

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING AN APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS/DESIGN APPROVAL/EXEMPTION

The application form is the same for all Landmarked properties in Boston, Historic Districts, Individual Landmarks, and Pending Landmarks. Please read all instructions carefully before filling out an application. Please refer to the Standards and Criteria for the specific District or Individual Landmark – available in the Study Reports on our [website](#).

CONSULTATION WITH COMMISSION STAFF: Staff is available by appointment to discuss proposed projects, and answer questions about the Standards and Criteria and documentation requirements. Please check the website for email contact information or call 617-635-3850 for answers to basic questions and/or to make an appointment for consultation.

ZONING ISSUES: All outstanding zoning issues must be resolved prior to submitting an application for commission review. Written confirmation of zoning status from either the Inspectional Services Department (ISD) or the Zoning Board of Appeal (ZBA) must be provided with the application if the scope of work involves changes in square footage, height, enclosed space, legal use of occupancy, rooftop construction, etc. ISD will determine whether zoning variances will be required for your project.

OTHER REVIEWS: In addition to District or Landmarks commission review, other government agencies may have review over your proposed project. These agencies may include ISD (617-635-5300), Boston Planning and Development Agency (617-722-4300), Public Works (617-635-4900), Parks and Recreation (617-635-4505), Boston Art Commission (617-635-2434), the Mass. Architectural Access Board (617-727-0660), etc. **It is your responsibility to ensure that all required approvals are obtained.**

APPLICATIONS AND HEARING DATES: Design review hearings for Historic Districts, Individual Landmarks, and Pending Landmarks are held once a month. All hearings are open to the public and held in City Hall unless otherwise noted. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. To be added to a hearing agenda, an application must be determined to be complete by staff fifteen business days prior to the hearing date. **Incomplete applications cannot be added to a hearing agenda.** See the annual schedule of hearing dates online at www.boston.gov/landmarks, also available at Boston City Hall, Room 709. Applications may be filed in person, by messenger, or by mail addressed to the Environment Department, Boston City Hall, Room 709, Boston, MA 02201. Emailed applications are not acceptable.

Please note that staff is not available to review applications for completeness immediately upon submittal. Review all instructions and requirements carefully before submitting your application. It is your responsibility to submit a complete application. **Incomplete applications cannot be added to a hearing agenda.** If you have questions about your application, please email the appropriate staff person as found on the website or call 617-635-3850 for answers to basic questions and/or to make an appointment to meet with staff.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW: In order to expedite the review process, commissions have delegated the approval of certain work items, such as those involving ordinary maintenance and repair, restoration or replacement with minimal impact on a property's appearance, that meet applicable guidelines, to staff. Applicants with projects listed on an agenda under this heading **NEED NOT APPEAR** and do not make a presentation at the hearing. After approval at the hearing, all applicants will be issued a Determination Sheet as confirmation of project approval to present at the Inspectional Services Department - ISD (1010 Mass. Ave) when applying for a building permit. Administrative approval is part of the design review hearing process - only staff can make this determination.

THE APPLICATION FORM

The application form used is for all Landmarked properties in Boston including Historic Districts, Individual Landmarks, and Pending Landmarks. Please fill out the application form as completely as possible. Incomplete applications cannot be added to a design review hearing agenda. Lack of information delays the review process.

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY. * indicates required information

PART I:

***ADDRESS:** Provide the legal property address (street number and street name).

NAME of BUSINESS/PROPERTY: Provide the business name for a commercial property, for example a restaurant. If the property has a historic name, please provide that name. *If neither applies, leave this space blank.*

PART II:

We use the names, phone numbers, email and postal addresses in the application form for all communications about the application, including hearing notices and commission decisions. Please provide accurate information. The applicant will be considered the primary contact for pertinent communications.

***APPLICANT:** Provide name of contact person, organization (if applicable), daytime phone number, email address and complete mailing address. Anyone can act as an applicant: property owner or representative (such as a property manager or attorney), tenant, architect, contractor, etc.

***PROPERTY OWNER:** Provide name of the legal property owner (and contact person if applicable), daytime phone number, email address and complete mailing address. "Property owner" is the owner of the entire building or site, not the owner of a business or unit inside the building.

ARCHITECT: If an architect or other design professional is involved with the project, you can provide name, phone number, email address and mailing address. If not, leave this space blank.

CONTRACTOR: If a contractor has been selected, provide name, telephone number, email address and complete mailing address. If not, leave this space blank.

PART III:

***DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED WORK:** Provide a concise, complete summary of the entire scope of work, including the existing conditions, historic conditions if known, and the proposed scope of work., for example "Remove all of the non-historic aluminum windows on the front façade and install two-over-two, double-hung wood window sashes with true divided lights and wood brick molds all with a black painted finish to match the historic." An itemized list of work items is strongly recommended. This description is used to create the official notice and subsequent decision, and it must clearly represent the entire project. **You must provide a summary of the scope of work in the space on the front page of the form.** Additional pages can be attached if necessary to provide additional more detailed information.

