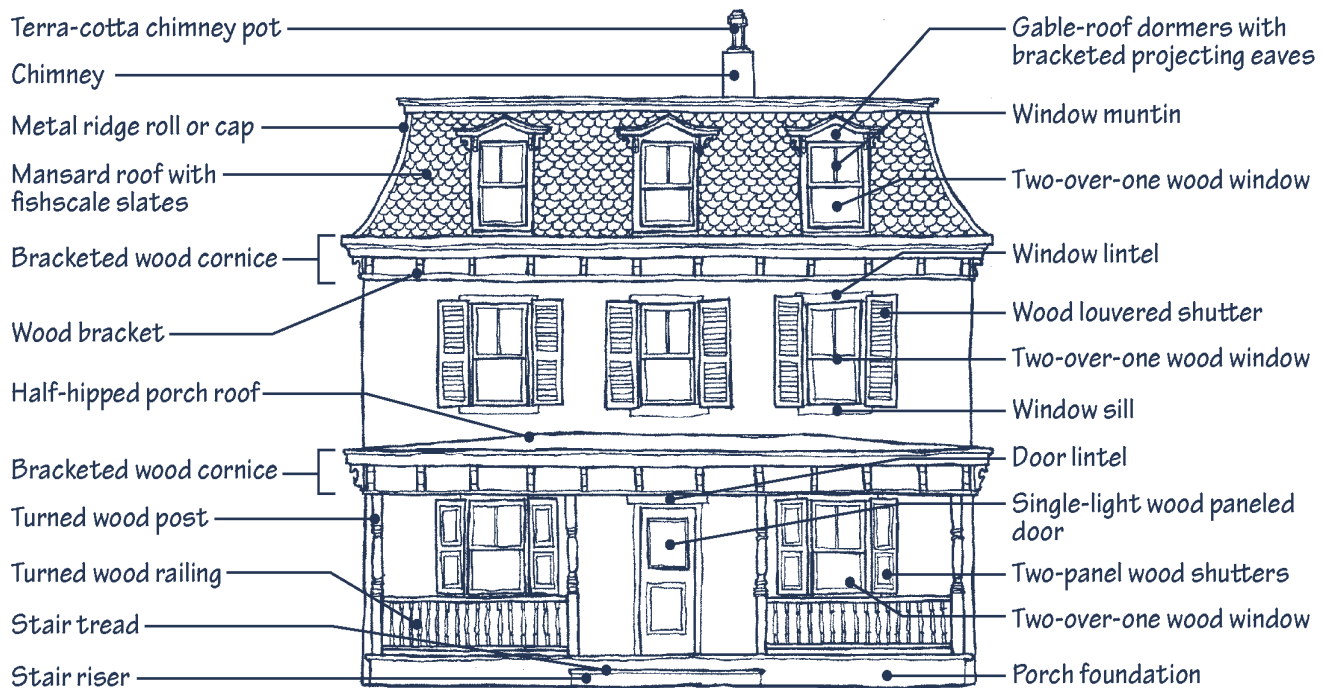
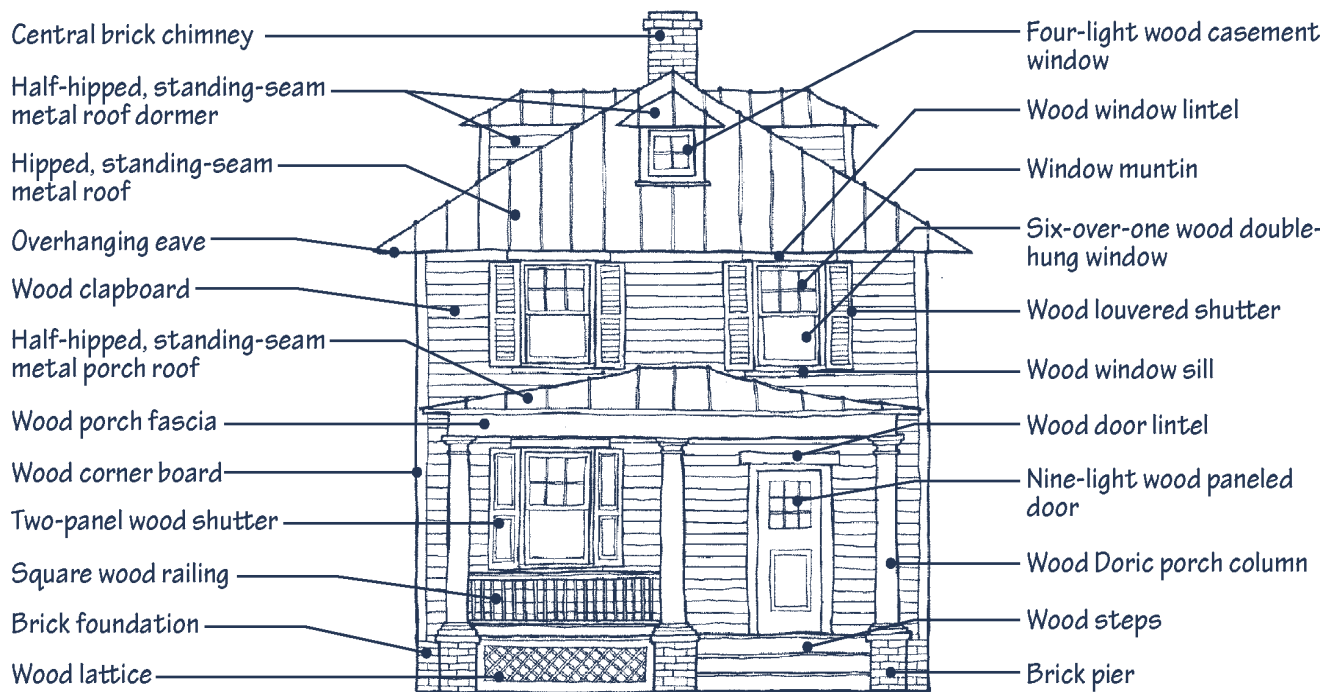
- Patrick Gordon, Chairman  
Julie Gilman, Board of Selectman Representative  
Pam Gjettum, Clerk  
Curtis Boivin, Member  
Nicole Martineau, Member  
Valerie Ouellette, Member  
Pete Cameron, Planning Board Representative, Alternate

