



CITY OF PORTSMOUTH

Historic District Commission

Guidelines Introduction



WHY IS HISTORIC PRESERVATION IMPORTANT IN PORTSMOUTH?

The City of Portsmouth recognizes that the character and quality of life enjoyed by its citizens depend in great measure upon the City's rich architectural heritage and the importance of the natural and designed landscapes in our community. This historical, cultural, archaeological, social and economic heritage is entrusted to each generation, enriched and passed on to future generations.

These *Guidelines* were developed in conjunction with the City of Portsmouth's Historic District Commission (HDC) and the Planning Department. Please review this information during the early stages of planning a project. Familiarity with this material can assist in moving a project quickly through the approval process, saving applicants both time and money.

In its review, the HDC considers a property's classification, recommending the greatest historic authenticity at focal buildings, with more flexibility at contributing structures, and the most at non-contributing properties. The HDC Staff in the Planning Department is available to provide informal informational meetings with potential applicants who are considering improvements to their properties.

Additional *Guidelines* addressing other historic building topics are available at City Hall and on the Commission's website at www.planportsmouth.com/historicdistrictcommission. For more information, to clarify whether a proposed project requires HDC review, or to obtain permit applications, please call the Planning Department at (603) 610-7216.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN PORTSMOUTH

To promote continued enrichment of our local heritage, the City of Portsmouth enacted the Historic District ordinance, (Article 6 - Overlay Districts) of the City's Zoning Ordinance, whose purpose is:

- *To preserve the architectural and historic resources of the City of Portsmouth; to foster its architectural and historic character and its sense of place; to conserve property values; to strengthen the local economy; and to promote the use of the District for education, pleasure and welfare of residents and visitors.*

Since 1965, the Portsmouth Historic District Commission (HDC) and City Planning Department have worked to support the preservation and enhancement of historical sites, buildings, landscapes and structures, and the surrounding environment within the Portsmouth Historic District. The principal mechanism they utilize for this effort is through a review process of exterior alterations to existing buildings and structures as well as the construction of new buildings and structures.

LANDSCAPE PRESERVATION

When contemplating changes to the landscape such as installing a fence or a project near a wetland resource area, please consider that your project may need review by multiple bodies. Recognizing the importance of the natural and cultural landscape as part of the defining characteristics of Portsmouth, the City established the Conservation Commission. The purpose of the Conservation Commission is to protect, promote and enhance the natural resources of the City. In conjunction with the HDC, the Conservation Commission protects the scenic and cultural heritage of our community.

PORTSMOUTH HISTORIC DISTRICT ¹

Description

The Portsmouth Historic District comprises the urban land area of the colonial port-capital of New Hampshire as it had evolved by the mid-nineteenth century. It contains approximately 1,200 buildings and structures as well as some seven tested or excavated archaeological sites. With the exception of several large, modern intrusions since the mid-twentieth century, the district is densely built either by original land division or through the process of later subdivision and infill. Bounded on the east by the Piscataqua River, the district follows an irregular pattern, extending along the principal land transportation routes radiating from the urban core. It encompasses *five* distinct, yet historically related components of the old town: the South End, the downtown, the North End (or Christian Shore), *the West End* and the Haymarket Square Middle Street areas. The South End is a tightly built residential area of wooden houses, ranging from the late 17th through the early 20th century, surrounding the South Mill Pond along streets interlacing the spine of South, Marcy and Pleasant Streets. The commercial core is largely brick, three story blocks and rows along streets radiating from Market Square and built during the 19th century after a series of fires. At Haymarket Square and adjoining Court, State and Middle Streets are a series of 3-story Federal mansions on large lots intermixed in later years with some of the most important mid-19th century Italianate and Mansard wooden and brick houses in Portsmouth. The North End and Christian Shore surrounding the North Mill Pond, are linked to the downtown by Maplewood Avenue. While the southern portion has been intruded by urban renewal, containing several major historic urban archaeological sites, the rest is a 2-story residential area below the Route 1 Bypass which includes the oldest house in New Hampshire and a cluster of Federal and Victorian buildings similar to the South End. *Added to the District in 2010, the West End is a 19th century Industrial area which also encompasses the Islington Street corridor and includes various residential and commercial architectural styles.* Together these five areas contain the majority of the architecturally and historically significant landmarks of the city, in their traditional settings of streetscapes, open parks and public spaces which create a sense of time and place. The historic district is also clearly distinct from the surrounding suburban development characteristic of the late 19th and 20th centuries, industrial sections, and modern commercial strips.

