

# **Design Guidelines**

for  
**Construction and Renovation**  
in the  
**Longmeadow Historic District**

## **Revision 2008.1**

The following list of Guidelines has been compiled to facilitate the homeowner's planning for projects affecting the property as viewed from any public way. The Guidelines have been arranged so that the numbers correspond to those in the Rules and Regulations, Section V.

### **1,3,4) New Construction and Additions**

The design of any new structure in the Historic District (hereinafter the "District") is of great importance because it must be compatible with existing structures and must harmonize with the visual characteristics of the neighborhood.

The following guidelines for new construction cover additions to existing buildings as well as entirely new structures within the District. These guidelines are not intended to dictate particular architectural styles or features. They are intended to identify a range of design options which will encourage new development that is harmonious with the character of the District. The important elements to consider in new construction are scale, design quality and relationship to neighboring buildings, rather than the degree to which new construction imitates a historic style or period.

New construction is reviewed in terms of the following: siting, massing, rhythm and directional emphasis, materials, and building elements.

**Siting.** The setback and orientation of new buildings in the District should align with neighboring historic buildings. Within Longmeadow's District, principal elevations of buildings characteristically face the street with a strong sense of entry. Eighteenth century homes tend to have a relatively short set back, whereas the mid to late Nineteenth century homes tend to be set back considerably.

**Size and Scale.** New construction should conform to the massing, proportion, volume, scale and height of neighboring buildings. The bulk and area requirements in the zoning ordinance regulate the specific height and area coverage of buildings allowed in the District.

**Rhythm and Directional Emphasis.** New construction should be compatible with the rhythm of neighboring buildings along the street. Rhythm is defined by the relationship of buildings to open space along the street, the relationship of solids to voids on the building facades, and the relationship of entrance and porch projections to the street.

The directional emphasis whether vertical or horizontal in character of new construction should relate to that of neighboring buildings.

**Materials.** The exterior materials used in new construction should be compatible with historically appropriate materials of neighboring buildings or the District as a whole.

**Building Elements.** The various individual elements of a building; roof, windows, doors, porches, and trim should be carefully integrated into the overall design of new construction. These elements also should complement those on neighboring structures. The shape and pitch of the roof should be considered. Window and door proportion, size, design and pattern of spacing between openings should be compatible with historic treatments of windows and doors in the District.

## 2) Demolition.

The distinguishing original architectural features as well as the character of a building, structure, or site and its surroundings shall not be destroyed. The removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive architectural features should be avoided.

The Commission strongly recommends preservation and rehabilitation. Demolition will not be allowed except under the most unusual circumstances or conditions.

## 5) Roofs.

The roof, its shape, functional and decorative features, and roofing material is an important identifying element in a building's historic character. A sound roof is also essential to maintaining the soundness of the entire structure, therefore the protection and repair of the roof is fundamental to rehabilitation projects.

- Retain original shape (pitch, configuration) of the roof.
- Preserve both functional and decorative features of the roof, such as eaves, cornices, chimneys, dormers, cupolas, gutters and flashing. If a particular feature is too deteriorated to repair, replacement should match as near as possible in material, size, shape, texture, and color and be of similar construction as the original.
- Retain original roofing material unless it is deteriorated. When partially re-roofing, deteriorated roof coverings should be replaced whenever possible with new materials that match the old in composition, size, shape and texture. When entirely re-roofing, new materials need not replicate the old (especially when using the same kind of material is not economically feasible), and should be compatible substitute materials. For example: architectural slate line.
- Additions to roofs such as dormers, skylights, solar collectors, mechanical and service equipment should be placed so that they are not seen from any public way. Roof additions or alterations should not damage or obscure the historic character of the roof.

**Siding.** Artificial siding is not permitted in the District. Artificial siding conceals historic fabric such as clapboards, shingles, and masonry. Its installation very often removes historic trim, brackets and other unique architectural features.

Do not resurface buildings with inappropriate new materials such as artificial stone, artificial brick veneer ("brick face"), vinyl or aluminum siding, asbestos or asphalt shingles.

When removing deteriorated paint from clapboards, the recommended methods are hand scraping and hand sanding. Avoid destructive removal methods such as sandblasting and waterblasting.

When changing the existing color of a structure, the new color should be compatible with the period of the structure and must be approved by the Commission.

#### **6) Storm Windows, Storm Doors, Air Conditioners, Electric Cables, Light Fixtures, Solar Panels, Antennas, and Gutters.**

If exterior storm windows are required, they should have wooden frames, or, if metal, should be painted to blend with the trim. Interior storm windows or frameless storm panels are recommended. The use of storm doors is discouraged by the Commission.

Air conditioning units, solar panels, antennae, satellite dishes should not be seen from a public way.

