



## Review and Approval Process for Changes to Designated Landmarks

### *What is the function of the Boston Landmarks Commission?*

The Boston Landmarks Commission (BLC), as the City's historic preservation agency, provides a mechanism for preservation of Boston's historic buildings and neighborhoods.

### *What is a Landmark?*

According to the Commission's statute, a Landmark is a "physical feature or improvement which in whole or part has historical, social, cultural, architectural or aesthetic significance to the city and the commonwealth, the New England region or nation." Designation is initiated through a petition, which is followed by a preliminary hearing before the Commission, the preparation of a study report on the proposed Landmark, and a public hearing. To be designated, a property must receive a 2/3 majority vote from the Commission and be confirmed by the Mayor and by City Council. When a property is designated a Landmark, it becomes subject to review by the Commission, and physical changes must be approved before work is begun.

### *What is the process for changing a designated Landmark?*

Landmark design review ensures that future physical changes are appropriate and sensitive to the historical value of the property. It allows local residents to participate in the process of change in their neighborhoods through the public hearing process.

### *What changes must be reviewed?*

In general, any change, addition, or demolition that is visible from a public way with regard to design, materials, or appearance must be reviewed. In rare cases where an interior has been designated, changes to specified interior elements are reviewed; the majority of interior changes are not subject to review.

Specific Standards and Criteria, tailored to the property, are part of each study report. The BLC has also adopted General Standards and Criteria, which apply to all designated Landmarks. Before work can begin, the appropriate certificate, either approval or exemption, must be issued by the Commission.

### *What is the procedure for obtaining a certificate?*

BLC design review hearings are held monthly on fourth Tuesdays. Applications for design review are accepted on a rolling basis. Applications that are determined to be complete as of fifteen business days prior to a hearing date are added to the hearing agenda. Incomplete applications cannot be added to a hearing agenda. Application materials are available online, at <https://www.cityofboston.gov/landmarks/> (hard copies available at Room 709 Boston City Hall). A certificate of approval must be obtained prior to obtaining a building permit.

A hearing is always required for a certificate of design approval. In some cases, routine maintenance and repair or a threat to safety, work can be administratively approved. If a public hearing before the Commission is required, at least ten days notice is given to the applicant, owner (if different), abutters, public officials, and other interested parties.

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