



SPRINGFIELD HISTORICAL COMMISSION

**36 Court Street
City Hall
Springfield
Massachusetts
01103**

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, and 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 FOREST PARK HEIGHTS Historic District?

Forest Park Heights (see map) is Springfield's second historic district, created in 1975 and enlarged in 1980. It is a turn-of-the-century neighborhood composed of architecturally fine houses. Although individual structures may not be significant, the relationship between the various buildings creates a whole, which is greater than the sum of its parts. Years after Forest Park Heights was built, it not only is still well maintained, but is still remarkably intact. To aid in preserving this architecturally delightful area, the Historical Commission, City Council, and the Mayor declared it a historic district.

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. Ordinary maintenance, repair or replacement of any exterior feature, which does not involve a change in design, material, or outward appearance thereof.
2. Work which cannot be seen from any public street or park.
3. Temporary signs or structures subject to conditions such as duration and location.
4. Terraces, walks, driveways, and sidewalks, provided they are substantially at grade level.

5. Storm windows, screens, window air conditioners, antennae [satellite dishes **are** regulated; please see *Satellite Dish Guidelines*], and similar appurtenances.
6. Color of paint.
7. Color of roof material.
8. Signs of not more than one square foot.
9. Reconstruction, substantially similar in exterior design, of a building, structure, or exterior architectural feature damaged by fire, storm or other disaster.
10. Gutters and down spouts.
11. Light fixtures.
12. Fencing not lying between the foundation line and the public way.
13. Screen and storm doors (it is suggested, however, that storm doors be un-elaborate and contain as much glass as possible. Colonial style doors are especially inappropriate for non-colonial houses).

What Residential Controls and Guidelines are Being 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 the street vista, fencing between the public way and the foundation line is not allowed. Under certain circumstances, on a case-by-case basis, the Commission will permit fencing.
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 shape or material of roof shall require approval.
Building Additions	Design to be approved on a 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 an economic hardship.
Siding (also see Trim)	Color not subject to control. Change in type of siding

	shall require approval on a case-by-case basis.
Trim	Design is subject to control, i.e., corner boards, window details, color not subject to control. Removal of, or a change in design is subject to control.
Windows	Size, material or design change shall require approval. Please see <i>Window Replacement Guideline</i> . The Commission can provide examples of recently approved windows for your review.
Doors	All doors, except storm, shall require approval for changes in size, location or design.
Porches (including railings)	Any change in shape, location or design, including enclosure, shall require approval.
Chimney	Any change in shape, location, or design shall require approval.
Awning	Rigid permanent awnings are not allowed. Canvas or other fabric is recommended. Rollable aluminum awnings will be considered.
Signs	Size, shape and designs of signs larger than one square foot shall require approval.
Garages	Changes in shape or design subject to approval--feature by feature, as listed above.
Electric meters	Placement is controlled by the Commission on a case-by-case basis.
Satellite Dishes	Please see the <i>Satellite Dish Guidelines</i> .

Are There any Controls or Guidelines for Commercial Buildings?

Because the few commercial structures in the area are not of any architectural interest, the Commission does not intend to control them closely. In the event of remodeling or new construction, however, the Commission intends to insure that further development will be compatible with the district. It will be concerned with building scale, setback, parking, fencing, and signs. These will be reviewed 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 with 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 by mail to abutters fourteen (14) days prior to the hearing.
4. The Commission must decide on all requests within sixty (60) days of receipt of the application; otherwise, the request is automatically granted.

What Kinds of Certificates Are Available?

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

Approved and Modified – December 2007