Significance

Portsmouth is the only colonial seaport in New Hampshire, being the capital of the Province until the American Revolution and the state's only major port throughout the 19th century. The Historic District encompasses the whole street plan of the city from its urban inception in the 1690's to its height as a shipbuilding and commercial center. Its early recognition for outstanding Colonial and Federal architecture helped to preserve the large number of individual landmark structures during the first half of the 20th century, but the attempts to alter its cohesive character, *especially during the urban*

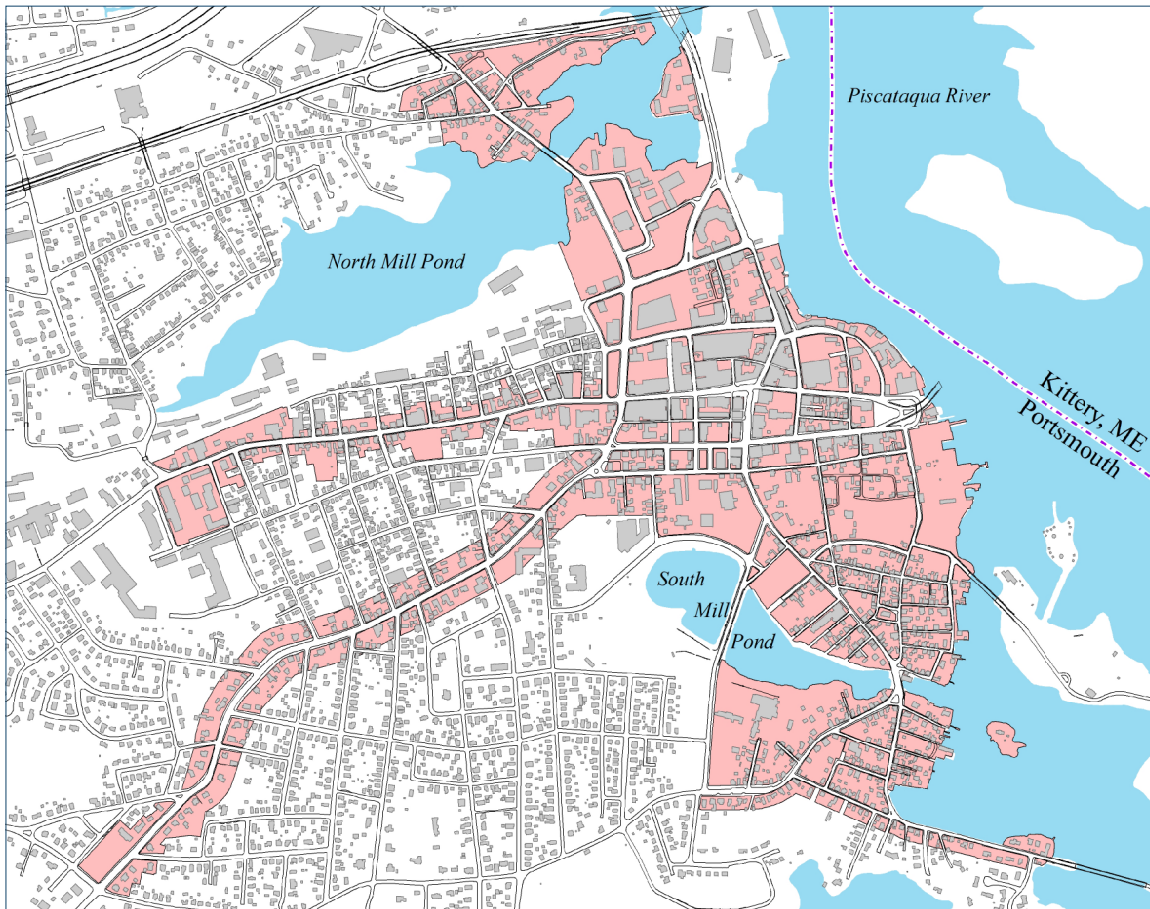
renewal period, have stimulated a broad recognition of the architectural, historical and archaeological importance of its unusually complete survival. The South End is an important maritime neighborhood which includes not only the Gov. John Langdon House, Strawberry Banke Historic District, and the South Meetinghouse already on the National Register, but several hundred colonial, federal and later 19th century domestic buildings which share a distinct character of height, scale, design and materials reflective of the historical development of the area. The downtown, likewise, reflects the rebuilding after its 19th century fires which formed a central core of Federal commercial buildings which established the three-story building height which continued until the 20th century. The use of local red bricks in the commercial core established its architectural character, which includes excellent examples of master builders and architects from the Federal through the Victorian period. Haymarket Square and Middle Street contain the city's most extensive collection of post-colonial domestic architecture, while the Christian Shore area reflects the middle class developments in housing of the same period. The latter also includes the earliest building in the State of New Hampshire, the Jackson House of c. 1664.

