



36 Court Street  
City Hall  
Springfield  
Massachusetts  
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### **What is the Springfield Historical Commission?**

The Commission is the City agency responsible for the preservation and promotion of Springfield's historic assets. Its seven members are appointed by the Mayor for staggered three year terms. The Commission must include residents of the historic districts, as well as members nominated by the Board of Realtors, American Institute of Architects, the Springfield Preservation Trust, the Springfield Historical Society or the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities. The Springfield Historical Commission meets on the first and third Thursday of each month.

### **What is the MAPLE HILL Historic District?**

Maple Hill (see Map) is Springfield's sixth historic district. The area dates back to the early nineteenth century when Maple Street was extended from Central Street to Mill Street. Many of the area's wealthiest individuals of the time built some of the city's most beautiful homes in this district. Styles present include Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, Italianate, Stick, Shingle, Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, and Tudor Revival. Many of the structures within this district are considered architecturally significant as they represent some of the finest examples of styles within the city. To aid in preserving this important neighborhood, the Historical Commission, City Council, and the Mayor declared it a historic district in 1978.

### **What Does Historic District Status Mean?**

The Springfield Historical Commission must approve any exterior work **PRIOR** to beginning any work. This review mechanism attempts to insure that changes are compatible with the character of the district. New construction and demolition are also controlled. Landscaping with plants, shrubs, and trees is not controlled.

The following can be approved through a certificate of nonapplicability, which does not require a public hearing:

1. Temporary structure or signs, subject to such conditions as to duration of use, location, lighting, removal and similar matters as the Commission may reasonably specify.
2. Terraces, walks, driveways, and sidewalks provided that any such structure is substantially at grade level.

3. Storm windows, screens, window air conditioners, antennae [satellite dishes **are** regulated; please see Satellite Dish Guidelines], and similar appurtenances.
4. The color of materials used on roofs.
5. Signs of not more than one square foot in area in connection with use of a residence for a customary home occupation, or for professional purposes, provided only one such sign is displayed in connection with each residence and, if illuminated, are illuminated only indirectly.
6. The reconstruction, substantially similar in exterior design, of a building, structure or exterior architectural feature damaged or destroyed by fire, storm or other disaster, provided such reconstruction is begun within one year thereafter and carried forward with due diligence.
7. Color of paint.

**What Residential Controls and Guidelines have been adopted?**

The following features **ARE** controlled and their guidelines have been adopted so that the individual character of each house will be respected and that the integrity and visual cohesiveness of the neighborhood is retained:

<u>Features</u>	<u>Guidelines</u>
Fencing	To protect street vistas, the yard between the street and foundation line should be kept open. Only under unusual circumstances on a case-by-case basis will fencing be allowed.
Steps	Replacement shall be in the shape and design of the original; change in material, e.g., wood to concrete, is permissible.
Roof	Change of roof shape shall require approval.
Building Additions	Design to be approved on case-by-case basis.
Grillwork (on roofs and porches)	Shall be retained unless it can be demonstrated to the Commission that retention would result in a safety hazard or economic hardship.

Siding (also see "Trim")	Original wood, clapboard, or shingle siding will be maintained whenever possible. A change in type or material of siding shall require approval on a case-by-case basis. Any change should not affect trim or other decorative features.
Trim	Color not subject to control, i.e., corner boards, window detail, cornices, etc.; Removal of, or a change in design is subject to control,
Windows	Please see <i>Window Replacement Guidelines</i> . The Commission can provide examples of recently approved windows for your review.
Doors	All doors shall require approval for changes in size, location or design.
Porches (including railings) require approval.	Any change in shape, location or design, including enclosure, shall
Chimney	Any change in shape, location or design shall require approval.
Awnings allowed. Canvas or other fabric is Rollable aluminum considered.	Rigid permanent awnings are not recommended. awnings will be
Signs	Size, shape and designs of signs larger than one (1) square foot shall require approval.
Garages	Changes in shape or design subject to approval feature by feature.
Paint	Color of paint is not controlled; however, approval must be sought prior to painting any previously unpainted masonry.
Lighting fixtures	Must be approved on a case-by-case basis.

**WHAT PROCEDURES ARE TO BE FOLLOWED IN REQUESTING APPROVAL FOR A CHANGE?**

1. Call Springfield Planning Department (787-6020) and ask for the staff person for the Historical Commission to determine if the proposed change is controlled by the Commission.
2. If it is controlled, request an "Application for a Certificate" to proceed for the proposed change.
3. The Historical Commission, after receipt of the application form, will schedule a public hearing to discuss the request. Notices will be sent to abutters by mail fourteen (14) days prior to the scheduled hearing.
4. The Commission must decide on all requests within sixty (60) days of receipt of application; otherwise, the request will automatically be granted.

**WHAT CERTIFICATE CATEGORIES ARE AVAILABLE BY APPLICATION?**

1. **APPROPRIATENESS** - issued for those changes that are in conformance with the guidelines and/or are acceptable for the district.
2. **HARDSHIP** - issued for those changes that are not appropriate but may be necessary due to economic, physical, social, or other special conditions.
3. **NON-APPLICABILITY** - issued for those changes which affect features that are not controlled by the Commission.

**What About Further Recourse?**

If a petitioner disagrees with a ruling by the Commission, he or she may, within twenty (20) days after the filing of the notice of such ruling with the City Clerk, appeal to the Superior Court (Housing Court may also have jurisdiction). On the other hand, the Historical Commission may, through Superior Court (or Housing Court), seek an injunction against any violation to the historic district. The Court may order the removal of any such violation, or the restoration of any building or feature altered or demolished in violation of the historic district. Persons found guilty of violating the district may be fined not less than Ten Dollars (\$10.00) nor more than Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00).

**Where Can More Information Be Obtained?**

Call the Commission staff person at the Springfield Planning Department (413) 787-6020.