### 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 Commercial Properties

### COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES

The economic development of Exeter's retail areas and the commercial properties within it is encouraged. It is recognized that Exeter's vibrance is linked to the viability of its businesses and institutions. Every effort will be made to assist commercial building owners and tenants with revitalizing older retail areas and buildings, helping to attract new customers while promoting an appreciation of historic architecture. The goals for commercial properties are to:

- Encourage compatibility and provide a visual connection with the historic building and context
- Provide variety and vitality along commercial corridors
- Encourage the greatest amount of design flexibility
- Identify those elements that are indisputably detrimental to the historic streetscape
- Encourage the consideration of how a proposed storefront and sign or awning relates to each property, the streetscape and the historic context

### INFORMATION FOR NEW BUSINESSES

If considering opening a new business in Exeter, Building Department representatives are available to discuss zoning, construction and other requirements applicable to a specific project. Please contact them at (603) 773-6112 for more information.

### INSTITUTIONAL BUILDINGS

Institutional buildings share many of the same concerns as commercial buildings including signage and accessibility. Applicable references throughout this section should also be applied to institutional buildings.

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](http://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.



### COMMERCIAL BUILDING COMPOSITION

This represents a typical multi-story, commercial building in Exeter. It has three distinct vertically stacked zones:

- A. The bracketed ornamental building cornice provides a visual cap or termination at the top of the building
- B. Upper floor operable windows appear to be "punched" through the flat, relatively solid, typically masonry, wall surface in a regular pattern that does not align with the storefront openings below
- C. A storefront capped by a storefront cornice runs along the ground floor with large display windows topped by transom windows

In reviewing potential locations for signage on the building above, the following should be considered:

1. Wall Mounted Sign
2. Projecting Sign
3. Window Sign
4. Awning Sign

It is important to note that the location, number, and size of signs is limited by the Zoning Ordinance.

Historic commercial buildings typically include storefronts extending along the sidewalk edge with punched windows in the wall plane above.



## STOREFRONTS

The attractiveness and overall maintenance of a storefront can greatly influence a casual observer’s perception of a building and the business within. Because a positive impression can help draw potential customers, regular maintenance and careful design can be positive on the bottom line. The storefront is one of the most significant features of a commercial building, the business within it and the overall streetscape. Storefronts often included large sheets of glass at display windows with minimally sized mullions and often recessed entries. This configuration allowed merchants to maximize the visibility of their wares to attract potential customers.