DO NOT WRITE "SEE ATTACHED" – THE APPLICATION WILL BE CONSIDERED INCOMPLETE.

***REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION:** All applications must have supporting documentation that clearly illustrates the existing conditions, the scope of work and its impact on the building: color photographs, fully dimensioned existing and proposed drawings, written specifications, etc. You are not required to hire an architect but professional design advice is strongly recommended, especially for projects involving construction or design changes.

Documentation should address the following clearly and completely:

What is being proposed? Sample: "Replace existing roof deck with new, expand size by three feet."

Where proposed changes are based on historic evidence, provide documentary or physical evidence to support (e.g. historical photos)

How, specifically, will the work be performed?

Exact location on the building that will be affected, with photographic support.

Show what the building will look like when the proposed work is finished.

PART III DOCUMENTATION (continued): Commissions review a wide variety of projects; therefore, the amount of documentation varies with the scope of work. Please refer to the required documentation instructions below or consult staff regarding your specific project, if necessary.

- The application and documentation are part of the commission's public record. One hard copy set needs to be submitted with your application. Please, **hard copy only**, electronic versions cannot be considered part of the application. Staff will request a digital version of your hearing presentation to make it available on the [city's public notice website](#). Additional hard copies of application materials may be required for the hearing per staff. All documentation, including color photos and drawings, **must be dated and labeled with the property address**. Drawings should be no larger than 11"x17". **Do not submit large rolled drawings, or drawings or photographs mounted on boards.** If you wish to use presentation boards for the public hearing, provide an **unmounted unbound** set of drawings and photos for the file. Applications with large, mounted and/or bound materials cannot be accepted.
- Interior floor plans are generally not required **except for Individual Landmarks with interior designations** (see [list](#) online). Be aware that some interior work affects the exterior of a building - window replacement, changes in floor levels, elevators, fireplaces, mechanical systems, fire egress, window signs, exhaust/air vents, etc. - exterior impacts will most likely be subject to commission review; consult staff.

Revisions to projects between filing the application and the hearing date are not uncommon. If further design details have developed, please notify staff of the changes and bring a set of revised drawings with you to the hearing for the commission's files. **Additions to the scope of work, however, are not permitted to be discussed by the commission at the hearing.** A separate application and public hearing are required.

SPECIFIC DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS:

APPLICATIONS WITHOUT PHOTOGRAPHS ARE INCOMPLETE. Current, clear color photographs are required for all applications, including for ordinary maintenance and repair projects, to record existing conditions. Context and close-up photos must be provided - the building facade in its entirety, any rear or side elevations, roof, individual details, and abutting buildings if the project will affect these areas. High quality photographs 3x5-inches or larger are preferred. **Photocopies of photographs are not acceptable, but clear digital images are.**

REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE: Required - Photographs documenting existing conditions, a written scope of work, specifications (methods, materials, colors, etc.) this includes projects involving cleaning and repair of masonry and other historic exterior materials. Test patches on site may be required for all maintenance items.

REPLACEMENT: Required - Photographs to document existing conditions; drawings or specifications for both existing and replacement elements comparing existing to proposed conditions to ensure consistency; material or color samples. For replacement windows, both existing and proposed fully dimensioned Elevation, Horizontal Section, and Vertical Section drawings must be submitted with all of the details fully dimensioned (top rail, meeting rail, stiles, muntins, bottom rail, sill, brick mold, etc.).

MINOR MODIFICATIONS: Required - Photographs documenting existing conditions, sketches or shop drawings (drawn to scale and including all dimensions, materials, colors, method of attachment, etc.), manufacturer literature or specifications sketches or elevation drawings showing the proposal in context with the building or site.

DESIGN CHANGES, MAJOR ALTERATIONS - FACADES, REAR OR SIDE ELEVATIONS:

Photographs to document existing conditions; full elevation drawings of both existing and proposed conditions (annotated, labeled, dated, drawn to scale); detail drawings of specific elements; manufacturer literature; material and color samples. For basement excavations, gates/fences, landscaping**, parking areas, paving, new stoops/stairs, other site alterations: same documentation as above plus full section drawings. A new fire egress required by Inspectional Services Dept.: same as above plus certification from ISD that work is required. Increase in height, square footage, enclosed space, legal use or occupancy: same as above plus written certification of zoning status.

SPECIFIC DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS (continued):

SIGNAGE: Photograph of entire building façade, plus close-up details of subject storefront or other building element; drawing(s) of signage indicating where it will be positioned on building, to-scale detail drawings of sign dimensions, materials, methods of attachment; lighting, colors, and lettering sizes.

