

Historic District Guidelines

Bedford Historic District Commission

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All of the current (as of 5/7/09) members of the Bedford Historic District Commission contributed to these Guidelines.

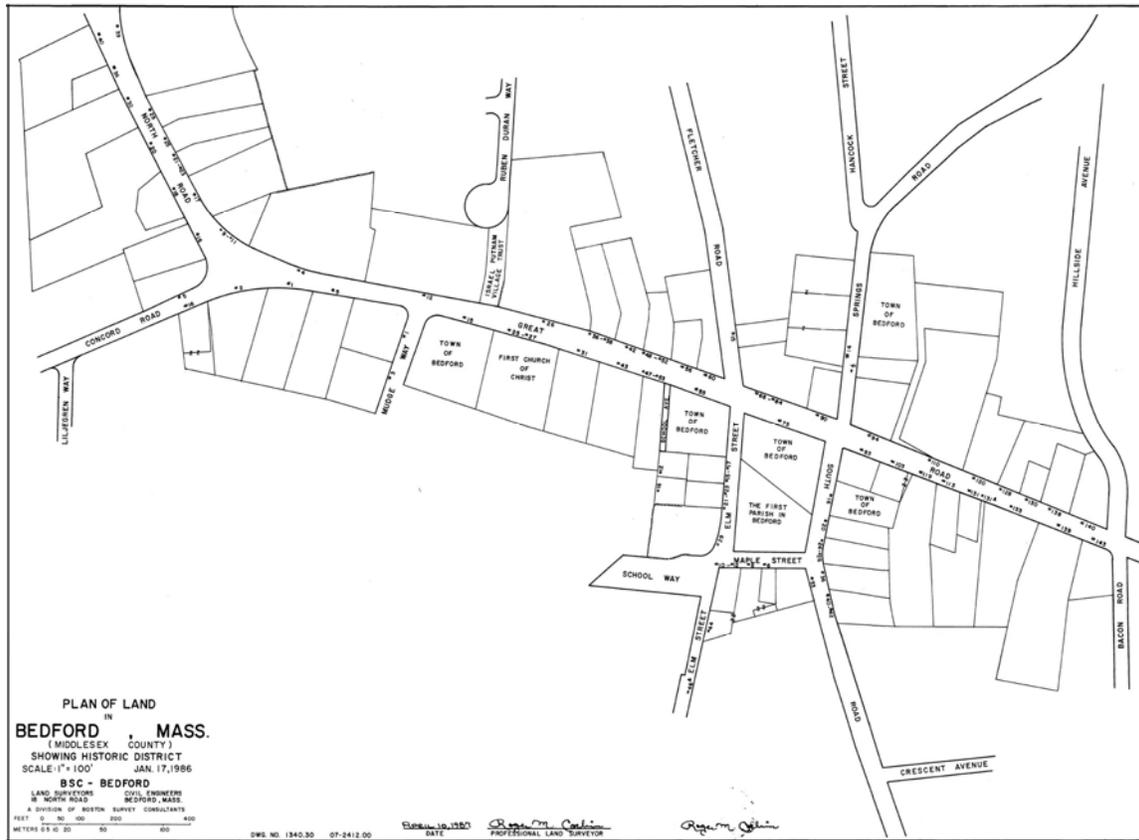
Note that in keeping with a tradition of sharing design guidelines among cities and towns in Massachusetts with historic districts, certain sections of the Concord (MA) Historic Districts Guidelines (2002 edition) were adapted, with permission, for use in this document with only minor modifications.

Additional copies of these Guidelines and information about the HDC public hearing process are available from the Code Enforcement Department, Town Hall, 10 Mudge Way, Bedford, MA 01730, 781-275-7446.

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Map of the Bedford Center Historic District



Introduction and Application Procedures

The Bedford Historic District Commission was established in 1964 by a Town Meeting vote and ratified by the Massachusetts Legislature *via* the Acts of 1964 as amended as the guardian of the Bedford Historic District. The Commission consists of five voting members and two alternate members appointed by the Board of Selectmen to serve rotating three-year terms. Commission members are Bedford residents who have demonstrated special interest, experience, or education in architecture, history, archaeology, or other preservation-related fields. As stated in the Commission’s enabling Act, the purpose of the Commission is “the preservation and protection of buildings, places and districts of historic significance, [to be accomplished] through the maintenance of said buildings, places and districts as sites and landmarks compatible with the historical tradition of Bedford.”

In implementing its mission, the Commission will consider of primary importance the need to honor the architectural style of the building in question along with that of surrounding structures. Typical styles to be found in the Bedford Center Historic District include: Colonial, Federal, Greek Revival, Second French Empire, Queen Ann, Dutch Colonial, Colonial Revival, and American Four Square. The shape, mass, and architectural elements unique to each style will inform any decisions the Commission makes. It is the intent of the Commission, as reinforced by popular opinion in a recent survey of Town residents, to work with residents of the Historic District to retain, as much as possible, the look of a small Colonial town center.

Buildings, structures, and landscaping in the Historic District may not be constructed, altered, demolished, or removed if visible from a public street, way, or place without review and approval in the form of a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Commission. The Town Code Enforcement Officer will not issue a building permit for buildings in the Historic District without the requisite Certificate of Appropriateness from the HDC.