Historic storefronts were typically constructed of wood, metal (cast iron, bronze, copper, tin, galvanized sheet metal, cast zinc, or stainless steel), masonry (brick or stone) and clear, translucent or pigmented glass at transoms. Although the specific configurations of storefronts can vary greatly based upon architectural styles, at different buildings and locations, a common feature is large expanses of glass to display merchandise. In addition, it is typical to have a principal entrance to the commercial space and a separate entrance that includes a stair for access to the upper levels.

### STOREFRONT MODIFICATION

Because of the unique nature of every storefront, property owners are encouraged to consult with the HDC early in the process when contemplating storefront modifications.

## STOREFRONT COMPONENTS

A storefront is made up of a number of different components. One of the key aspects of a successful storefront is that it is designed holistically, with all of the various pieces and parts forming a unified expression. It should be noted, however, that all storefronts do not necessarily include all components.



Storefront cornices can be highly decorative and serve to separate the storefront from the building above.

**Storefront Cornices** are projecting moldings at the top of storefronts, providing a visual cap or termination to the storefronts and a separation with the upper floors. Cornice materials can vary widely and include wood, pressed metal, limestone, terra cotta or decorative brick patterns. Cornice details can include brackets, dentils and panels.

**Transom Windows** may be located above display windows and doorways to provide additional daylight, and can be either fixed or operable for ventilation. They can be either single or multi-paned and historically were often leaded, stained or textured glass. Transom windows can also include signage, lettering or other ornamental details.

*The transom window allow natural light to illuminate the interior of the shop.*

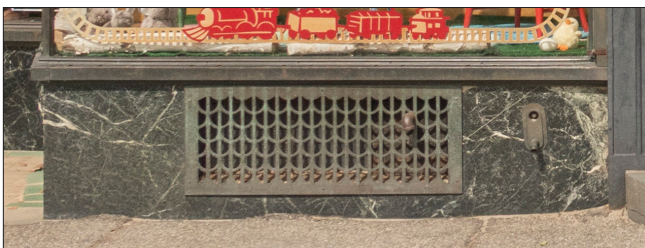


**Display Windows** are typically large expanses of glazing to present the available merchandise within a shop. Display windows typically flank the entrance doorway or alcove to a store and can include additional advertising to further entice potential customers.

*A well organized display window can highlight items offered for sale, attracting potential customers.*



**Aprons** or bulkheads act as the base for the display windows and at the interior can provide a raised platform for merchandise display. Aprons can be constructed of a variety of materials with different finishes including wood, masonry and tile.



*Marble was a common apron material in the early 20th century. This example includes a decorative ventilation grille.*



*Storefront entrance doors typically include a lot of glass, allowing potential patrons a clear view inside. This entrance door is located within an alcove, increasing the display possibilities and providing shelter to those entering the building.*

**Entrances** at storefronts can be located flush with the outside of the building or recessed within an alcove providing additional display areas and shelter from the elements. In addition to commercial entrances, there can be secondary entrance doors that provide access to upper building floors.



*Structural supports carry the load of the building above the storefront. They can be an integral part of the display window support system, as in this example, or imperceptible, as in the entrance photograph above.*

**Structural Supports** at storefronts are necessary to carry the weight of the building and roof above and can be decorative, reinforcing the storefront's architectural style. Typically, structural supports flank entrance doors and display windows and can be constructed of wood, cast iron or masonry.

## STOREFRONT TREATMENT APPROACH

Changes to storefronts can be a costly endeavor that if not properly planned might negatively impact a building's architecture or the business located in it. Prior to considering alterations, property owners should identify the key storefront elements and consider options. By carefully studying alternatives, property owners tend to be much happier with the finished results. When contemplating storefront work, the following approach is recommended:

