



TOWN OF ACTON
472 Main Street
Acton, Massachusetts, 01720

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Acton Historical Commission

Marker Program for Historic Structures

To commemorate Acton's 275th anniversary, the Acton Historical Commission created a Historic Marker Program for residents who own historic homes, barns, or other structures. These markers display historical information about the properties. Although there are requirements for participation in the Historic Marker Program, the signs themselves have no legal implication on the structure. Information about how to obtain a historic marker is set forth below.

Information about the Historic Markers

Signs are carved and hand painted (white sign with black, engraved lettering), and measure 12" x 16." Applicants may choose from one of four designs (depending on the information to be displayed on the sign). These signs are custom designed and individually produced for the Town. **For uniformity, the Commission recommends that, whenever possible, owners hang their markers (1) at the right corner of the street-facing side of the structure and (2) at the top of the first story of the structure. For structures in Acton's Historic Districts, the marker location is determined by the Historic District Commission and requires a separate application to the HDC.**

What structures are eligible for the Historic Marker Program?

Expedited Structures:

1. *Structures listed on Acton's [Cultural Resource List](#)* (maintained by the Acton Historical Commission)
2. *Structures inventoried within the Massachusetts Historical Commission's [MACRIS](#) database* (Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System)
3. *Structures located within one of the Town's three Historic Districts **
4. *Structures built prior to 1900*

* **Review of Marker Placement within a Historic District:** Upon approval by the Acton Historical Commission, the Historic District Commission (HDC) will then review the application in regard to the marker's placement on the building. This requires a separate application to the HDC and is typically approved at one of its twice monthly meetings. [HDC Application](#).

For all other structures built after 1900; not listed in the CRL or MACRIS; or located outside a Historic District:

You are invited to apply for the Historic Marker Program, but if your building does not fall within the above criteria, you will need to explain why the structure is significant (and provide supportive documentation). The Commission will evaluate a structure's qualifications for a Historic Marker according to the following general criteria:

Event: The site or building is associated with one or more events in the life of a person or group who made a noteworthy contribution to local, regional, or national history.

Person: The site or building is associated with a person or group who made a noteworthy contribution to local, regional, or national history, even if the names of those persons are no longer known.

Style: The building embodies distinctive characteristics of a particular architectural or construction style, including both the work of noted architects as well as unknown regional builders and craftsmen.

Archaeology: The site demonstrates or, based on its history and/or geography, is likely to offer important information pertaining to local history.

How do I apply?

Step 1. Download and fill out the [Historic Marker Application Form](#). You may also stop by Town Hall's Land Use Department to pick up a paper copy of the form.

As part of the form, the owner must include:

- (1) a photograph of the front of the building (print or digital), and
- (2) a copy of the inventory form for the building (on [MACRIS](#)), if applicable.

In the application, the owner should indicate the preferred marker design and proposed text for the marker.

Be sure to check the Expedited Review box if your property is listed on MACRIS, the Cultural Resource List, lies within one of Acton's Historic Districts, or is built prior to 1900.

For all other properties, the owner will need to include a deeper explanation of the building's significance and provide background materials, if applicable.

Step 2: Once complete, the owner should submit the application to the Historical Commission for review and approval, by email to hc@actonma.gov, or by U.S. mail or hand delivery to:

Acton Historical Commission
Acton Town Hall
472 Main Street
Acton, MA 01720

Step 3: The Commission will evaluate the owner's application and respond as soon as possible, typically within 30-60 days. Some additional time may be required for structures in Historic Districts to accommodate review by the Historic District Commission. If approved, the Commission will sign the application and send it back to the owner and also to the town-designated Sign Maker.

Step 4: The Sign Maker will send a proof via email to the owner. Once approved, the Sign Maker will produce the historic marker.

Step 5: The owner will receive an invoice via email for \$200 from the Sign Maker, including payment information. Pick up for the completed marker will be at the Land Use Dept. at the Acton Town Hall.

What is the procedure for the AHC's review?

The Acton Historical Commission will confirm receipt of all applications by mail or email, and will review applications at their regular monthly meetings. Typically, the review will take about 30-60 days to complete. The Commission's review will focus on verification of the significance of the property and the accuracy and appropriateness of the requested text of the marker. The Commission may deny an application if it determines that the structure does not qualify or if an application does not contain enough detail or explanation for the Commission to confirm the importance of the structure. An application may also be denied if the Commission deems the requested text to be inaccurate or inappropriate. In such cases, the Commission could ask the applicant for additional information or alternative text for the proposed marker. As mentioned above, this coordination may require some additional time.

Once the Commission approves an application (and receives approval from the Historic District Commission, if necessary), it will sign and return the approved application to the owner via email and also send it to the Sign Maker. From that point, the owner will work directly with the Sign

Maker for proof approval and payment. For owners' convenience, completed markers can be picked up at the Acton Town Hall.

How much does a marker cost?

The historic markers are priced at \$200 (this includes MA sales tax) for a 12" x 16", payable directly to the Sign Maker. Pickup of completed markers is at the Acton Town Hall. Applicants whose building qualifies but who are unable to pay for a historic marker can request assistance from the Commission, and the Commission will endeavor to help the applicant locate funding for the requested marker.

Additional Information:

Please contact the Historical Commission directly, at hc@actonma.gov, with any questions about the Historic Marker Program.

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