The following Guidelines are intended to provide direction for property owners and potential applicants before the Commission on the kinds of alterations the Commission deems appropriate in the Historic District. The Guidelines are also intended to help the Commission make consistent and informed decisions about what is, and is not, appropriate. But, as the title suggests, the Guidelines are intended as guides, not hard-and-fast rules, and neither applicants nor the Commission are bound to follow them in every case. Each application will be considered by the Commission on a case-by-case basis, and the Guidelines should be a starting point, but not necessarily an ending point, in the process.

Alterations that Require Review

The following types of work in the Historic District require a hearing for a Certificate of Appropriateness:

- Any exterior changes visible from a public street, way, or place
- The erection or demolition of any building or structure visible from a public street, way, or place
- Any change of exterior paint color, except a change to white.
- Changes to or additions of any signs
- Changes to or additions of any landscaping feature(s)
- Changes to or additions of any exterior light or other fixtures

Work not Requiring Review

Ordinary maintenance or repair of any exterior architectural feature is subject to review by the Commission only to the extent that it involves a change in design, materials, color, or features covered by the Historic District's Acts and these Guidelines. Note that "ordinary maintenance or repair" does not include replacements or changes of color, materials, design, or size of an existing feature. For example, repair or

reconstruction of existing window sashes is considered “ordinary maintenance or repair,” but installation of replacement windows requires a hearing. If part of the maintenance involves **painting**, the project will not need HDC approval so long as the color is the same as that existing. However, any change in color (except to white), even the color of trim or shutters, must be brought before the Commission. Finally, **temporary signs** (those displayed for thirty (30) days or less) do not require a hearing for a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Applications

- Application forms may be obtained from the Bedford Code Enforcement Department at the Town Hall. The HDC Assistant in that department is available to provide information as necessary.
- Applicants are required to obtain a list of abutters from the Assessor’s Office so that the HDC may notify abutters of the scheduled hearing.
- Applications must be signed by the property owner (or the owner’s duly authorized representative).
- A set of the following supporting materials must be submitted fourteen (14) calendar days before the scheduled hearing:
 - Photos of existing conditions
 - Elevation drawings to scale
 - Site plan to scale
 - Manufacturer’s literature
 - Color chips and brand/number of manufacturer
- Additional information and materials may be requested by the Commission.

Hearings

Hearings are held on the first Thursday of each month. Applications received two weeks or more prior to that Thursday will be heard in order of receipt. Hearings are subject to the Public Hearing Law, and as such must be advertised at least a week in advance. The Commission may request a site visit to view the project within the context of the area prior to making a final determination.

Certificate of Appropriateness

Unless the hearing is continued to the next month by majority vote of the Commissioners present, a Certificate of Appropriateness will be approved or denied at the conclusion of the hearing. The Certificate of Appropriateness will be issued by the Commission’s recording secretary within a week of the hearing. No changes shall be made from the approved Certificate without a new application and a new hearing. Work must commence within a year of the date of the Certificate, unless further time is requested and approved by the Commission.

Design Guidelines for the Historic District

Architectural Elements

Architectural elements are such features as doors, windows, dormers, porches and balconies, decorative details such as cornices, columns, pediments, railings, and similar features. Large or small, they play a key role in defining the style of a building and so deserve particular attention and respect.

Original elements should be retained to the extent possible. Alterations should be carried out in a way that does not damage or hide these elements. New architectural elements should match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, material.

Colors

Any change to the color of a structure in the Historic District, or to the color of any of its architectural features, requires the approval of the Historic District Commission. The sole exception is that a change to white does not need a Certificate of Appropriateness. It is, however, a common misconception that houses in colonial New England were all white:

“Contrary to popular opinion, most of the wooden houses in New England before the Revolution were not painted white. Browns, dull reds, grays, and neutral yellows are mentioned in contemporary documents and referred to as ‘stone’ colors.”

William H. Pierson, Jr.

*American Buildings and Their Architects,
The Colonial and Neo-Classical Styles.*

Paint Color Guidelines

The HDC provides a selection of paint colors that is appropriate for period homes in Bedford. There is a range of acceptable colors and hues, thus providing leeway for personal choice as long as harmonious colors are used.

Sample color chips, accompanied by their names and identifying numbers, must be submitted to the Commission with applications. Many colors look different when applied on wood, so it is advisable to bring to the hearing a slab of wood that is painted with the selected color. A list of appropriate historic paint colors is provided as Appendix I to these Guidelines, and an interesting historical discourse on house colors in Bedford is

presented in Appendix II. Paint samples and additional resources for choosing colors are available for review in the office of the HDC Assistant in the Code Enforcement Department at the Town Hall.

Many colors that are promoted as “historic” or “traditional” may not be justified. Organizations such as **Historic New England** (Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities [SPENA]), headquartered in Boston, have color charts of historic paint collections associated with specific architectural styles and periods. For comprehensive information, call **Historic New England**, (617) 227-3957, ext. 237. Many local paint retailers offer color charts appropriate for period buildings.

Property owners should consider the colors of surrounding buildings in their neighborhood and the architectural period of their house/building when selecting paint colors.

