



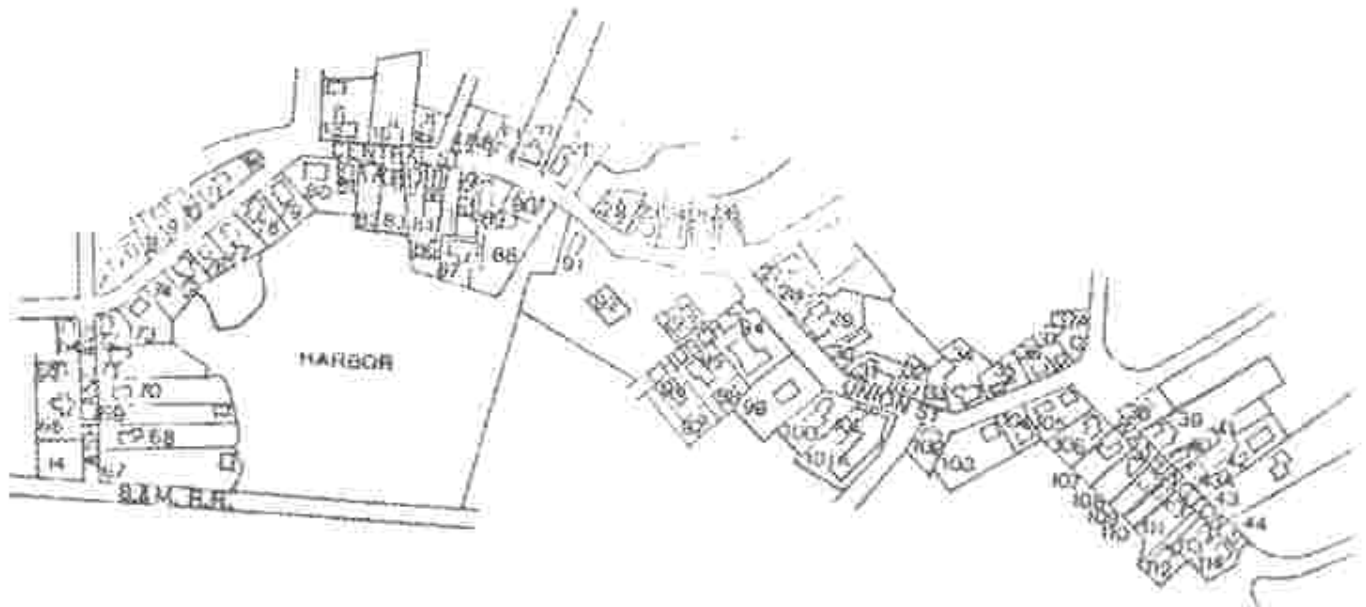
MANCHESTER HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
Manchester, MA 01544

GUIDELINES

1989

## GENERAL

In May 1975 the Annual Town Meeting voted a By-law to establish a Historic District within the Town of Manchester. The boundaries of the District are shown in the map below.



The purpose of this By-Law is explained in Section 2, Chapter 40-C of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts:

Promote the educational, cultural, economic, and general welfare of the public through the preservation and protection of the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places significant in the history of the Town of Manchester or their architecture, and through the maintenance and improvement of settings for such buildings and places and the encouragement of design compatible therewith.

The By-law grants the Manchester Historic District Commission the right to exercise the powers and duties granted in Chapter 40-C of the General Laws of the Commonwealth. Under the rules of the Commission, property owners in the Historic District are required to present plans to the Commission before undertaking changes affecting the exterior appearance of any structure within the Manchester Historic District, and to obtain a Certificate of Approval from the Commission.

These guidelines are offered by the Commission to aid property owners and others when preparing plans to submit to the Commission for approval. Suggested are several items that should be considered by persons preparing such plans in order to insure consistency and to avoid time-consuming delays for the property owners and the Commission.

#### APPROVAL FROM OTHER BOARDS

If the proposed work needs approvals from other boards, such as the Planning Board, the Board of Appeals, or the Conservation Commission, those approvals should be obtained prior to coming before the Historic District Commission.

#### HOW TO APPLY FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

A Certificate of Approval granted by the Historic District Commission, in addition to a building permit, is required for exterior alterations, new construction, and building removal or demolition on all properties within the Historic District. In other words, a building permit will not be granted without a Certificate of Approval.

A certificate of Approval is also required for items not covered by a building permit, such as, but not limited to, windmills, window boxes, docks, piers, flag poles, clothesline structures, shutters, signs, fences, davits, mail boxes, and solar panels.

No construction or modification can be made until the Historic District Commission grants a Certificate of Approval.

The Manchester Historic District Commission grants three types of Certificates of Approval:

- Certificate of Appropriateness
- Certificate of Nonapplicability
- Certificate of Hardship

To apply for a Certificate of Approval, obtain an Application for a Certificate from the Board of Selectmen. Fill it out in triplicate; and submit it, along with drawings of the proposed work and a building permit application (if applicable) to the Manchester Historic District Commission, Town Hall, Manchester, MA 01944.

