



City of Quincy Historical Commission  
1305 Hancock Street  
Quincy, MA 02169

---

### **WHAT WORK REQUIRES A CERTIFICATE?**

If the property is located within an historic district, an applicant will need to obtain a CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS for most new construction or alterations affecting the exterior appearance of the property, including signs. The Commission maintains a set of design guidelines for signage and for other changes, such as those listed below, within the historic district. The Commission, its Chairman or its Administrator, or the Inspector of Buildings will be able to assist applicants in determining whether a Certificate is required.

### **BUILDING CONSTRUCTION INCLUDING:**

- Construction of a new building or additions to an existing building
- Alteration of any exterior feature
- Painting or re-painting (regardless of color)
- Demolition (except structures declared hazardous by the Inspector of Buildings)
- Re-roofing
- Re-siding
- Storm windows and doors

### **OTHER STRUCTURES INCLUDING CONSTRUCTION, DEMOLITION, OR ALTERATION:**

- Fences and stonewalls
- Driveways
- Garages and accessory buildings
- Walks and curbs
- Exterior light fixtures
- Swimming pools
- Solar panels
- Air conditioning equipment
- Landscaping

### **SIGNS INCLUDING:**

- Exterior signs of any type, except signs deemed exempt under the sign ordinance (generally political signs and signs smaller than a certain size).
- Permanent window and interior signs visible from the exterior
- Sign illumination
- Temporary real estate banner "for sale or lease" signs.

### **WORK PERMITTED WITHOUT A CERTIFICATE:**

*A Certificate of Appropriateness is not required for certain types of work:*

- Interior work not affecting the exterior
- Routine repairs not changing the exterior appearance
- Emergency repairs required by the Inspector of Buildings

## HOW TO APPLY TO THE QUINCY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

**APPLICATION** – Applications for certificates are available at the Department of Building Inspection, 1585 Hancock Street (Quincy Fair Building) or from the Commission through the Planning Department at City Hall. The Inspector of Buildings or Local Building Inspector must certify on the application whether Zoning Board of Appeals approval is also required. If Zoning Board of Appeals approval is required, that must be obtained prior to being considered by the Commission.

**REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS TO APPLICATIONS** – (1) TEN copies of each completed application, including drawings, plans or other attachments. (2) A signed copy of the building permit application. (3) A certified abutter's list within 100 feet of property and printed on mailing labels. Attachments remain on file with the Commission. Completed applications MUST be submitted prior to the established deadline, which can be found on the separate insert sheet in this package. **THE OWNER OF THE PROPERTY AND THE BUILDING INSPECTOR MUST SIGN THE APPLICATION FORM.**

### **SIGNS:**

- The Inspector of Buildings or a Local Building Inspector MUST sign the application stating that he or she has reviewed the proposed sign and determined that the design is or is not in compliance with the City's sign ordinance. **NO APPLICATION WILL BE CONSIDERED COMPLETE WITHOUT A SIGNATURE.** Also, if Zoning Board of Appeals approval is required, it must be obtained prior to being considered by the Commission.
- Photographs of the proposed sign location should be provided, showing adjacent buildings and signs as well as the area for proposed new sign.
- A drawing must indicate the exact location of the proposed sign on the existing storefront and should show how new signs or awnings will be located relative to adjacent signs or awnings. This may involve having your contractor measure adjacent heights and locations of existing signs, but including this information in your drawing usually eliminates questions as to how the new sign will fit in with its neighbors.
- The application must specify the size of the proposed sign, its shape, mounting, color(s), lettering size, style, materials, and layout.
- The design and location of any lighting of the sign must be specified.
- A detail drawing should show the means of support and attachment.
- Color, design, lettering or logos on awnings or awning signs must be specified. Flags, other than national or state flags, are not allowed if they project over a public way.
- The name of your sign contractor, if any, should be provided.

### **CHANGES TO EXISTING BUILDINGS/STRUCTURES:**

- Photographs of the existing building, structure or sign should be supplied, showing location of proposed alterations or renovations and of adjacent areas.
- Detailed drawings or plans showing dimensions, elevations, and a schedule of exterior materials and colors must be submitted.
- Manufacturer's brochures with illustrations and specifications for new materials, components, or assemblies to be used, if available, should be provided.
- If appropriate, a landscaping plan should be prepared showing all proposed changes and describing all materials including plantings.

### **EXTERIOR COLOR CHANGES ONLY:**

- Submit color photographs of the existing building.
- Submit samples of proposed paint or stain colors including principal and trim colors.
- Locate on a photograph or sketch which areas will receive which color.

## CONSTRUCTION OF NEW BUILDINGS:

- A site plan must be prepared showing the proposed structure, its relation to adjacent structures, and to existing and proposed grades. Ground level photos need to be submitted.
- Architectural plans, including drawings or renderings of exterior elevations, must also be submitted. Prior to issuance of a certificate, three stamped sets of plans should be submitted which will become a part of the Certificate issued to you.
- A schedule of all exterior materials and colors should accompany the plans.
- Manufacturer's brochures as previously described should similarly be provided.
- A landscaping plan, if appropriate, should also be prepared.

