



TOWN OF ACTON
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
472 MAIN STREET
ACTON, MASSACHUSETTS,
01720
hdc@acton-ma.gov

March 2025

Dear Historic District Property Owner,

You are receiving this letter because you own a property in a Historic District in Acton. ¹

Being located within one of Acton's three Historic Districts brings benefits and responsibilities. This annual letter is designed to help guide you in maintaining and enjoying the historical character and architectural significance of these districts. It also explains the mission of the **Historic District Commission (HDC)** and the process of working with it regarding most exterior changes to your property.



West Acton Historic District



Acton Center Historic District






South Acton Historic District






It's All Here. Use this QR code to go to the HDC web page on the Town website:



You will find links to:

-  Applications for a COA
-  Historic District Bylaw
-  HDC Rules & Regs

Resources:

-  Demolition Guidelines
-  Design Guidelines
-  Solar Guidelines
-  Criteria for Decisions
-  Application Flow Chart

Who We Are: The HDC Oversees Acton's Historic Districts

The Historic Districts were created through a Special Town Meeting vote in 1990 and follow the rules and regulations as set forth in the Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40C, Chapter P of the Bylaws of the Town of Acton. **The Historic District Commission, appointed by the Select Board, is required by law to review the appropriateness of proposed exterior changes to all buildings within the three districts, including alterations, new additions, or removal of structures.**

The HDC, in its review process, balances its mission of preserving important historical resources with guidance that allows the Historic Districts to evolve to meet current needs.

HDC meetings are held on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month, and agendas are posted on the Town website: www.acton-ma.gov. The first 15 minutes of each meeting are reserved for residents' concerns or questions. This is a great time to ask if your proposed project requires HDC review. We welcome your participation.

Your Responsibilities: As required by law, if you plan to make exterior alterations to a property within the Historic District, you must first obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) or a Certificate of Non-Applicability (CNA) from the HDC.

(over)

Items typically requiring a COA include any changes to the property that can be seen from the public way, including windows, trim, vents, porches, solar panels, gutters, and charging stations. The HDC is required to review any proposed addition, removal, or modification of a building element. Landscape features, such as walls or fences that measure 12 inches above grade and are visible from the public way, are also subject to review.

Examples of items typically NOT requiring a COA: color of paint, storm windows, storm doors, temporary window air conditioners; plantings, garden objects, and temporary signs and seasonal decorations.

Please check with the HDC to see if your project requires an application and HDC review. Email: hdc@acton-ma.gov.

HDC Certificates

When approved, a Certificate of Appropriateness or a Certificate of Non-Applicability (an expedited certificate approved by the HDC Chair for various minor work, such as in-kind repairs) is filed with the Town Clerk and the Building Inspector. A Building Permit will not be issued to a property doing exterior work within the Historic District without a COA or CNA. Certificates are good for a year from issuance but are renewable with HDC approval.

You Play a Role in Acton's History

Acton is a vibrant New England town, and its three Historic Districts represent over 200 years of architectural design and neighborhood and economic growth. In fact, this year marks the 250th anniversary of the beginning of the American Revolution, and Acton townspeople played a pivotal role. As an owner of a property in a Historic District, we hope that you are proud that your home or business contributes to Acton's rich history. Through preservation and thoughtful enhancements, these buildings will continue to be enjoyed and admired by future residents and visitors. Thank you!

The HDC is a volunteer board and is currently looking for new members. All Acton residents are encouraged to participate. Please contact us for more information, attend one of our meetings, or pick up a Town of Acton Volunteer Application form from the Town Clerk. Please contact us at any time by email: hdc@acton-ma.gov. Once again, thank you for your efforts to take care of your property.

Sincerely,

Town of Acton Historic District Commission

David Honn, Chair
Anita Rogers, Vice-Chair
David Shoemaker, Secretary
Art Leavens
Zach Taillefer
Barbara Rhines, Acton Cultural Resource Planner
Fran Arsenault, Select Board Liaison

¹ This letter does not substitute for any of the procedures described in our Rules and Regulations or in our Bylaw. Both can be found on the Town of Acton website: www.acton-ma.gov/101/Historic-District-Commission or use the QR code on page 1 of this letter.

This is an important notice. Please have it translated.

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Este é um aviso importante. Por favor, faça a tradução.

Sa a se yon avètisman enpòtan. Tanpri fè li tradui.

Это важное уведомление. Пожалуйста, переведите его.

重要通知，请翻译此内容。

यह एक महत्वपूर्ण सूचना है। कृपया इसका अनुवाद करवा लें।