

**ANDOVER STREET, BELVIDERE HILL, LIVINGSTON-HARVARD,
ROGERS FORT HILL PARK, SOUTH COMMON, TYLER PARK, WANNALANCIT STREET,
WASHINGTON SQUARE, & WILDER STREET
NEIGHBORHOOD DISTRICT
PERMITTING PROCESS**

WHAT IS REVIEWED?

Proposed demolition, partial demolition (such as removal of architectural details and other features such as porches), and new construction requires the approval of the Board before work begins and any other City approvals are issued. Work requires the approval of the Board before it begins and any other City approvals are issued. Work is divided into one type under the regulations and the Board Administrator will determine if the proposed work requires review:

MAJOR DEVELOPMENT: Proposed demolition, partial demolition (such as removal of architectural details and other features such as porches), and new construction. All determinations regarding Major Development are reviewed by the Board at a public hearing.

THE BEST WAY TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE WORK YOU ARE CONTEMPLATING MUST BE REVIEWED BY THE HISTORIC BOARD IS TO CONSULT THE STAFF.

DESIGN REVIEW STANDARDS

The purpose of the District's Design Review Standards is to guide all demolition and new construction of contributing properties in the Districts so that the integrity of Lowell's distinct neighborhoods is not disrupted. They are intended to help applicants propose and design projects that are consistent with, and maintain, the District's setting. This helps in ensuring that the review process is fair and can be completed quickly. The goal is to minimize reliance on individual tastes and preferences of applicants and reviewers by having clear, understandable guidelines.

WHAT IS THE REVIEW PROCESS?

1. **CONSULT WITH THE STAFF** as soon as you begin to consider doing work to determine whether the work will require review and what Standards apply. The staff's job is to assist you in making appropriate and long-lasting changes to your building. The Board and its staff are always available to assist with any questions regarding design and process in the district.
2. **COMPLETE THE APPLICATION FORM** including all required materials and application fee. Incomplete applications will delay the review process. The staff makes every effort to assist the applicant in assembling all necessary materials for the application.
3. **ATTEND DESIGN REVIEW MEETINGS** to discuss your proposal.
4. **ATTEND A PUBLIC HEARING** to present the application. The Board will hear your presentation, testimony of interested parties, and the recommendations of the staff, Design Review, and Neighborhood Committee before rendering a decision.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF REVIEW?

HISTORIC PERMIT: An Historic Permit outlines the work described in your application and is a legal agreement regarding the methods and results of proposed work.

HISTORIC PERMIT WITH CONDITIONS: This type of permit outlines the conditions under which the Board has agreed to approve the work. The most common condition is "final details to be reviewed by the Administrator." This condition is used to expedite the review process while ensuring that all details of the work comply with the District's Design Review Standards and the Board determination. Any conditions included in a permit are part of the legal agreement and must be adhered to.

CONTINUANCE: Sometimes the Board may vote to continue the discussion to another hearing in order to review additional information such as revised drawings or a site inspection.

DENIAL: Rarely the Board will vote to deny an application. Typically the staff will warn the applicant if the proposed work is inconsistent with the District's Design Review Standards and help to amend the proposal to meet the standards.

PROCESS TIMELINE AND APPEALS

30 DAYS for Historic Permits for MAJOR DEVELOPMENT.

This time period is average. Completeness of applications, appropriateness of proposals, and timing of application submittals all affect the review process.

By statute, any person aggrieved by a decision for Major Development can appeal to Superior Court within 20 days of the decision being filed with the City Clerk.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- The Board must approve in advance all demolition (including partial) and new construction in the Neighborhood Districts. By state law, no City department, board or commission can issue any permits, variances, approvals, etc. within the Districts until the Historic Board has first issued its approval and/or granted an Historic Permit.
- If unapproved work is found to be in progress or has been completed, a "stop work" order will be issued. If the work is found to be inconsistent with the Board's Design Review Standards, a violation process is instituted and the owner may be required to undo the changes and repair any damage at his/her own expense. Violations within the Districts are subject to fines up to \$100 a day with each day constituting a separate offense.
- The Board does not review additions to existing buildings or structures, only freestanding new construction in the neighborhood districts. New construction refers to construction of a building or structure on an empty site within the district, which is independent from any other structure on the property. For example, building a home or a detached garage would be considered new construction as would a project's associated landscape and site elements.
- Demolition refers to the complete or partial tearing down of a building or structure, the removal of a building or structure from a site within the district, and the relocation of a structure within the district. An example of partial demolition could include removal of an historic porch or architectural detailing such as trim, moldings, brackets, or other details in order to facilitate the installation of new vinyl siding which would not be allowed to be undertaken. However if the installation of vinyl siding can be achieved without removing architectural detailing, there would be no review.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Additional information and application materials can be obtained in person or on-line at:

Lowell Historic Board
Lowell City Hall
375 Merrimack Street
Lowell, MA 01852

(978) 674-1443 (P)
(978) 446-7103 (F)

sstowell@lowellma.gov
www.historiclowell.net