---

## HELPFUL HINTS

---

- ✓ **DRAWINGS** – Drawings need not be professionally prepared, but must:
  - ◆ Be drawn to scale
  - ◆ Show all exterior features completely and accurately
  - ◆ Show how new signs or awnings will be located relative to adjacent signs or awnings on properties within the same building. This may involve having your contractor measure adjacent heights and locations of existing signs, but including this information in your drawing usually eliminates questions as to how the new sign will fit in with its neighbors and expedites the public hearing process.
  - ◆ Show finish grades and floor elevations
  - ◆ Indicate all materials, colors, unusual details
- ✓ **PHOTOGRAPHS** – Must be recent and of acceptable quality for viewing. Photos need to be in **color** and no smaller than those produced from a Polaroid camera. Several views are usually necessary. Please note that good quality photos are one of the best ways for the members to understand your existing sign, building or site! This helps expedite the public hearing process so that your project can get going as soon as possible!
- ✓ **SAMPLES** – Samples, models, mock-up, etc., may be required if specifically requested by the Commission. Color samples are usually the best way to show exactly what color you are proposing for new signs, awnings and other commonly used materials.

## OPERATING PROCEDURES OF THE COMMISSION

**MEETINGS AND PUBLIC HEARINGS** – All meetings and deliberations of the Commission are governed by the Open Meeting Law. Notice of meetings, including the agenda, must be posted at City Hall 48 hours in advance thereof. Public notice must also be given of the time, place and purpose of each hearing, by publication and by mail to the applicant, to the owners of adjoining property, and to such other persons as the Commission shall deem materially affected or entitled to notice, at least two weeks in advance of the hearing. Applications must be filed with the Commission's Administrator, in the Planning Department at City Hall, in advance of the next scheduled hearing in order to be considered at that hearing.

**DEADLINES** – In general, Commission meetings and public hearings are held on the fourth Monday of the month in the evening. Legal advertising requirements set a deadline for accepting applications for public hearings. This deadline is the Thursday before the Monday publication date. Please see the separate established public hearing sheet for a listing of regularly scheduled public hearings, deadline dates and further information. The Commission will schedule a public hearing to act on each application for a Certificate except in cases where it has duly delegated to the Chairman or to its Administrator the power to determine (1) that no Certificate of Appropriateness is required, or (2) that work proposed will comply with established guidelines. Hearings are generally held on the fourth Monday of each month at the call of the Chairman. See the separate sheet for regularly scheduled public hearing dates and submittal deadlines.

A public hearing on an application need not be held if such hearing is waived in writing by all persons entitled to notice thereof. In addition, a public hearing on an application may be waived by the Commission if it determines that the exterior architectural feature involved or its category or color as the case may be, is so insubstantial in its effect on a historic district that it may be reviewed by the Commission without public hearing on the application.

**SITE VISITS** – In addition to the formal application and supporting materials, the Commission often finds it necessary to arrange a site visit before a final determination can be made.

**ISSUANCE OF DECISIONS** – As soon as convenient after the hearing, but in any event within sixty days after the filing of the application, or within such further time as the applicant may allow in writing, the Commission shall make a determination and:

- ◆ Issue (or decline to issue) a Certificate of Appropriateness
- ◆ Issue (or decline to issue) a Permit for Demolition, or
- ◆ Issue (or decline to issue) a Certificate of Hardship

Any certificate issued may contain appropriate conditions, safeguards or limitations. If the Commission shall decline to issue a Certificate, it shall state its reasons for doing so. If the Commission shall fail to make a determination within the period of time required under this paragraph, the Commission shall issue, or be deemed to have issued, a Certificate of Hardship.

**PERMITS** – If a Certificate is obtained, the Inspector of Buildings must also issue the necessary permits, including a sign permit or building permit if required, before the work can begin. In applicable cases, the Inspector of Buildings will issue an occupancy permit after the completed work has been inspected and approved by the Commission. **ALL WORK MUST BE COMPLETED WITHIN SIX MONTHS FROM THE DATE OF THE CERTIFICATE.**

The applicant is responsible for seeing that the work is completed as approved in the Certificate of Appropriateness. The Commission may refuse to approve any additional applications for a property until all previous work has been completed and approved the Commission. The Commission may refuse to accept an incomplete application, or to issue a certificate for any property at which there exist unremedied violations of the Historic Districts Ordinance or these Procedures for Administration thereof.

**CHANGES IN APPROVED PLANS** – Any changes to approved plans require a new hearing and a new Certificate unless the Commission deems them to be non-material.

**FURTHER INFORMATION** – The Commission is available for advice on an informal basis. In order not to delay work on your property, we suggest you identify potential problems before the public hearing.

**MAPS** – Maps at different scales outlining the boundaries of the historic districts are available at the Department of Building Inspection, 1585 Hancock Street, and at the Planning Department at City Hall. A copy of the ordinance is available in the Planning Department or from the City Clerk.