#### **7) Walkways, Terraces, Steps, Driveways, Gates, Fences, Walls, Barns, Garages, Swimming Pools, Parking Areas, And Gazebos.**

**Walkways, Terraces and Steps.** New construction of walkways and steps should use historic materials such as sandstone or brick. Terraces and walls should use only natural materials such as stone or brick.

**Driveways.** The placement and size of the driveway should be designed to minimize its impact on the site. Examples of recently approved materials – pavers, pea stone, asphalt.

**Fences.** Historic fencing should be retained and repaired rather than replaced wherever possible. Deteriorated fencing should be replaced in a similar material, matching as closely as possible in size, shape texture and color. Historically appropriate enclosures include wrought iron fences, painted picket fences, low hedges, or low retaining walls. Inappropriate enclosures include opaque fences such as stockade fences, vinyl fences, high berms and modern fence types such as chain-link, or contemporary metal railings.

**Garages and Parking.** Historically in the District, garages have been detached from the house and situated to the side of the lot behind the house. New garages should follow this pattern. Garage construction, like other new construction, should be compatible in scale and material with the principal structure and with neighboring accessory structures. Parking spaces should be as inconspicuous as possible and located to the rear of the property.

**Gazebos.** Gazebos must match the style of the primary structure, should be constructed of wood and be located to the rear of the property.

**Swimming Pools.** Swimming pools shall not be allowed even if shrubs or fences block it's view from a public way.

## **8) Doors, Windows, Shutters, Porches and Chimneys.**

The replacement of historic wood framed windows should be avoided in the District. In many cases, wooden windows can be repaired. The wooden windows in the District have probably survived 100 years or more. With proper restoration and maintenance, windows can do well for another 100 years. If the windows are beyond repair, they should be replaced with new wood windows, or aluminum clad. Recently approved examples are Wood Wright Series. Vinyl, metal, or windows with snap in muntins are inappropriate in the District.

**Doors.** Maintain the size, shape and location of door openings and porches. Primary entrances should not be relocated. New entrances should not be added to the main elevation. Do not "block down" entryways in order to reduce the size of the door opening or to fit modern stock door sizes.

**Porches.** Those which are appropriate to the building should not be removed.

Retain the original features of entrances and porches whenever possible. These include doors, fanlights and lights, sidelights, pilasters, entablatures, hardware, columns, balustrades, and steps. Do not discard elements if they can be repaired and re-used.

If deterioration makes it necessary to replace part or all of an entrance or porch, the replacement should be similar in material and design. Avoid using modern doors which are inappropriate to the historic period of the house. Simplified versions of original features (such as porch posts) may be acceptable as long as they are of the same size and proportion.

Some later doorways and porches may have acquired significance in their own right (such as Colonial Revival elements on older houses) and should be respected because they are evidence of the building's history.

Do not enclose open front porches with opaque walls or materials. Screened or glassed-in porches may be acceptable if appropriately detailed and well proportioned.

**Chimneys and brick work.** Maintain the original color and texture of masonry walls and chimneys. Stucco or paint should not be removed from historically painted or stuccoed masonry walls. Likewise, paint or stucco should not be applied to historically unpainted or unstuccoed masonry walls.

Clean masonry and mortar only when necessary to halt deterioration or to remove heavy soiling, using the gentlest method possible, such as low pressure brushes. Sandblasting, caustic solutions, and high-pressure water blasting should not be used. These methods erode the surface and accelerate deterioration.

Repoint masonry walls and chimneys when there is evidence of disintegrating mortar, cracks in mortar joints, loose bricks, or moisture retention in the walls. New mortar should duplicate the old mortar in composition, bonding strength, profile, color and texture.

Screening or other apparatus installed on a chimney should not be visible from a public way.

## **9) Landscaping features.**

Landscaping features such as statuary, children's play equipment and water features, should not be visible from a public way.

### 10) Signs.

The placement of signs in the District is discouraged, except for house street address signs that meet town zoning by-law of one square foot maximum.

Every application for a sign will be reviewed for appropriateness in the context of its immediate environment, the following guidelines shall apply:

- a) Black lettering on white ground is preferred.
- b) Minor use of older colors and gold leaf shall be accepted
- c) All lettering must be executed in a professional manner
- d) Overall size should generally be smaller than that allowed in the zoning by-law.

### 11) Revision History

Date	Description	Revision#
5/7/2005	Development of the Design Guidelines	2002.1
1/1/2005	Section 10, Signs, excluded House Numbers	2005.1
1/8/2008	Section 5 - Re-roofing Section 6 – Storm windows Section 7 – Driveways Section 7 – Fences Section 8 – Doors, windows	2008.1