For historical accuracy, unpainted masonry should remain unpainted.

A hearing before the Commission is not required to repaint a building/structure the same color as its existing color.

Demolition, Removal, and Vacant Lots

In general, structures, including additions and outbuildings, should not be demolished.

The Commission will consider allowing demolition only if a building or structure has no historic/architectural merit or relationship with the Historic District. The Commission may put a permanent hold on demolition of a building of historic merit. Note that demolition of buildings that are not in the Historic District is under the purview of the Historic Preservation Commission, which may issue a demolition delay of up to twelve months for structures deemed to be “preferably preserved.”

An application for demolition based upon structural instability, deterioration or safety issues must be supported by the Town Code Enforcement Officer and by a technical report prepared by a qualified structural engineer detailing the nature and extent of the building’s deterioration.

Removal, preservation and relocation to an appropriate site will be considered only as an alternative to demolition.

If a new building or structure will replace one proposed for demolition or removal, plans and specifications for the new building or structure and a timetable for completion must be submitted as a condition for consideration of the demolition proposal. In order to accommodate an owner’s construction schedule, the Commission may occasionally issue

a Certificate of Appropriateness just for the demolition of an existing structure, with a separate, later approval for the construction itself. However, demolition that would result in an empty lot that might remain vacant for a considerable period of time will rarely be approved prior to issuance of the Certificate for construction.

Doors and Storm Doors

Entrances are often the focus of the primary façade of an historic building and are often the main decorative element. It is expected that original doorways will be maintained and restored and when necessary, replicated when a door can't be repaired. The same guidance applies to sidelights, surrounds, transom windows, fans, and other associated entrance components.

If a door in a primary façade must be replaced, the original door design and size should be retained. Enlargements or reductions of historical or original door openings to fit new stock door sizes will not generally be allowed. Metal or vinyl doors are not appropriate.

The stylistic period or periods a building represents should be respected when replacing door hardware. Original hardware should be repaired and reused whenever possible. If new hardware is required, it is expected that the replacement hardware will be in keeping with the appropriate period of the building.



Generally, it is not appropriate to introduce a new door opening into the principal or front elevation. The appropriateness of new side or rear doors depends on their design and whether they can be seen from a public way.

Doorways above ground floor level that provide secondary means of egress must be evaluated individually. In general, approval will result only when visibility from the street is minimal. The application of exterior staircases to buildings is generally not acceptable.

Porticos, porches, steps, and railings that are appropriate to the building and its development should be retained. Deteriorated porticos, porches, steps, and railings should be repaired, where necessary, with materials and construction details that duplicate the original as closely as possible.

Storm Doors

Original wooden storm doors and screens should be restored and maintained. If wooden storms and screens are unsalvageable, wood storms and screens should replace the original. Storm doors should have a large panel of glass and be a very simple design.

Combination aluminum or steel storms and screen may be used as a substitute for wood. The finish must be anodized or painted; exposed metallic frames are not appropriate. Metal frame profiles should match those of wood as closely as possible.

Doors marked as “Colonial” with a crossbuck on the bottom half and scalloped frame around the upper window are not appropriate to historic buildings.



Victorian entry with wooden storm door.

Fences and Walls

Fences and walls are significant architectural features that create a setting for a property and also enhance the streetscape.

Architecturally significant fences and all stone walls should be maintained and repaired or restored.

Traditional materials (wood, cast or wrought iron, granite and other stone) are appropriate and should be compatible with the existing building materials, proportion, style and historic period. Vinyl fences are not appropriate and will not be approved.

When located in front of a building, fences should be open and should not exceed 42 inches in height, so as not to block the public view. For example, a 3-foot high wooden picket fence would be appropriate.

Taller, less open fences may be located where they have little visual impact from public streets, ways, or places. For side and backyards, flat board fencing is appropriate and especially attractive with a lattice top for privacy and enhanced aesthetics.

Low brick walls, stockade, chain link, and wire fencing are not appropriate in the Historic District.

Landscaping should be considered to relieve the visual impact of long fences.



Double split-rail fence, with granite posts.



Triple split-rail fence, with wooden posts.



Wood picket fence, 42” high, with wooden posts.



Anodized aluminum fence, painted black, 60” high

Gutters, Downspouts, and Drainage

Gutters may be of wood or copper and, in some cases, painted aluminum. Unpainted, mill-finished aluminum is generally not appropriate for flashing, gutters, or downspouts in the Historic District.

Replacement flashing, gutters, and downspouts should be of a material consistent with the existing or original. Wooden gutters should be replaced with wood, if possible. Painted metal may be considered if appropriate to the architectural features of the building.

Removal of trim pieces from the roofline in order to attach gutters more easily is generally not appropriate. In older buildings, gutters were often designed as part of the eave profile. In these cases, gutters become particularly important architectural features and should be repaired whenever possible. If they are beyond repair, they should be replaced with like materials and design. Hung gutters (those not designed as part of the eave) should be as unobtrusive as possible. Downspouts should not obstruct the view of the corner wall elements of the structure.

Natural stone splash beds near the foundation at the drip edge are appropriate, and should be considered. Spillways to direct water from downspouts away from the foundation should be of natural materials and integrated with landscaping – plastic will ordinarily not be approved.