ALTERATIONS TO ROOFS: This includes roof decks, additions, elevator headhouses, rooftop mechanical equipment, etc. Required documentation as stated above under "Design Changes" plus color photos of existing rooftop conditions; color photographs of the rooftop mock-up, existing and proposed roof plans; full sightlines section drawings; full elevation drawings showing context; block plan. For equipment: documentation as above plus manufacturer literature. For any increase in the floor area ratio (FAR): block plans should indicate existing additions on the block. For decks, headhouses, additions, or mechanical equipment, a mock-up of the proposed height and volume on site will be required by the commission to determine visibility before approval. To save time, a mock-up should be in place at the time your application is submitted (photographed on the roof and from the ground), so that it may be inspected and verified by staff.

MAJOR CONSTRUCTION: Complete photographic documentation of the site; full, detailed construction drawings, including context of abutting buildings, site and block plans. Advisory (informal) presentation before the commission of preliminary concepts and drawings may be helpful before filing an application or proceeding with design development.

DEMOLITION (also see Article 85 for non-Landmarked structures): Complete photographic documentation of the structure (interior and exterior), report on historic and architectural significance of the building; engineer's report documenting condition of the building; economic impacts of demolition vs. rehabilitation; site and block plans; certification from ISD that demolition is required for public safety; proposal for new construction on site.

ESTIMATED COST OF CONSTRUCTION: Estimate the total cost of the work proposed.

PART IV:

* **DULY AUTHORIZED SIGNATURES (BOTH REQUIRED):** Both the applicant and the legal property owner must sign the application form as required. It can be the same person, but we will need two signatures.

UNSIGNED OR PARTIALLY SIGNED FORMS ARE CONSIDERED INCOMPLETE.

In cases of condos/co-ops, the chair of the association or authorized representative (such as a property manager) shall sign as owner; in cases of institutional ownership, an authorized representative shall sign as owner. The signature of the property owner represents consent to the work being proposed. Misrepresentation of owner consent shall invalidate any Certificate of Appropriateness or Design Approval.

Misrepresentation of signatory authority may result in the invalidation of the application.

** Specific Landscape Requirements for the Aberdeen Architectural Conservation District can be found on the website, the following covers Landscaping and Tree Removal within the Back Bay Architectural District:

The Back Bay Architectural Commission (BBAC) has review authority over front- and rear-yard trees located within the boundaries of the district. Believing that well-maintained trees of appropriate species, scale and location are an important visual amenity, the commission discourages the casual removal of trees. In many cases, diseased and/or overgrown trees can be addressed. At the same time, the commission understands that it is sometimes necessary to remove trees with health or structural integrity issues, or those with roots causing damage to foundations or other below-grade infrastructure systems. In considering the appropriateness of removing trees under the relevant guidelines, the BBAC requires that applications include the following items of documentation:

- Photographs and site plans depicting the tree or trees identified for removal within their context
- For trees that are believed to be diseased or unstable, a report from a certified arborist as to the health of the tree(s)
- For trees whose root systems may be damaging foundations or utilities, a structural engineer's report detailing the nature and extent of the compromise
- A plan for the introduction of replacement tree(s) should the commission so require
- Tree species identification is required in all cases.

FEES FOR APPLICATIONS
FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS/DESIGN APPROVAL/EXEMPTIONS

(As authorized under City of Boston Code, Title 14, Section 450) Effective 1 March 2004

NOTE:

All fees must be paid by check or money order to the “City of Boston” and presented at the time the application is made.

\$25.00 *Minor modifications* to the exterior architectural features of a building, including painting, cleaning of masonry, interior window signs, masonry repointing, new window shutters, planting boxes or parterres, paving surfaces, intercom and security devices, storm windows, lighting, residential window grates, screens, benches and plaques.

\$50.00 *Design changes* to the façade of a building, including but not limited to changes to or installation of doors, windows, balconies, exterior signs, roof decks, handrails, fences, masonry walls, changes to window size, siding or roofing materials, skylights, solar panels, large antennae, ramps, new chimneys and flues, residential vents, fire escape, heat pumps and non-portable air-conditioning units, major masonry repair (including resurfacing of stoops and brownstone façades).

\$100.00 *Major alterations* to the exterior design or form of the building, including replacement of front stoop, roof headhouse, new penthouse, new storefront, yard excavation, commercial exhaust vent, new or raised dormer, new window and door openings, new terrace, demolition and increase to floor area.

\$250.00 *Major construction* including new building, infill structure, or major development project.

In cases where the cost of new construction or major exterior changes exceed five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000), the fee shall be one-half (1/2) of one percent (1%) of the fair cost of the work, provided, however, that in no case shall the fee be more than five thousand dollars (\$5,000).

For Certificates of Design Approval for work on a Landmarked interior space not requiring a building permit from the Inspectional Services Dept. the fee shall be ten dollars (\$10.00), all other cases twenty five dollars (\$25.00).

All applicants must pay the appropriate design review application fee.

Questions? Call Environment Department staff at 617-635-3850.