Significance - Architecture

By virtue of its size, the Portsmouth historic district includes the largest concentration of colonial and federal buildings of all socio-economic groups to have been built, and survive, in the State of New Hampshire. Focused around some 50 or more major public, commercial and residential buildings of larger scale, the city's oldest core retains excellent vernacular examples of a full evolution of 17th century, Georgian, Federal, Italianate, and later Victorian building styles. The Portsmouth Advocate's Survey of the Portsmouth Historic District in 1982 has identified and analyzed the full number and type of these structures with descriptions, location and ownership information as well as photographs and categories of significance. Where known, the forms list the locally prominent builders such as John Drew, Michael Whidden I, II, and III, Daniel Hart, James Nutter, and others as well as local architects like Ebenezer Clifford, Bradbury Johnson, William Tucker, Isaiah Wilson and William Ash. Later architects like Alexander Parris, Ammi B. Young, Gridley J.F. Bryant, Towle and Foster, Cram and Wentworth, Arthur Vinal, Dabney and Ball, and other Boston architects who worked in Portsmouth have been identified. Many of the prominent buildings by known master-builders or a professional architect rely for their historical and physical context on the less well documented buildings which create the streetscapes linking the individual parts as a cohesive whole. It is in this sense that the hundreds of contributing structures in the district are of primary architectural significance.

¹ Information in this section extracted from *An Architectural Survey of the Historic District of Portsmouth, New Hampshire - Application for Certification of the Portsmouth N. H. Historic District* as prepared by the Portsmouth Advocates Inc. for the City of Portsmouth, New Hampshire; June - September 1982. Woodward D. Openo, Survey Director.

Italicized text represents modifications for inclusion of West End.



The locally designated Portsmouth Historic District encompasses five distinct, but historically related components including the downtown, the South End, the North End, the West End and the Haymarket Square - Middle Street Areas. Strawberry Banke and the South Meetinghouse area are also listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

HISTORIC DESIGNATION & LISTING

Definitions

- **Historic Resource:** An individual building, structure, site, object or district that has been determined to have historical significance or associations and whose distinctive character conveys a unique architectural and cultural heritage.
- **Historic District:** A defined area that contains concentrations of historic resources. A district can include as few as one historic resource or hundreds of resources.

Portsmouth Historic District Classifications (1982)

- **Focal Buildings:** Buildings that are listed or eligible for listing on the National Register.
- **Contributing Buildings:** Buildings that rely on their location within a streetscape and land use pattern that links individual buildings into a cohesive historical and physical context.
- **Non-Contributing Buildings:** Buildings less than 50 years old that are of modern design, appreciably different scale, height or building materials.
- **Intrusive Buildings:** Buildings that are significantly out of scale or placement and/or use materials or a building design that is in strong contrast with the surrounding context, streetscape, and the contributing buildings.

Local Designation

Local designation of a historic property or district provides a tool for local communities to determine what is architecturally and historically important to their community and a mechanism for the regulation of proposed changes to those properties.

The National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is the United States government's official list of districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects identified as worthy of preservation. The National Register is administered by the National Park Service, a division of the Department of the Interior.

Listing in the National Register does not eliminate or restrict property rights of individual owners. Projects involving federal or state permits, licenses or funding are reviewed for their potential effects on significant historic properties, including those listed in the National Register. Having a property listed on the National Register could make its owners eligible for federal and state tax credits for expenses incurred rehabilitating an income-producing property. National Register information is available from the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources. (Refer to *Preservation Organizations*, page 01-15.)



Local designation helps to maintain the character of Portsmouth's historic neighborhoods.

BENEFITS OF LOCAL DESIGNATION

The designation of local historic districts and landmarks has been found to:

- Increase neighborhood stability and property values
- Preserve the physical history of the area
- Promote an appreciation of the physical environment
- Foster community pride and self-image by creating a unique sense of place and local identity
- Increase the awareness and appreciation of local history
- Increase tourism
- Attract potential customers to businesses
- Create local construction jobs employing skilled tradesmen

SUSTAINABLE BENEFITS OF PRESERVATION

Historic buildings are intrinsically “green,” as reusing an existing building has substantially lower environmental impact than building a new one. Preservation and rehabilitation minimize the wasteful loss of materials while maintaining a distinctive sense of place. Sustainable benefits of preservation include:

- The historic building or structure already exists, and the energy required to fabricate the lumber, bricks, windows and doors was expended long ago
- New construction often includes demolition of an existing building (construction waste comprises approximately 25% to 30% of landfills), in addition to the fabrication of new construction materials creating additional waste, while the preservation of an existing building conserves landfill space
- The most appropriate materials for the majority of preservation projects are often historic materials rather than non-biodegradable manufactured products, such as vinyl and/or plastics

PRESERVATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

There are federal and state incentive programs available for historic properties. The submission and review requirements are rigorous and it is highly recommended that applicants contact the applicable agency at the early planning stages of a potential project.

Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives

The Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program rewards private investment in rehabilitating historic income-producing properties such as offices, rental housing and retail stores. The Program, established by the Tax Reform Act of 1986, is jointly administered by the U.S. Department of the Treasury and the U.S. Department of the Interior's National Park Service. Owner-occupied single-family residences are not eligible for the program. If eligible, up to 20 cents on every dollar spent on qualified rehabilitation work (including most architectural and engineering fees) would be available as a credit against federal income taxes. The 20% tax credit is available to buildings that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places, either individually or as a contributing building in a National Register historic district, or as a contributing building within a local historic district that has been certified by the Department of the Interior. To be eligible for the 20% tax credit, project work must be certified as meeting *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*. (Refer to *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*, page 01-10.)

Preservation Easement

Preservation easements are a tool often used to insure the preservation of the character defining features of a property for the public's benefit. The New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources maintains an easement program to protect historic resources. The extent of the protection of the property is dependent on the strength of the easement. Some easements protect just the façade of a building. Other easements protect the larger preservation values including but not limited to the exterior and interior architectural features, materials, landscape features, outbuildings, fences and archeological resources of a property.



Assistance programs, such as the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program are available for designated commercial designated properties that undertake a certified rehabilitation project.

PRESERVATION REGULATORY REVIEW

To maintain the character of properties within the Historic District, most proposed exterior changes require review and the issuance of a Certificate of Approval from the HDC prior to commencing work, or if deemed to be an exempt activity or a minor application by Planning Staff, the approval process can be addressed administratively. The type of work requiring a Certificate of Approval includes:

- **Exterior Alteration** - Removal, modification and/or installation of materials or features from sites, buildings or structures
- **New Construction** - New building, structure or site feature and/or expansion of an existing building, structure or site feature
- **Demolition** - Complete or partial removal of a building, structure or site feature
- **Relocation** - Relocation of a building, structure or site feature

Certificate of Approval applications are reviewed by the HDC at their monthly (and occasionally bi-monthly as warranted by the number of application) meetings. During their reviews, the HDC references the criteria set forth in the Historic Preservation sections of the City's Ordinance. Review by the HDC ensures that any proposed changes will be compatible with the character and design of the individual property and/or Historic District.

The process of applying for a Certificate of Approval requires the project representative to provide sufficient information on the City's application form and to provide a narrative, drawings, sketches, photographs, a survey, proof of ownership, product brochures or samples for certain building features that will be modified, as well as potentially a 3-D massing model for more complex applications. The applicant is encouraged to consult with Planning Staff to ensure that all the information is included in the application.

Once the application has been determined to be complete, it will be placed on the HDC agenda. The applicant or a project representative should attend the HDC meeting for Work Sessions as well as Certificate of Approval reviews to answer any questions the HDC may have regarding the application, or the application could be tabled pending clarification and/or the submission of additional information as requested by the HDC.

APPROVALS REQUIRED FOR WORK

HDC review and approval is triggered by the application for a building permit. This includes the replacement of windows, doors and roofs as well as ground disturbance at potential archaeological sites. HDC approval is necessary but may not be sufficient for the granting of a building permit. Each property is subject to review for compliance with applicable zoning, building and safety codes. The property owner is responsible obtaining all necessary approvals prior to commencing with work.



The HDC reviews most proposed exterior changes at properties within the Portsmouth Historic District.

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

The HDC has oversight of the City's preservation activities and regulatory review within the bounds of the Portsmouth Historic District. The HDC is comprised of seven members and two alternates, including:

- A City Councilor
- A Planning Board member
- Two District residents
- A District resident who either owns or works in a business within the Historic District

Although the HDC's primary responsibility is to conduct Work Sessions and to review applications for Certificates of Approval, the HDC also provides recommendations to the City Council regarding historic preservation activities in the City including the documentation of historically designated properties.

The HDC can take one of four actions following the review of an application:

- **Approval as Submitted** - The Certificate for Approval will be issued.
- **Approval with Conditions** - A Certificate for Approval will be issued pending review for compliance of required conditions.
- **Continued** - The applicant provides additional information or clarification as requested by the HDC
- **Denial** - It is determined that the project does not meet the requirements for the granting of a Certificate of Approval. The applicant can work with Planning Staff to bring the project into compliance with the ordinance using the *Guidelines* and resubmit to the HDC for re-review or appeal to the Board of Adjustment.