Landscaping

Landscaping can add substantially to the attractiveness of a structure or, conversely, can detract from the overall impression if not thought out carefully. Landscaping should enhance the appearance of the property, respecting the significant architectural features of the building(s) as well as the shape and contours of the site. Also, landscaping can often be used to hide or partially obscure elements that themselves detract from the appearance of a structure, for example ramps and exterior stairways.

An application for changes to or additions of landscaping elements should include a detailed plan and a list, sample, brochure and/or drawing of all materials and plantings to be used. A detailed landscaping plan is especially important in the case of new construction.

Trees: Removal of a significant tree requires an application giving the reason for removal, plus a letter from a certified arborist indicating the condition of the tree (if poor condition is the reason for removal). Any tree having a circumference greater than twenty-five (25) inches (eight inches in diameter) measured at a height of four (4) feet above ground level is deemed “significant” for the purpose of these Guidelines. Also, a tree may be considered significant based on its age, rarity, or appearance, regardless of size. The Bedford Arbor Resource Committee (BARC) will be notified of the date of the hearing. If the tree is in immediate danger of falling, the Tree Warden in the Public Works Department must be notified. If trees are to be added, consideration should be given to the use of mature specimens (at least 2 ½ -3 inches in diameter), since saplings can take years to grow to full size. Also, addition of disease-resistant varieties (e.g. Princeton elms) of trees once prevalent in town should be considered. Finally, there is value in putting several species in a single location, to minimize the chances of losing an entire planting in a single outbreak of disease.

Shrubs and flowers: A new area of shrubbery, or removal of same, requires a public hearing. Plantings of low-growing flowers and annuals do not. In general, indigenous species should be used in preference to exotics.

Driveways, Sidewalks, Walkways: Removal or installation of a new pavement or stone driveway, or walkways of any material, requires a public hearing. Similarly, paving an existing driveway or walk that was not previously paved must be approved by the Commission. On the other hand, re-paving a driveway with the same material is considered maintenance and does not require approval. Note that the Department of Public Works must also be consulted in the event that a driveway is being added or extended.

Lighting

All aspects of exterior lighting in the Historic District, including design, size, placement, materials, and color of fixtures, as well as the color, intensity, and directionality of the light itself, must be approved by the HDC.

In general, exterior lighting in the District should be kept to a minimum, to respect the architecture and to convey a sense of calm and tranquility. Light levels should be adequate to ensure public safety but should not stand out or spill over onto adjacent properties. Fixtures should be appropriate to the architectural style of the structure and should not evoke either an older or a newer period.

The HDC will not approve any lighting without seeing copies of cut sheets describing all of the technical details and dimensions of the proposed fixtures and any poles or posts on which they will be mounted. Site plans and/or building-elevation drawings must be submitted showing numbers and exact locations of fixtures. In addition, wattages must be specified and, in cases in which fixtures will illuminate semi-public spaces like walkways or parking areas, an analysis from a lighting engineer may be required to reassure the Commission that illumination levels will be adequate but not excessive.

The following considerations apply to both residential and commercial properties:

- Incandescent lighting is strongly preferred.
- Mercury-vapor lights are prohibited; sodium-vapor lights are strongly discouraged.
- Moving or flashing lights of any sort are prohibited.
- Original fixtures should be preserved wherever possible.
- If original fixtures cannot be preserved, replacement fixtures should correspond in style and scale to the originals.
- New fixtures on masonry walls should be attached to mortar, not the masonry itself.
- Security lighting, if necessary, should be mounted as inconspicuously as possible, preferably not on a façade of the building that is visible from a public way.
- If walkway or driveway lighting is necessary, foot lights are preferable to post-mounted lighting.
- Lighting designed to illuminate the façade of a building should enhance architectural features and not obscure them with excess glare.
- Building illumination should aim for true color rendition and not add color itself to the structure.

Specific Considerations for Commercial Properties:

- Pole lighting for walkways and parking lots should not exceed 10 feet in height, should be only bright enough to ensure public safety, and should be shielded if necessary to prevent light spillage onto adjacent properties.
- Internally lit plastic signs are not allowed. If exterior signage must be illuminated, spot or up-lighting fixtures are preferred.
- Fixtures illuminating signs or building facades should be concealed wherever possible.

Mailboxes

Mailboxes should be of wood or painted metal, attached near the front door of a home or business. Because of the relatively urban nature of the Historic District, traditional “rural” mailboxes on free-standing posts near the street will generally not be approved.

Masonry, including Foundations and Chimneys

Masonry: Brick, stone, terra cotta, concrete, adobe, stucco and mortar

The Commission recommends identifying, retaining, and preserving masonry features that are important in defining the overall character of the building, such as walls, brackets, railings, cornices, window architraves, door pediments, steps, and columns; and details such as tooling and bonding patterns, coatings, and color.