- 1. Identify Key Historic Elements:** Develop an understanding of the architectural character of the storefront including the overall size, major divisions or bays, placement of components such as doors, windows and distinctive elements. This can be based on selective removals or documentation such as old photographs or drawings.
- 2. Retain, Preserve and Repair:** Once important historic elements have been identified, they should be incorporated into the storefront design. Deterioration of some historic elements might require stabilization, replacement in-kind, or replacement with a similar substitute material utilizing the historic material as the guide.
- 3. Replacement:** Replacement of a historic storefront is only encouraged when the existing storefront materials are too deteriorated to be repairable, or a historic storefront has been encased in a newer storefront and the historic form and detailing are still present allowing for an accurate representation. Replacement of historic storefronts with modern storefront systems is strongly discouraged; however, appropriate suitable alternate materials that convey the same historic visual appearance can be used where the use of original materials is not technically or economically feasible.
- 4. Reconstructing a New Storefront With Historic Documentation:** If there is no physical evidence of a historic storefront, there might be sufficient historical or pictorial evidence to allow for appropriate reconstruction. Appropriate research is recommended to ensure the greatest degree of accuracy feasible in the reconstruction.
- 5. Installing a New Storefront Without Historic Information:** If there is not sufficient information and documentation to accurately reconstruct a storefront, the new design should be compatible in size, pattern, scale, material and color as the overall building and similar storefronts from the period, but have distinctly contemporary characters that reflect rather than copy historic storefronts.

### HISTORIC STOREFRONT APPEARANCE

Often, remnants of earlier storefronts or "ghosts" of earlier materials are concealed under newer storefront materials and careful selective removals can reveal elements or clues. Another potential source of information is old records, photographs or drawings. These can be advertisements or articles, newspapers, previous business promotional materials or postcards.



*The accessible ramp allows all visitors to enter through the same door while maintaining the stair configuration.*

## ACCESSIBILITY

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) strives to improve the quality of life of people with disabilities. The ADA recognizes that, for people with disabilities to participate in the everyday activities in their communities such as going to work, eating in a restaurant or shopping in a store, they need to have access to the goods and services provided by businesses. Many business and institutional facilities in Exeter were constructed prior to the enactment of the ADA in 1992 and lack features to accommodate people with disabilities, including those who use wheelchairs.

As existing buildings are renovated, they are often required to make accommodations for people with disabilities. One of the most visible exterior alterations required by ADA is the installation of a wheelchair ramp or lift to provide building access. In many locations, these ramps or lifts have been successfully incorporated at the interior of the building envelope with modification of existing door sills. When installing ramps, it is important to remember that if the ramp is too steep or railings are not secure, it can potentially be hazardous.

### ALLOWABLE SIGNAGE

The Zoning Ordinance governs allowable signage at each property in Exeter. It is recommended that potential applicants for signage and awnings contact the HDC early in the design process to understand the allowable signage at their property.

### HISTORIC SIGNAGE

Historic signage is often an architectural feature that reflects the original owner and use of the building. Although abandoned signs from recent tenants should be removed, it is encouraged that historic signage be retained.





## TYPES OF SIGNS IN EXETER

Historically, there are two types of signs; those that are attached to the building and those that are freestanding and placed near buildings. New signs can use similar features of traditional signs to both enhance the character of the building and convey the necessary information to the public.

The choice between attached or freestanding signs may be based upon the property's specific location, needs of the occupant, and limitations in the Zoning Ordinance. The following illustrations are intended to provide general examples of sign types that can be found at historic properties and within a historic context.



Wall signs should be proportional and fit their location. This example extends across the entire facade and width of the storefront below.

**Wall Signs** are the most common type of signage in Exeter. They are single sided signs mounted parallel to and generally flat against a wall of the building.

*This freestanding sign is also a directory sign. Directory signs for professional offices employ small, changeable nameplates, matching in size, color, letter size, case and type style mounted to a larger building sign.*



**Freestanding Signs** are not attached to the building. They are most appropriate when a building is set back from the street, and often reflect the building's style. They can include information on one or two sides, mounted on the ground or suspended from a rail or bracket that is supported by one or two posts that are set in paving or landscape areas.



Multiple projecting signs can create visual interest along a streetscape.

**Perpendicular Projecting Signs** are generally two sided signs, suspended from an iron or metal bracket, or projecting building feature, mounted perpendicular to the face of the building or element such as a wall.



Window signs can provide an alternative to wall mounted signs for stores.

**Window Signs** are applied to the interior of the window or door glazing. Signs that are attached to the glazing are generally painted, vinyl appliqué or etched glass. A related option is stained glass. All window signs that are attached to the exterior of the glazing are subject to HDC review. Window signs mounted at the interior of the glazing are not subject to HDC review but must comply with the Zoning Ordinance.



Awnings provide shelter for pedestrians and protect merchandise from the sun's rays.