The Commission's Secretary will schedule the application on the first available agenda date, and notify the property owner. At the meeting, the Commission will then define what it deems acceptable for approval.

### Certificate of Appropriateness

1. If the proposed work is deemed by the Manchester Historic District Commission insubstantial in its effect on the Historic District and adjacent properties and after the Commission has voted to waive public hearing on the application, the Commission will then notify adjacent property owners, and in some cases, publish a notice of said work in the newspaper, and if no applicable adverse comments are received by the Commission from the property owners and others, and after a lapse of ten (10) days from date of notice to submitters, a Certificate of Appropriateness may be issued.
2. If the proposed work is deemed substantial in its effect on the Historic District and adjacent properties, the Commission will conduct a public hearing within a reasonable time and will give public notice thereof by publishing notice of the time, place, and purpose of the hearing in a local newspaper at least 14 days prior to the hearing and also, within seven (7) days of the hearing, and will mail a copy of said notice to the applicant, to the owners of all property deemed by the Commission to be affected thereby as they appear on the most recent local tax list, to the Town Planning Board, and to such other persons as the Commission shall deem appropriate. As soon as convenient after such public hearing, but within 60 days after the filing of the application or within such further time as the applicant shall allow in writing, the Commission shall make a determination on the application.
3. If the Commission rejects or recommends changes in the proposals for a property, then a Manchester Historic District Commission Preliminary File Number will be assigned to the application. Such changes must be made the Commission must be contacted to reschedule the application for another meeting. If such changes comply with the Commission's request, the Commission will proceed with Step 1 above. If further requests for changes are appropriate, then Step 1 will continue until the Commission finds the changes acceptable for approval.

### Certificate of Nonapplicability

If the proposed work is deemed to be nonapplicable to the authority of the Manchester Historic District Commission, a Certificate of Nonapplicability will be issued.

### Certificate of Hardship

If it can be proved that failure of the Commission to approve the proposed work will involve substantial hardship to the applicant, or that no substantial detriment to the public welfare would result from approval of the proposed work, or if the proposed work would not result in substantial derogation from the intent and purposes of the Massachusetts Historic District Act and the Manchester Historic District By-law, the Commission may issue a Certificate of Hardship.

### COMPLETION OF WORK

The owner of the property is responsible for seeing that the work is completed as approved on the Certificate of Approval. The Commission may refuse to approve additional applications for a property owner until all previous work has been completed and approved by the Commission. The Commission may refuse to review any applications for a property owner who is in violation of any rules and regulations of the Commission.

### TIME LIMIT

All work approved must be completed within two (2) years from the date of the Certificate or the building permit, whichever comes later.

### OVERALL DESIGN

Although there may be many ways to preserve, restore, or recreate the abundance of architectural styles existing in the District, some may be more effective, and possibly simpler, than others in retaining the appropriate character of the District and of each building. There are a few basic rules for the owner to follow when ideas are being formed and are being translated into documents for presentation to the Commission.

1. Changes to existing buildings should be directed toward retaining or restoring the original design. This is of great importance when changes are proposed to properties having historic value. Owners must provide full information concerning the proposed changes, such as references to similar restoration or changes in the District, in other Districts, or in publications.

2. Changes to existing properties should be consistent with the style of the period in which they were built or are proposed to emulate. Proposals for new structures should recognize and accommodate the styles of buildings nearby, and should not detract from the architectural harmony of their surroundings.
3. Architectural details and building materials should be appropriate for the period and style of the original building.
4. Artificial, quaint, or "cute" design features should be avoided.

#### DOORS, WINDOWS

Openings of a building should be viewed from the perspective of the total structure as well as individually. In most buildings within the District, the original design created a simple, harmonious pattern by using consistent proportions in window spacing, the subdivision of window panes, the location of doors, and the division of glass panes in doors. Care was given in the consideration of the trim and frames of windows and doors, and the size, style, and location of shutters and blinds.

Proposed treatment of openings should be made with the objective of preserving or restoring such features consistent with the original or period design. Changing such openings to accommodate today's standard-size units is not always appropriate for many buildings within the District, and owners should be aware of this when preparing drawings. The use of commercial pop-in dividers to subdivide window panes is unacceptable and will not be certified as a like-for-like situation. Those existing presently, if removed, must be replaced with permanent dividers.

#### NEW CONSTRUCTION AND ADDITIONS

Additions to existing structures and new construction will be evaluated according to appropriateness of size and shape in relation to the land on which it will be located, and to the other buildings, structures, and sites in the vicinity. The Commission may impose dimensional and set-back requirements in addition to those required by applicable town by-laws.

New additions or alterations to properties should be done in such a manner that if they were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the original building and site would not be impaired.

Only direct illumination of signs will be considered as appropriate by the Commission. Proposed method of illumination of signs should be included in each application.

#### SKYLIGHTS

The Commission recommends, for most instances, designs that parallel the slope of the roof, are flat-glazed, and are compatible with the size and geometric proportions of the roof.