- Existing walls should be retained and repaired:
- New brick should match the old brick as closely as possible in size, color and bond.
- Original mortar should be retained whenever possible. Mortar within the wall indicates original color more accurately than surface mortar, which is soiled and tends to darken with age. If it is necessary to repoint, duplicate the old mortar as nearly as possible in type, color, size, texture, joint profile, and strength. Strength is a particularly important factor because the brick itself can be damaged if the mortar used involves too high a concentration of Portland cement. Mortar was historically formulated to be softer than the brick, and the joints will need to be repointed every 50 years or so.
- Painting of masonry walls will be considered if the wall is already painted or if the masonry is extremely damaged.

- Stucco walls should be repaired with a mixture that duplicates the original as closely as possible in color, texture, and overall appearance.

Foundations should be repaired or extended with the material of the existing foundation.

Chimney repairs may be undertaken subject to the guidelines for mortar/brick.

- Proposals to alter, remove or replace chimneys will be reviewed in light of the guidelines for architectural elements as well as for brickwork.
- If fireplaces in the interior are to be removed, every effort should be made to retain the exterior stack.

Modern Equipment

Window-mounted air-conditioning units may be installed seasonally without a hearing before the Commission. Permanently installed air-handling units generally detract from the appearance of a building and should be mounted preferentially on the sides and rear of the structure. The distance that permanent units project through the wall to the exterior should be minimized, preferably not exceeding 4-5 inches.

Roof-mounted equipment such as television antennas and satellite dishes generally detract from the appearance of historic structures and should be hidden as much as possible from public view. Vents projecting through the roof should be hidden to the extent possible and painted the same color as the roof surface. Solar panels should be installed parallel to the surface of the roof to which they are attached, set back from the edges of the roof to minimize their visibility. No pipes or cables should be visible from the ground.

Ground-level equipment such as gas and electric meters and air-conditioning compressors should be installed on the side or rear of the building if possible, and shrubbery should be planted to shield them from public view.



Modern equipment not obscured from view.



Gas meter obscured by shrubbery.

New Construction and Additions

New construction in the Historic District is subject to review by the Commission in accordance with the criteria for appropriateness, as stated in the Acts of 1964 (as amended), Chapter 118, Section 9: "In passing upon appropriateness the commission shall consider, among other things, the historic value and significance of the site, building or structure, the general design, arrangement, texture, material and color of the features...involved, and the relation of such factors to similar factors of sites, buildings and structures in the immediate surroundings. The commission shall consider the appropriateness of the size and shape of the building or structure in relation to (a) the land area upon which the building or structure is situated, (b) the landscaping and planting features proposed by the applicant and (c) the neighboring sites, buildings or structures within the district."

Any new construction should respect its historic setting and the architectural character of any historic houses around it. In general, features such as setbacks, cornice heights, window sizes, and siding materials are important in helping a new building fit in. The Commission will be favorably disposed to the use of materials that were used in the District originally, such as wood siding and wood windows, taking cues from houses on the particular street for building form including height, massing, roof shapes and pitches, fenestration (window) patterns, chimneys, and porches, etc., as well as setbacks. Combining styles and periods is discouraged.

While the use of traditional materials is strongly encouraged, the Commission is mindful that new products are constantly being brought to the market, some of which have benefits that outweigh the loss of the recognized qualities of traditional materials. The Commission will consider appropriate substitutions on a case-by-case basis.

Additions

As is the case with new construction, additions should be compatible with the existing building and neighborhood both in overall character and in specific elements. They should not damage, alter, or obstruct the character-defining features of the existing building, which should be preserved. The key factors to be considered include the scale and proportions of the addition; the shape and style; the siting (which should be least visible from public view); the building elements, such as windows, doors, trim, porches or decks, material and finish, all of which should be in harmony with the original building. In general, all elements of the new addition will be reviewed in light of the guidelines for those elements.

The need for "compatibility" does not rule out the use of contemporary designs or materials, which the Commission will consider on a case-by-case basis.

Outbuildings

Outbuildings include sheds, garages, and other small accessory structures. Such structures are common historically and should be maintained in their original visual relationship to the main building. Outbuildings often contribute to the overall character of a property and of the District. Construction should follow the same guidelines used for principal structures. Any new construction or change to an existing outbuilding must be reviewed by the Commission.

If possible, new outbuildings should be located so they cannot be seen from a public way. If this is not possible, they should be placed as inconspicuously as possible on the property. Outbuildings should be compatible with the design, size, shape, and materials of the principal building. They should never obscure or diminish the unique historic or architectural impact of the principal building on the property or of adjacent structures in the Historic District.

The style and color of these ancillary structures should match the main building on the property as much as possible, and should also be in keeping with the look and feel of the surrounding structures in the District.

Porches and Decks

Porches on the front or side of a house are always significant architectural features and as such must be designed carefully. Additions of porches must respect the style and proportions of the existing structure. Materials should match the existing structure if possible. Alterations to existing porches should be designed to preserve the historical accuracy of their architectural elements.

Decks are a more modern concept than porches, in general, and are typically inappropriate for the fronts of buildings in the Historic District. Like porches, their design should respect the style and proportions of the main structure. To the extent that a deck design conflicts with the historic appearance of a house, vegetative screening may be required for Commission approval.

Both decks and porches are exposed to harsh weather conditions in New England and, where appropriate, consideration will be given to the use of compatible modern building materials, particularly for horizontal components. Railings should be wood or wrought iron, however – vinyl components will not be approved.



Porch with railing – new construction.