WORKING WITHOUT A CERTIFICATE FOR APPROVAL

The Planning Department will inspect all work for compliance with an approved Certificate of Approval. If any changes are proposed after the issuance of a Certificate of Approval, please contact the Planning Department at (603) 610-7216 for additional required reviews. Work completed without an approved Certificate of Approval is subject to possible fines, removal and restoration of the site, building or structure to its appearance prior to the violation.

TIMING FOR REVIEW

The City of Portsmouth makes every effort to quickly conduct required reviews. If an application is incomplete, if the HDC requests a change, or if all City deadlines are not met, the issuance of permits and approvals could take several months. In addition, complex applications requiring multiple reviews will typically require additional time, particularly if coordination with other City Departments is required.

All applications are first reviewed by Planning Staff for completeness and potential of a project's eligibility for an administrative approval, or whether it would be more appropriate for a Work Session review. If an application requires HDC review, Staff will place the application on the next available meeting's agenda. For most applications, the HDC acts within 45 days on a completed application.

Staff Review & Administrative Approval

Staff reviews are typically conducted for applications that are considered minor in the context of the designated property, and if applicable, the surrounding local Historic District. Applications that may be limited to Staff review include:

- Minor maintenance and in-kind repair, which are exempted from HDC purview after Staff review
- Exterior alterations at all properties within the bounds of the local Historic District that are considered insubstantial with limited visibility
- Minor changes to a previously approved Certificate for Approval

Staff reviews of complete applications are generally completed within 7 to 10 business days of filing and all administrative approvals must be ratified by the HDC at their next scheduled meeting.

HDC Review

Applications that propose alterations that are too substantial for Staff administrative approval are forwarded to the HDC for review. The HDC holds regular monthly meetings at City Hall the first Wednesday of each month and often the second Wednesday if there are a large number of applications. At its meetings, HDC conducts reviews applications for Certificates of Approval, Work Session applications, as well as addresses issues pertaining to the Historic District and preservation issues in the City. (Refer to *Work Session Review*, page 01-8.)

When reviewing Certificate of Approval applications, assuming that the application materials are complete and the HDC does not require any additional information, applicants should assume a minimum of 4 weeks between the submission deadline of the HDC application and the issuance of a HDC Certificate of Approval.

PLANNING FOR ALTERATIONS TO HISTORIC PROPERTIES

One of the key first steps in planning an alteration to a historic property is developing an understanding of what makes a property important. Historic properties typically derive their significance from their architectural character and/or their historical significance as related to an association with an important individual or event.

Once it is understood why a property is defined as significant, a determination can be made whether it has historic integrity, or the ability of a property to convey its significance. Some of the aspects considered when making a determination of integrity relate to its:

- Location
- Design
- Setting
- Materials
- Workmanship
- Feeling
- Association with the historic individual or event

Properties that retain integrity always possess several of these aspects.



Great care should be taken when proposing alterations to the City's focal buildings. The HDC recommends maintaining of as much of the historic materials as possible.

DESIGN OF ALTERATIONS

In balancing the desire for a change to a historic property with regard to the historic integrity, the HDC encourages property owners to retain as much historic building fabric as possible. As such, the following guide can be used, listed in preferential order:

1. Maintenance
2. Repair and In-Kind Replacement
3. Alterations and Renovations
4. Adaptive Reuse
5. Additions and New Constructions

If demolition is considered, property owners should refer to the Demolition review process (Refer to *Demolition Application Review*, page 01-7). Demolition of designated historic buildings is rarely appropriate.

DEMOLITION APPLICATION REVIEW

The demolition of historic properties is considered a drastic action. The loss of a historic building constitutes not only a loss of historic fabric and context; it can alter the character of the streetscape and surrounding buildings. Once resources or buildings that contribute to the heritage of the community are destroyed, they cannot be replaced.

Demolition could represent a lost educational resource for the community whether the building was an example of past construction techniques, or has associations with a significant individual or event in our history. As a result, demolition of historically or architecturally significant buildings and structures is rarely considered to be an appropriate option. In addition to meeting all City requirements, the proposed demolition of buildings or structures located within the Historic District are subject to HDC review.

To promote and maintain the historic character of the Historic District, the HDC will assess the historical and architectural integrity of the existing building or structure proposed for demolition. (Refer to *Planning for Alterations to Historic Properties*, page 01-6.) In addition, as part of its review of the proposed demolition, the HDC will also review the proposed development of the site to determine whether the recommended redevelopment is compatible with and enhances the character of the District.



Demolition is an irreversible action that alters the character of the property, the streetscape, and the area. The HDC strongly recommends against the demolition of buildings or features that are architecturally or historically significant to the history of Portsmouth.

PORTSMOUTH HISTORIC PRESERVATION DESIGN GUIDELINES

The *Portsmouth Historic Preservation Design Guidelines (Guidelines)* are intended as a tool to help manage change and protect the City's architectural and historical resources.