## AWNINGS

Awnings are a historically popular means of sheltering pedestrians, advertising a business, and protecting window merchandise from sun damage, particularly for storefronts oriented to the south or west. Historically, awnings project at a continuous angle away from the face of the building on a metal frame, terminating at a skirt or valance. Awnings can be fixed or retractable in configuration. Retractable awnings tend to be open sided, while fixed awnings can be either open or close sided.

Awnings that include text, logos, graphics or designs are considered to be signs that are subject to the applicable Zoning Ordinance requirements. By contrast, plain cloth awnings are not signs, but are still subject to HDC review.

## SIGN MATERIAL

Early signs were typically made of wood, either attached directly to the building or suspended from metal brackets or galleries. As technology advanced and building styles changed, a wider range of materials were used. These included bronze, cast iron, stainless steel, etched or painted glass, leaded glass, gold leaf, tile, terrazzo, concrete, stone and enamel and metal panels. Each material was popular during particular time periods, and might not be appropriate at all building locations.

Some materials might no longer be practical for signage installations due to limited availability or expense. When using modern materials care should be taken to select those that offer improved performance, while replicating the appearance of traditional materials. Some modern materials such as plywood may replicate the appearance of a traditional wood sign but will warp or split over time. In addition to materials that appear historic, the HDC welcomes innovative designs and alternate signage materials that are appropriate to the building style and location.



*One of the most appropriate sign materials is wood, which has the added benefit of allowing creativity in shape and the addition of three-dimensional components.*

## SIGN LOCATION

Although it is helpful to understand a building's type, style and design when locating a sign, in general:

- Signs should not be installed in locations that damage or obstruct important architectural features
- Signage for 1st floor businesses should be located below 2nd floor window sills
- No sign or sign support should be located on the roof or extend above a roof cornice

In addition, the sign location should comply with all Zoning Ordinance requirements. (Refer to *Commercial Building Composition* on page 08-02 for additional sign location information.)



*The curved shape of the top of the sign complements the business logo.*

## SIGN SIZE & SHAPE

Exeter's Zoning Ordinance establishes the maximum size and type of signage; however, the HDC determines the appropriateness of the placement relative to the building's design. In general, the HDC utilizes the following guidelines when reviewing the appropriateness of proposed sign's size:

- Signage should be compatible to scale of the building, adjacent buildings, the streetscape and adjacent signage
- Small scale signs are appropriate to smaller scale buildings and pedestrian traffic, while larger scaled signs are more appropriate to vehicular traffic
- Small scale signs are appropriate to primarily residential areas and uses such as professional offices
- Small scale signs are appropriate for buildings that require several signs, which can be grouped in a single directory sign for a unified appearance
- A well-designed smaller sign can have more of an impact than a larger sign, particularly in historic commercial corridors, where the means of travel is by foot or slow moving vehicles
- A sign's shape, particularly a wall sign, should fit proportionally within the area in which it is mounted
- A sign's shape can reflect the type of business or institution at the location, increasing its impact

## SIGN ILLUMINATION

In many instances, available ambient street or storefront lighting can illuminate signs, which is preferred to the installation of additional lighting. The use and placement of sign illumination is subject to the approval of the HDC. Gooseneck lighting or other unobtrusive light fixture is often the most appropriate choice to illuminate wall signage. Backlit signs are typically inappropriate.



*The clear lettering and strong contrast between the letter color and background make this sign very legible. A discreet light is located in the grass, providing illumination of the sign in the evening.*

## SIGN & AWNING COLOR & LEGIBILITY

The contrast between the logo or lettering and background color can greatly increase the overall legibility of the sign. In many instances, limiting the number of colors to those necessary to convey the information also increases the legibility. Similar to selecting a color, when considering letter style for signs and awnings, business owners must balance the need to make them legible, convey the business identity or logo, and complement the historic character of the building and environment. Excessive amounts of text or highly stylized type styles can overwhelm a viewer and render the message ineffective or illegible.

In general, there are three styles of lettering available; serif, non-serif and script. Within each general style are numerous typefaces available, many of which can be varied by making them bold or italicized. Similar to materials, different styles of lettering were typically utilized for specific architectural periods. Applicants are encouraged to utilize lettering and materials that complement their particular building.