Roofs and Roof Structures

Original rooflines, including dormer windows, vents, chimneys, end or fire walls, etc. should be retained.

Roof-covering materials used for repair or replacement should duplicate the original or existing, if appropriate, in both style and color. Such repairs may be performed without approval from the Commission. Changes in color or style, e.g. architectural shingles, may be considered if appropriate, but do require a public hearing.

Siding

Appropriate siding materials are clapboard, brick, wood, shingles, stone and, on certain historical styles, stucco.

Original siding material should be retained whenever possible and deteriorated materials repaired or replaced with new material that duplicates the original as closely as possible. Siding on an addition should be in most cases the same as on the existing main structure.

In general, synthetic siding, such as vinyl, asphalt, aluminum, artificial stone or brick, and cementitious composite like HardiePlank, is not appropriate for existing structures in the Historic District and will not be approved. Cementitious or other composite siding may be considered, but only on applications for new construction.

The HDC encourages the removal of modern, non-original siding materials and trim, for example vinyl or aluminum siding, and replacement with more historically accurate products.

Signage

Signage in the Historic District should contribute to and complement the architectural character and detail of the buildings it fronts. Signage locations should be appropriate and consistent with traditional placement and reflect the scale, size, and proportions of both the building and the streetscape. Signs should also reflect the contextual nature of the District and incorporate both creativity and variety.

Historically appropriate material for signs is wood with raised or carved lettering. Posts should also be wood (cedar is recommended). Serif-style fonts are preferred (see Appendix III). Colors should reflect colors available in the 18th and 19th centuries (see Appendices I and II). Fluorescent colors and reflective paints or materials are not acceptable. Sign lettering on building facades should be no more than 12" high. Signage can be incorporated into the display windows or mid-cornices of historic storefronts, or placed on suspended signboards or awnings.

Corporate or franchised logos are considered a more contemporary medium, and their use in the Historic District is discouraged. It is requested that such logos be modified to appropriately complement the historic context being preserved.

Proposed signage should not conceal significant architectural building features or details.

Sign lighting is discouraged. If proposed, the lighting should be appropriate to the design and nature of the building and the business. Internally-lit signs and colored accent lighting are not allowed.

Materials to submit with a sign application:

- Scaled drawings for the proposed sign(s) at no less than 1/2" = 1'-0" which include proposed materials, colors, typeface and dimensions
- Actual samples of sign materials, paint chips and finishes
- List of proposed mounting hardware including the details and specification and method of installation, manufacturer's lighting specifications and catalog cuts for proposed lighting fixtures with a proposed lighting plan
- Photographs and/or elevations of building, or a plot plan, showing exact locations of proposed sign(s)

Please refer also to the Lighting section of these Guidelines and to the Town of Bedford Sign Bylaw, available from the Code Enforcement Department at the Town Hall, 10 Mudge Way.

Skylights

Skylights are reviewed on an individual basis, subject to the following considerations:

- In general, skylights will not be approved on the front façade of a building in the Historic District. It is recommended that skylights be placed so as to not be visible from a public way or on the rear or least visible façade whenever possible.
- Projection should be less than one foot above the roof and at least one foot back from the visible edge of the roof.
- Framing of skylights should be dark and non-reflective.
- Flat glass skylights are preferred; curved plastic is not approved for roofs visible from a public place.

Steps, Stairways, Fire Escapes, Railings, and Ramps

Exterior elements like stairways, fire escapes, and ramps are important in that they are not only functional but also architectural, so it is necessary that they be incorporated thoughtfully. Front steps, railings, and porticos are always significant features of the façade that can greatly enhance the appearance of a building. On the other hand, fire escapes and stairways to provide exterior access to upper floors often detract from the appearance of a structure, so they should be placed as far from public view as possible while still performing their mandated functions.

Handicapped-access ramps are required by law on many commercial buildings and are a necessity for certain homeowners, when the building entrance is above grade level. Such ramps are under the purview of the Code Enforcement Department as a safety issue on public buildings, and applicable State accessibility laws may mandate placement in locations that would conflict with HDC guidelines. The Commission will strike a balance between its mandate to preserve the historic character of the District and the requirements of the State Architectural Access Board for handicapped-access accommodations. Each installation will be treated on a case-by-case basis with this goal in mind.

The design, construction materials, and colors of any ramps are under the jurisdiction of the Historic District Commission and are subject to the following considerations:

- Natural materials, typically wood and/or stone, should be used, if possible
- Design of ramp and railings should be consistent with the style of the building (colonial, Victorian, etc.)
- Color should match building or trim
- Landscaping to lessen visibility and architectural impact from a public place is desirable.

Storefronts, Awnings, and Street Furniture

New Store Fronts

A new building containing store fronts should maintain the established setback and spacing patterns of existing surrounding buildings. New buildings should be oriented with their front façades along the street and should be designed on a human, pedestrian scale, maintaining the proportions and scale of neighboring structures. The height of the new structure should relate to the height of adjacent historic buildings. The building should maintain similar roof form, pitch, style, and materials as adjacent buildings, continuing any alignment characteristics that have been established on adjacent storefronts such as cornice line and the level of any upper-story windows. The design of the building should be consistent with the form and massing of neighboring historic buildings and with the directional emphasis of the established streetscape.