The *Guidelines* provide background information, guidance and regulations to be followed by property owners, design professionals, contractors, the HDC, the Portsmouth Planning Department and other City officials with regard to historic resources. They are intended as a supplement to, rather than as a substitute for, consultation with qualified architects, contractors and the HDC members.

The *Guidelines* addressing alterations to historic building fabric are based upon *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* and more specifically, the *Guidelines for Rehabilitation*. They are intended to encourage the retention and repair of existing historic building fabric. In the consideration of additions and new construction, the *Guidelines* provide a framework for review of appropriateness at the historic property and within the surrounding historic context rather than judgment on good or bad taste.

Because the HDC utilizes the *Guidelines* in their decision-making process, it is recommended that applicants review the information in the *Guidelines* sections during the early stages of planning a project and speak with historic preservation professionals about their project. Familiarity with this material can assist in moving a project forward quickly, saving both time and money.

The following *Guidelines* were completed as part of this project:

- *Guidelines Introduction*
- *Guidelines for Architectural Styles*
- *Guidelines for Exterior Maintenance*
- *Guidelines for Roofing*
- *Guidelines for Exterior Woodwork*
- *Guidelines for Porches & Stoops*
- *Guidelines for Masonry & Stucco*
- *Guidelines for Windows & Doors*
- *Guidelines for Site Elements & Streetscapes*
- *Guidelines for Small Scale New Construction & Additions*
- *Guidelines for Signs & Awnings*
- *Guidelines for Commercial Storefronts & Infill Development*

Each section addresses historic materials and building topics and all sections comprise the *Portsmouth Historic Preservation Design Guidelines*. Further information is available at the Planning Department and on the City's web site at www.planportsmouth.com/historicdistrictcommission. These *Guidelines* serve to cover the topics most typically addressed by the HDC. Any work under the jurisdiction of the HDC that is not specifically covered in these *Guidelines* is subject to HDC review and approval.

WORK SESSION REVIEW

Complex applications and applications for new construction or additions typically involve both large and small design decisions. To facilitate the design of new construction and additions in a manner that is compatible with a historic property and the surrounding Historic District, the HDC offers the opportunity for applicants to present their proposal at Work Sessions as designs are developed. These advisory sessions can be convened at any time during the design process, and continued to allow the development of design alternatives.

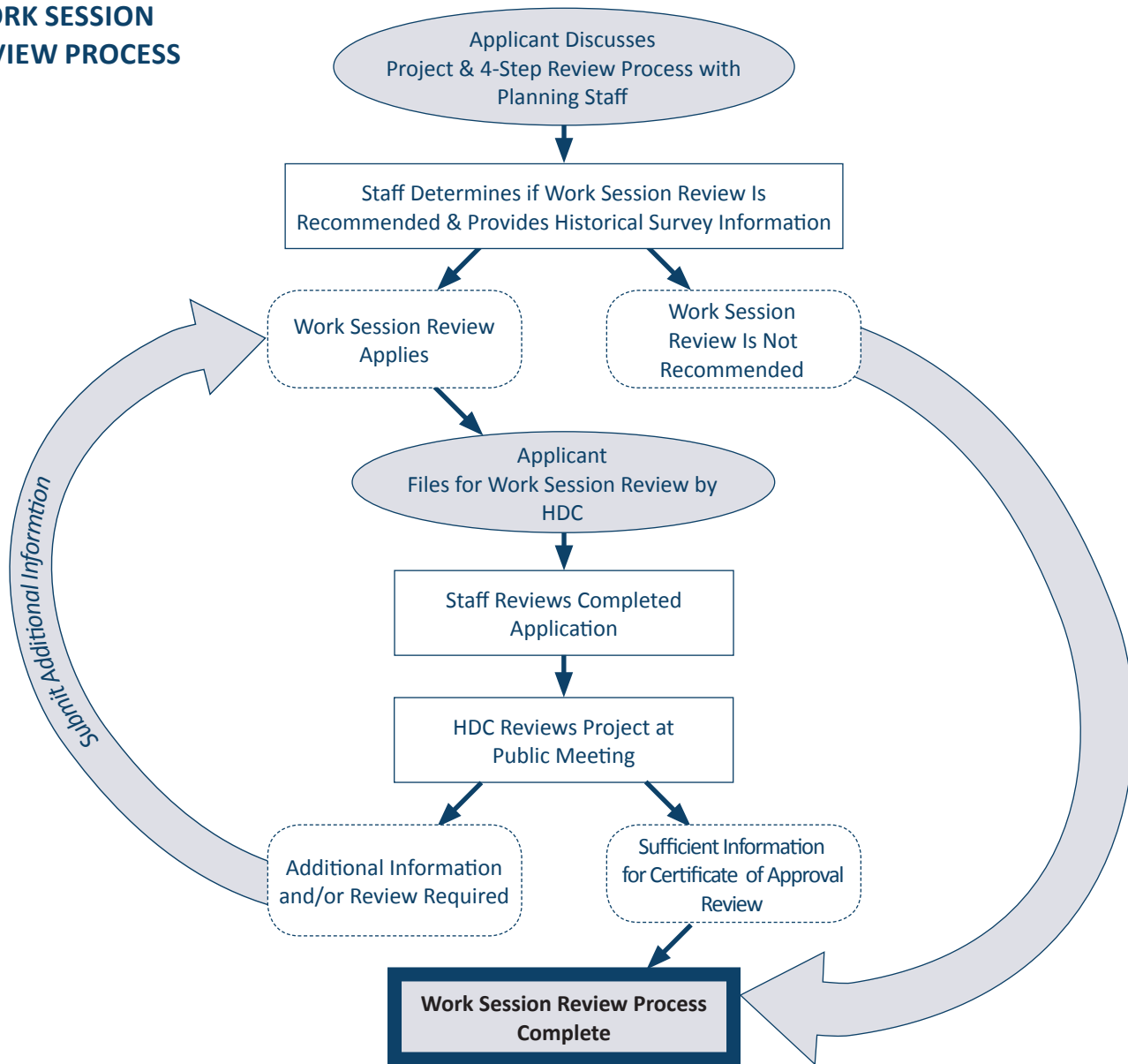
The purpose of the sessions is to HDC to comment on various design alternatives, issues and options in advance of submission of a Certificate of Approval application. It is intended that this process will save applicants both time and money in the development of a proposal that is approvable by the HDC prior to incurring the expense associated with the preparation of more detailed plans or construction documents.