*Numerous holes have been drilled into the face of this granite pier and several abandoned fasteners still remain. Fasteners should be removed, existing holes reused for future signs, abandoned holes filled and the stone surface cleaned. (Refer to Guidelines for Masonry & Stucco.)*

## MOUNTING SIGNS & AWNINGS

Care should be taken in mounting walls signs and awnings to minimize the damage to historic materials. This includes reusing hardware or brackets from previous signs or awnings. If reusing existing hardware or attachment locations is not an option, remove abandoned hardware and patch holes. When installing new signage or awnings, select mounting locations that can be easily patched if the sign or awning is relocated or removed. An example would be to locate anchors in mortar joints rather than mounting directly into brick or stone faces.

When installing signage, such as wall mounted signs, business owners are encouraged to recess fasteners and patch the fastener opening to match the sign background for a more finished appearance, unless the fasteners are part of the overall design.



*Projecting signs are generally most effective if placed near the entrance door.*

## STOREFRONT GUIDE

*The HDC encourages:*

- Following the *Storefront Treatment Approach* on page 08-4
- Maintaining historic storefront components
- Opening previously closed windows
- Maintaining the planes of the historic storefront relative to the building façade including recessed areas such as alcoves
- Selecting paint colors that complement the style and features of a storefront and building

*The HDC discourages:*

- Altering, enclosing or removing elements, such as building cornices, storefronts and angled storefront glazing
- Installing stylistic elements from periods that are different from the storefront or building and do not complement the overall stylistic expression
- Installing inappropriate materials at storefronts including vinyl siding, some types of wood siding or artificial brick
- Installing textured or colored glass in a display window
- Installing window air conditioners or thru-wall air conditioners that are visible from a public way
- Incompatible designs or false historic appearance based upon insufficient documentation

## ACCESSIBILITY GUIDE

*The HDC encourages:*

- Retaining historic entrance stairs and doors
- If front door access is not possible, providing a respectful accessible entrance that is located close to the principal entrance and designed in a manner that is visually unobtrusive and complements the building's style
- Complying with all aspects of the accessibility requirements, while minimizing alterations of the primary building façade and architectural features
- Modifying sidewalk or walkway elevation a few inches, where possible to provide an accessible entry and meet all code requirements
- Installing ramps and/or lifts within the building envelope where it is possible – The design of interior features are not subject to HDC review
- Install a lift in lieu of a ramp if it would be less obtrusive
- Installing compatible ramp or lift styles and railings that are as simple and visually unobtrusive

## SIGN & AWNING GUIDE

*The HDC encourages:*

- Maintaining and repairing historic signage with materials to match the original whenever possible
- Installing innovative signs reflecting the architectural characteristics with materials that are consistent with the historic character of the building and scaled for the location
- Utilizing existing ambient street light or storefront lighting in lieu of lighting whenever possible
- Installing lights that are compatible with the building character including location, orientation and brightness
- Installing compatible canvas fixed or retractable awnings, whose shape, color, style and location are compatible with the building and the associated openings
- Awnings whose slope projects down approximately 3-feet from the face of the building in a continuous angle of approximately 45-degrees, possibly with an 8- to 12-inch straight or scalloped valance
- Limiting lettering and logos to awning valances

*The HDC discourages:*

- Installing signs or awnings that obscure architectural features, or fasteners and hangers that destroy important building fabric for the installation of signs or awnings
- Paper signs or graphic films adhered to the exterior of glazing or any signage that obstructs views into the store through storefront windows and glazing
- Installing contemporary awning shapes, such as balloon or barrel awnings
- Installing awning materials that act as wall signs

*The HDC strongly discourages:*

- Removing, damaging, altering or encasing historic architectural features with signage or awnings
- Installing exposed conduit, junction boxes and raceways for signage or lighting
- Installing new billboards, internally illuminated box signs, LED reader boards, flashing or changable message signage
- Installing neon signs at the interior or exterior of a building that are highly visible from the street
- Installing awnings in locations where they are non-functional, such as under a balcony or overhang
- Installing contemporary or glossy awning materials such as vinyl, plastics or leatherette, internally illuminated awnings or awnings with a solid or closed underside

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*The Guidelines project has been financed in part with Federal funds from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, through the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior, or the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by the Department of the Interior, or the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources. This program receives Federal financial assistance for identification and protection of historic properties. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, the U.S. Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability or age in its federally assisted programs. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, please write to: Office for Equal Opportunity, National Park Service, 1849 C Street NW, Washington, DC 20240.*

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