The building should maintain any established façade patterns and proportions of adjacent buildings, continuing the relationship of solid wall to openings (doors, windows). Storefronts should have more area of opening (window) than wall on the first floor and more area of wall on the upper floors.

Examples of craftsmanship, ornamentation, and architectural detailing should be shown to the Commission as part of the application process. Detailing that relates to and reflects the character of the area is encouraged. Storefront façades should not obscure the basic architectural framework or details of the building.

Existing Store Fronts

Interior and exterior window decoration, signage, and internal lighting are all subject to review and approval by the Historic District Commission, and, in the case of signs, by Bedford's Code Enforcement Officer also.

The decoration of store-front windows is important to the business and has visual impact on the Historic District. Uncluttered windows with unified themes are highly encouraged. Signage attached to, or visible through, door or store-front windows

requires approval by the Historic District Commission and the town's Code Enforcement Officer. Lighting of the window display must meet town by-laws concerning, among other things, hours of operation. Internally lighted signs and neon signs are not allowed.

Awnings

Generally, traditional canvas awnings are acceptable. Awnings should not detract from the form of the building, or obscure its details. Awnings should be attached in a way that permits later removal without damaging the materials to which they are fastened. Awning skirts should not be held in place to appear permanent, but should hang free. New awning installations require a hearing. Any signage should be printed only on the awning skirt and requires the additional approval of the town's Code Enforcement Officer.

Street Furniture

Street furniture, which includes seating, trash and recycling containers, planters, public telephone areas, enclosure walls, information signs, display cases, drinking fountains, clocks, bike racks, and similar site furnishings, is subject to review by the Commission.

Street furniture should complement the architectural period of the structures in the area in which it is sited. Materials and design should be consistent with the period and style of the nearest structure(s), and should reflect the formal or informal character of the surroundings. Placement should not detract from the immediate environs or the broader streetscape. Seating should be made of natural materials that can withstand weather, such as wood or stone. Cast metal seating will be considered in appropriate locations.

No advertising should appear on any exterior surface.

Windows, Screens, Storm Windows, and Shutters

Windows

Windows should ordinarily be all wood, with true divided lights.

Existing windows should be repaired, not replaced.

If evidence is presented that a window or windows are beyond repair, replacements may be acceptable if they are of the same material and design as the original, including casing, size, number of panes, and type of window, and they are appropriate for the period and style of the building.

Muntins should be permanent and no wider than 7/8", even when insulating glass is used.

Frames, sills, and replacement windows should not be vinyl- or metal-clad.

Screens and Storm Windows

Screens and storm windows are generally acceptable, provided that installation does not alter the windows or frames and has minimal visual impact on the existing windows.

Shutters

Existing shutters should be repaired, not replaced.

When repair is not possible, replacements should be constructed of wood, match the height and ½ the width of the window openings and replicate the original shutter.

Shutters should be secured with appropriate functional hardware, not connected through their face frames in such a way that they cannot be opened and closed. Orientation of slats should be such that they point upward when open and downward to shed water when closed protecting the windows.

Appendices

I. Paint Colors Appropriate for Period Houses in Massachusetts

(Prepared by Fannin/Lehner for the Hingham HDC)

	Base Colors	Trim Colors	Door Colors
Colonial Mid 1600s- 1780	Natural Spanish brown (dark, dull red) Indian red (“verging to the scarlet”)	Same as base White	Dark brown Black/green Prussian (dark blue/green) Dark gray Dark red Green
Georgian 1714 - 1832	Yellow ochre		
Federal 1780-1830	Brick Off-white Pale Yellow Ochred white Soft beige Pale green Medium gray Medium blue	White Buff Medium blue Pale yellow white	Black Natural Brown Red
Greek Revival 1825-1855	White Buff Pale yellow Green/gray Blue/gray Pale gray Gray stain	Olive green Gray/blue Dark bottle green Green/black Buff White Black	Dark green Medium blue Black
Gothic Revival 1825 - 1855	Shades of gray Drab or fawn Sage Straw/sand Chocolate	Darker than base color when light Lighter than base color when dark Red	Unpainted wood Oak
Early Victorian 1840-1900	Buff Brick pink Mustard Straw colored stucco	Dark Gray Dark green/brown	

(Note: Dark body with light trim or light body with dark trim of the same color)

Bracketed or Italianate 1840-1880	Pale beige	Darker beige	Black
	Golden sand	Lighter sand	Natural
	Golden brown	Darker brown	Burgundy
	Olive branch stain	Lighter olive	
	Light gray	Dark gray	
	Deep gray	Light gray	
	Gray stain	Lighter stain	
	Yellow ochre	Dark green	
	Blue gray	Medium brownstone	
	Dark brown	Old gold	
	Medium red		
	Fawn	Sash: reddish brown	
	Buff	Shutter green	

Mansard or Second Empire 1855-1885	Pale olive	Ivory	Olive
	Olive	Tan	Oak
	Rose	Pale rose	Dark green
	Peach	Pale peach	
	Golden sand stain	Ivory, yellow sash, olive door	
	Tan	Bittersweet	
	Straw	Cream, yellow sash	
	Light yellow	White	
	Light yellow	Brown	
	Brown	Brown, bittersweet sash & shutters	
	Light brownstone	Medium brownstone	

(Note: Dark body with light trim or light body with dark trim of the same color.)