#### SOLAR COLLECTORS (Active and Photovoltaic)

The Historic District Commission may hold a public hearing on the merits of each application for solar panels. In deciding whether to issue a Certificate of Approval, the Commission will consider:

1. The importance, prominence, and historic significance of the building and/or its site,
2. Architectural compatibility,
3. Visual impact (geometry, color, glare), and
4. Abutters' and others' concerns.

The applicant should consider the following:

1. Collector panels to be flat-glazed, contained units mounted within a suitable frame,
2. Framing, piping, insulation, etc. to be dark in color to match roof surface,
3. Collectors to be mounted parallel to the roof slope, no more than three (3) inches above roof surface (see figure 1),

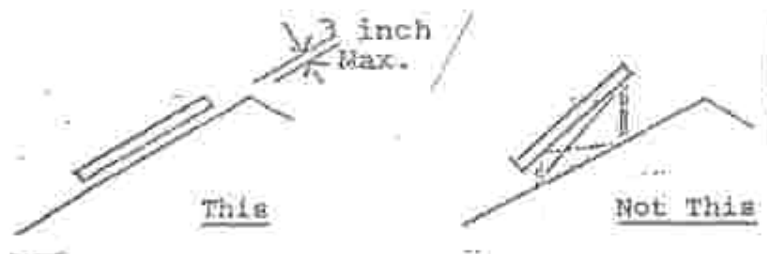


Figure 1.

4. Minimum of 2 feet of roof surface should be visible surrounding collector array (see figure 2).

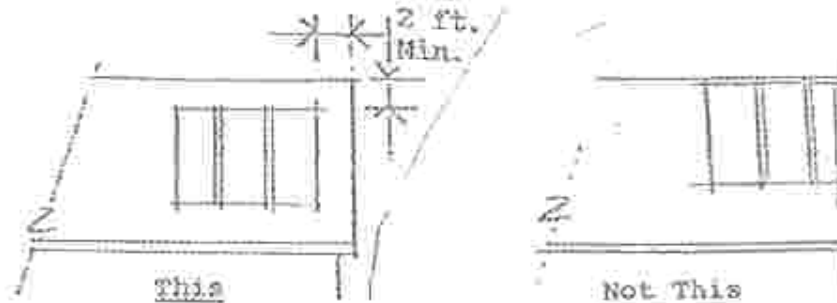


Figure 2.

5. Installation shall not permanently change any architectural feature, and
6. Piping shall be concealed from view, except when approved by the Commission.

#### PARABOLIC COLLECTORS, TRANSMISSION TOWERS, DISKS

Construction or installation of these devices will be discouraged unless totally screened from view.

#### WINDMILLS

Construction or installation of windmills within the Historic District will be reviewed on the merits of each application, and the Commission may hold a public hearing.

#### ONE-OF-A-KIND STRUCTURES

The Commission may hold a public hearing and will review the merits of each application for one-of-a-kind structures proposed within the District that do not presently conform to existing types of architecture or design.

#### EXCLUSIONS

Changes made to the following items or under the following circumstances do not require approval from the Commission:

1. Terraces, walks, driveways, sidewalks, and similar structures provided that such structures are substantially at grade level.



2. Storm doors and windows, screens, window air conditioners, lighting fixtures and antennae.
3. The color of paint.
4. The color of materials used on roofs.
5. 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 (1) year thereafter and carried forward with due diligence.

#### SUBMITTAL DOCUMENTS

Drawings and a written description of the proposed work as well as photographs of existing conditions are usually required by the Commission for evaluation of proposed changes in external appearance of properties within the District.

Drawings need not be professionally produced, but must show architectural features, details, sizes of units, structural detail when visible, and they must clearly identify all materials and finishes shown.

The more complete the presentation is to the Commission; i.e., plot plan, the more expedient the Commission can be in processing the application.

Alterations to plans or proposed work after the Certificate of Approval has been issued will require a new application.

An exception to the above would be proposed work of minor detail. However, a clear description of the changes will be necessary.

#### PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs of existing structures clearly showing the areas to be modified by the proposed changes are helpful to the Commission, and may be required for our permanent records.

#### MEETINGS

The Manchester Historic District Commission meets on the last Thursday of the month in May through September in the Town Hall at 8:00 p.m. The Commission will meet on the last Thursday of the month in October through April if

applications to be reviewed are brought to its attention one (1) week prior to the last Thursday of the month. Questions may be directed to the Commission, by mail, at the Town Hall. All meetings are open to anyone with interest in the activities of the Commission.

The Commission welcomes the opinions and suggestions of the owners within the District so it may better represent their needs.

#### MEMBERS

The seven (7) members of the Historic District Commission are appointed by the Board of Selectmen: one (1) recommended by the Historical Society, one (1) architect, one (1) real estate agent, and four (4) members are nominated by the property owners in the Historic District.

A property owner may submit a nomination in writing to the Historic District Commission at the Town Hall, at any time.

#### NON-COMPLIANCE WITH BY-LAW

Legal provisions for penalties to owners for non-compliance with the By-law and for appeal of unfavorable rulings by the Commission may be ascertained from Chapter 40-C of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as amended by the Acts of 1971, Chapter 359.