

Town of Sudbury, MA

HISTORIC DISTRICTS COMMISSION GENERAL GUIDELINES

The following general guidelines are used to determine appropriateness. More detail on specific kinds of changes (e.g., changing roofing, changing windows, etc.) is provided in the HDC Specific Guidelines.

- The historic character of a property and neighborhood will be retained and preserved. The replacement of intact or repairable historic materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property should be avoided. Whenever possible and feasible, like materials and construction methods will be replaced for existing materials and construction methods.
- Within each of Sudbury's five historic districts, there are a variety of houses of differing ages. What is appropriate for a fifty year old house is different than what is appropriate for a two hundred year old house. In particular, where there are clusters of newer houses (less than 50 years old) materials, massing, texture, colors, and general design elements that might not be allowed for structures in older neighborhoods are often considered appropriate and in keeping with more recent construction methods.
- Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right, regardless of age or listing in a historic registry, will in general be retained and preserved.
- Exterior or facade changes to exteriors that would alter historic features, except when such changes replicate historic features, restore previously damaged historic features, or are otherwise compatible with the detail and character of the district, shall be avoided.
- In the case of new construction and additions to existing structures, the Commission considers the appropriateness of size, shape, scale, overall massing, and architectural merits of the structure or addition in relation to the land area upon which the building or structure is situated and the integrity of the property and its environment. The Commission may in appropriate cases impose dimensional or set-back requirements in addition to those required by applicable zoning bylaw.
- Demolition, removal, and moving of any structure that is visible from the street requires a Certificate of Appropriateness. Demolition and removal of structures is considered a substantial change to the historic character of a property and generally is not considered appropriate without remediation (e.g., reconstruction or new construction).
- All signs that are visible from the street that are larger than 12" in width or 12" in height require a Certificate of Appropriateness.
- Following Sudbury's bylaw, Chapter 40 of the Special Acts of 1963, the Historic Districts Commission has jurisdiction over changes that are "visible from a public street, way, or place." Visible from a public street, way, or place means visible at any time of the year (for example, in winter, when leaves are off trees), and when temporary structures (for example, fences) and vegetation (for example, shrubs) may hide the view. In general, the Historic Districts Commission considers cases on an individual basis whenever "visible" may not easily be determined.