Queen Anne	Light olive	Dark olive, dark red accent trim
	Olive	Tan, dark olive accent trim
1875-1905	Green Gold stain	Yellow, dark olive accent trim
	Dark olive	Rose, brown accent trim
Multi- Colored Period	Green Gold stain	Terra cotta trim, dark salmon
	Sorrel	Tan, amber
	Brown, first floor	Rose gable
	Deep rose, second floor	Beige trim
	Dark tan	Peach
	Antique Brass stain	Pumpkin, gold accent trim
	Curry stain	Deep rose or pumpkin
	Pumpkin	Dark olive, light pumpkin trim
	Deep rose	Olive trim, deep olive accent
	Dark taupe	

Shingle Style 1880-1910	Stained shingles Silver-gray shingles	Cream white Gray white	Bronze green Shutters, green
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Colonial Revival 1876- present	Tan Yellow Golden yellow White Warm gray Cream Pale blue-gray Clear middle blue Straw Buff Moss green Deep sylvan green Terra cotta	White trim White trim, green shutter Medium brownstone Dark green trim White trim Bronze green Ivory trim
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II. Historic Paint Colors for Bedford Buildings

(Excerpts from *History of Bedford*, 1891, Abram English Brown; *The Old House Journal*, 1981, Katherine Conley; *Painting the Old House Journal*, April, 1981, Dr. Roger Moss)

Pre-1800 houses in New England, if painted at all, were done in whatever colors were obtainable. Dark red, made with iron oxide, was easy to produce. White lead was obtainable.

In Bedford, a special situation prevailed. A yellow ochre mineral pigment was available which was used to paint the meeting house in 1780. After 1812, it was mined commercially as a paint pigment. It is believed to have been the predominant color in Bedford for a long time.

After 1800, New England houses were commonly painted in whites and creams with green shutters. Doors were dark. Red was sometimes used on farm house doors.

For Greek Revival houses, white or pale yellow with white or cream trim is considered "classic." Pale gray, blue, green, or yellow are also considered appropriate. Dark green, black, and medium blue were used on doors.

After 1840, Andrew Jackson Downing helped start a fashion for romantic Gothic and Italianate cottages painted in pale, soft earth colors.

The 1860s and '70s produced more imposing formal styles painted in darker colors. These styles included Second Empire (Mansard roofs), Renaissance Revival and Italianate. Bedford did not enjoy prosperity at this time, so little of these styles is seen here.

After the railroad finally came to Bedford in 1874, a number of Victorian cottages were built within walking distance of the depot on Loomis Street. These were mainly in vernacular or Stick-Style Victorian. Body and trim might have been painted contrasting dark colors such as medium gray with dark gray trim, Indian red with dark brown trim, ochre with green-black trim or dark blue with beige trim. Door was unpainted hardwood. Victorian window sash was dark and appeared to recede into the building. At least one, #51 South Road, was painted in the bright, bold contrasting, multi-colored manner of the "painted ladies" of San Francisco.

The Queen Anne Revival Style, 1875-1915, had the greatest variety of detail and texture. Queen Anne houses were painted several dark colors to highlight all the detail. Number 140 The Great Road and the stable of the Wallace Webber mansion, now a residence at 18 Hillside Avenue, are among the few examples of this style in Bedford.

Colonial Revival houses of 1880 – present, differ from true colonials by having big front porches. These, again went back to the white, cream or pale yellow, with white or cream trim.

Craftsman Bungalows, Shingle Style, and Tudor houses of 1900-1930 were unpainted. Stains were sometimes used to darken the wood.

III. Recommended Fonts for Signage in the Historic District

Bedford Historic District Commission	Garamond GARAMOND 1234567890	Regular
	<i>Garamond GARAMOND</i> 1234567890	Italic
	Garamond GARAMOND 1234567890	Bold
	<i>Garamond GARAMOND 1234567890</i>	Italic
	abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy ABCDEFGHIJKLMN OP QRSTUVWXYZ	
<hr/>		
Bedford Historic District Commission	times TIMES 1234567890	Regular
	<i>times TIMES</i> 1234567890	Italic
	times TIMES 1234567890	Bold
	<i>times TIMES 1234567890</i>	Italic
	abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy ABCDEFGHIJKLMN OP QRSTUVWXYZ	
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Bedford Historic District Commission	helvetica HELVETICA 1234567890	Regular
	<i>helvetica HELVETICA</i> 1234567890	Italic
	helvetica HELVETICA 1234567890	Bold
	<i>helvetica HELVETICA 1234567890</i>	Italic
	abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy ABCDEFGHIJKLMN OP QRSTUVWXYZ	
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Bedford Historic District Commission	goudy GOUDY 1234567890	Regular
	<i>goudy GOUDY</i> 1234567890	Italic
	goudy GOUDY 1234567890	Bold
	<i>goudy GOUDY 1234567890</i>	Italic
	abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy ABCDEFGHIJKLMN OP QRSTUVWXYZ	