

## GROTON HISTORIC DISTRICTS COMMISSION REGULATIONS

Groton's Historic Districts have three purposes:

1. To preserve and protect the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places significant to the history of the Commonwealth and of Groton;
2. To maintain and improve the settings of those buildings and places; and
3. To assure that new construction is compatible with existing buildings and their historic relationship to other buildings and their historic relationship to other buildings in the district and immediate surroundings.

When reviewing individual applications, the Commission will be guided by the Town of Groton Historic Districts Bylaw and the design principles set forth in these regulations.

The historic character of a property should be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property should be avoided.

Each property should be recognized as a physical record of time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, should be avoided.

New additions, exterior alterations or related new construction that destroy historic materials, the integrity of design of the building, or features and spatial relationships that characterize the property in a manner and to a degree that negatively impacts the District are not allowed.

### **Application Process**

Applications are available at the town's Land Use Department located in the Town Hall.

1. A complete application will consist of all proposed work items, thoroughly described on scaled drawings and shall include specifications regarding dimensions, materials, and any other information needed for the Commission to visualize the proposed changes. Applications when appropriate shall include a manufacturer's catalog cut of the proposed item or material. Applications for paint colors shall include a manufacturer's paint chip or color chart.

The following items should be included:  
Site Plan (if needed)  
Elevation drawings of the specific areas

Details/profiles (i.e. moldings, cornices, fence caps, etc.)  
Materials (i.e. wood, brick, etc.)  
Dimensions (i.e. size of trim, etc.)

Photographs must be provided of sufficient number and quality to adequately document existing conditions. Historic photographs, if available shall be provided.

2. The Commission normally meets on the third Tuesday of each month in the Groton Town Hall at 7:00 p.m. Meetings are open to the public and any person is entitled to appear and be heard on any matter before the Commission before it votes on an application. The agenda for each meeting is posted on the town's website.
3. At the hearing, the Commission will discuss the application with the applicant or his/her representative, listen to comments from abutters or other concerned citizens, and take a vote on the application. Owners who have hired architects or contractors are urged to have them present at the hearing. An application may be continued until the next meeting if the commission deems necessary (i.e. for reasons of incomplete drawings or data, or to perform a site visit, etc.). In any case, the Commission must make a determination within 45 calendar days from the date on which the application was received, unless the applicant waives that requirement in writing.
4. A property owner or a contractor cannot receive a building permit unless a Certificate has been issued or the applicant has a letter from the Commission stating that the change involved is not subject to the Commission's jurisdiction.
5. The Town of Groton Building Commissioner and/or a member of the Historic District Commission shall have the right to inspect the project to certify compliance with the conditions set forth in the Certificate issued.

### **GENERAL GUIDELINES**

The following guidelines are intended to assist in facilitating a smooth review process; individual applications may involve considerations beyond the scope of these guidelines:

#### **(1)BUILDING EXTERIOR: Paint**

Paint and stain colors are associated with particular architectural styles and periods. The Commission uses and approves colors from the palette of historical colors which have existed on the building in the past or which are appropriate to the period and style of the structure.

A hearing before the Commission is not required to repaint a building or structure the same (existing ) color. Color chips, however, must be submitted, and will be approved or disapproved in writing.



A hearing before the Commission is required to change the color of the building, structure, trim and detail elements. A written record of the appropriate color choice(s), along with sample paint chips, must be submitted for the file. If it is determined at the hearing that the colors are proximate to those on the Approved List and appropriate for the structure given its architectural style, the owner will be informed in writing. Any color choices require review and approval by the Commission.

## **(2) BUILDING EXTERIOR: Masonry**

General design guidelines for exterior masonry are:

Masonry features that are important in defining the building's overall character should be identified, retained and preserved. Such elements include but are not limited to walls, cornices, hoodmolds, columns, door pediments, joints and bonding patterns.

Character-defining masonry elements should be repaired rather than replaced. If replacement becomes necessary, the original should be replicated, matching the original design and materials as closely as possible.

Painting previously unpainted masonry structures or applying stucco and concrete veneers to previously uncoated structures is not appropriate and will not be approved. Similarly, removing paint from a masonry building that has been historically painted is not appropriate.

## **Foundations**

In new construction, foundation height should be consistent with those typically found in other buildings of the same architectural style. Ideally, new foundations should also be in harmony with foundation heights of buildings in the surrounding area. The foundation height of an addition should match that of the existing structure.

Foundations should be left unpainted. New foundation construction as viewed from the exterior should be compatible with the original if possible.

## **(3) BUILDING EXTERIOR: Wood**

General design guidelines for exterior wood walls and trim are:

Original wood siding material should be retained whenever possible; deteriorated sections should be repaired or replaced with new material that duplicates the original as closely as possible. Vinyl and metal siding are not appropriate and will generally not be approved.

All existing shutters and their hardware should be retained and preserved. If replacement becomes necessary, replacement shutters should match the originals in terms of size, scale, detail, thickness and hardware.

Composite or other artificial materials that are indistinguishable from natural or traditional products can be considered; the Commission will consider their use on a case-by-case basis.

#### **(4) BUILDING EXTERIOR: Roofs**

General design guidelines for roofs are:

##### **Alterations and Penetrations**

Alterations that radically change, damage or destroy the roof's defining historic characteristics are not appropriate. New additions such as skylights, antennas or mechanical equipment should be installed in such a manner as to not be visible, or at least screened from the pedestrian view.

##### **Roof Repair or Replacement**

Repairs to roofs should include limited replacement in-kind, or replacement with a compatible substitute material.

If roof replacement is necessary, the same materials as the original, or a compatible substitute material, should be used. The replacement roof should match the original composition, size, shape, color, decorative patterning, and texture of the original.

##### **Gutters and Downspouts**

Wooden or copper gutters and downspouts can be important architectural features. In older houses or buildings, they were often designed as part of the eave moldings. In these cases, the gutters become particularly important architectural features and should be treated as such.

Gutters that are integral components of the building eave should be properly maintained and only replaced in cases of irreparable deterioration. Replacements should match the original in form, design, and material, or be made of a suitable substitute material.

More discretion may be allowed in the case of hung gutters. The architectural value of the gutters must still play a role in the decision-making process, but the cost differential between different materials and the environmental implications may also be taken into account.

New gutters and downspouts should be placed in an architecturally sensitive manner and painted the color of the surface on which they are installed; e.g., if a downspout runs



down a white corner board, it should be painted white. Painting of copper gutters and downspouts will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

## **(5) BUILDING EXTERIOR: Windows**

General guidelines for the treatment of windows are:

If replacement becomes necessary due to serve deterioration, the windows should duplicate the existing material, design, configuration and hardware. Replacement windows should match the original window characteristics. This includes characteristics such as the number and size of divided window panes, size and configuration of sash and muntins, etc.

### **Storm Windows**

The use of exterior storm windows should be considered because they are thermally efficient, cost effective, reversible, and allow the retention of existing windows. Storm windows will require a Certificate of Appropriateness for the initial installation. Although interior storm windows appear to offer an attractive option for achieving double-glazing with minimal visual impact from the exterior, the potential for damage due to condensation problems must be addressed.

Storm windows should match the color of the windows or house trim or be painted to match.

The use of unfinished aluminum is not allowed. Mid-rails should match the height of the meeting rails of the historic sash.

## **(6) PUBLIC VERSUS PRIVATE FACADES AND AREAS**

There are instances where rear facades and yards are visible to the public. The Commission shall work with applicants desiring to make changes to portions of residential buildings or yards which are normally considered private rather than public in order to accommodate contemporary usage and needs in such a way which does not negatively impact the District.