WORK SESSION REVIEW PROCESS

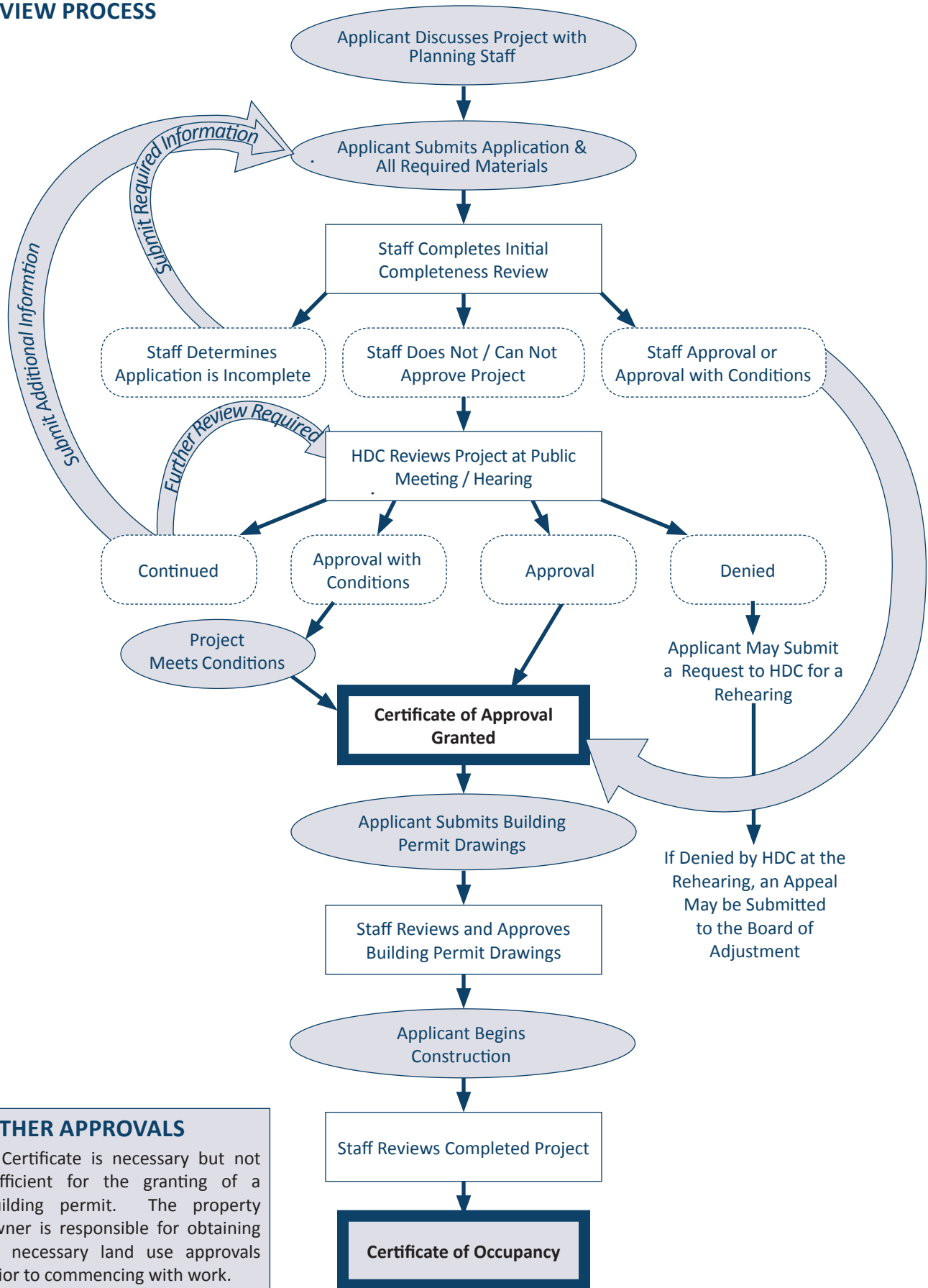
Although the number and timing of the Work Sessions will be dependent on the nature of the design development process of the project being considered, the following 4-step review process is offered as a suggested guide for consideration:

- 1. Neighborhood Context** - Identify and utilize the existing neighborhood context information to guide, inform and identify the appropriate scale, massing, setbacks, style and other design elements.
- 2. Massing** - Assess the appropriate height, scale, volume and massing relative to the surrounding context.
- 3. Façade Treatment & Architectural Style** - Assess the appropriateness of the proposed architectural style and façade treatments.
- 4. Elevation** - Assess the appropriateness of the proposed façade composition and materials.

Following the completion of the Work Session reviews, applications can be submitted to the HDC for a Certificate of Approval.



**CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL
REVIEW PROCESS**



OTHER APPROVALS

A Certificate is necessary but not sufficient for the granting of a building permit. The property owner is responsible for obtaining all necessary land use approvals prior to commencing with work.



Identification of key building features, such as the symmetrical façade, two-story projecting bays and projecting cornice can help identify where and to what extent alterations may be appropriate.

GUIDELINES FOR HDC DECISIONS FOR ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING BUILDINGS

When reviewing a proposed project for alteration to a historic building, the HDC's review is sometimes guided by principles contained in *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, and more specifically, *The Standards for Rehabilitation*. *The Standards for Rehabilitation* provide property owners and tenants common-sense guidelines to allow sensitive contemporary uses for their sites while retaining their architectural and cultural heritage. In reviewing projects, the HDC encourages sensitive rehabilitation involving the least amount of intervention or change as identified in the following guidelines:

- **Identify, retain, and preserve** the overall form, materials, and details that are important in defining the architectural and historical character of the building and site.
- **Protect and maintain** historic materials and features. This involves protection from other work that may occur in proximity to the historic materials, and also protection through regular maintenance. A regular program of protection and maintenance usually involves the least degree of intervention, and can prevent or postpone extensive and costly work.
- **Repair** rather than replace deteriorated historic materials and features. Repairs maintain the building in its current condition while making it weather-resistant and structurally sound. Repairs should involve the least intervention possible, concentrating specifically on areas of deterioration. When repair is not possible, the HDC encourages replacement in-kind, reproducing by new construction the original feature exactly, including the original material, finish, detailing and texture.

- **Replace** missing or deteriorated historic materials and features in-kind when the extent of deterioration precludes repair. Similar to repair, the preferred approach is to replace the entire feature in-kind to match the original material, finish, detailing and texture. Since this is not always technically or financially feasible, substitute materials are sometimes acceptable when they convey the appearance and finish of the original feature.
- **Reconstruct** missing historical features if adequate historical, pictorial, and physical documentation exists so that the feature may be accurately reproduced. The addition of features from other historic buildings or addition of historical elements for which there is no documentation is not appropriate.
- **Alterations and additions** are sometimes needed to ensure the continued use of a building. An alteration involves returning a building to a useful condition while saving those parts that represent its historical, architectural or cultural significance. It is important that alterations do not radically alter, obscure or destroy character-defining spaces, materials, features or finishes. An addition is new construction at the exterior of an existing building and should be carefully considered. New additions should be differentiated but also be compatible in size, mass, form, fenestration, material, detailing and style with the historic building, and should be constructed at a less visible side or rear elevation, so that the character-defining features are not radically obscured, damaged or destroyed.

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION¹

The *Standards for Rehabilitation* were developed in 1995 by the National Park Service of the U.S. Department of the Interior. They are the national standard to guide rehabilitation work on historic resources and are used as a general guidelines by the HDC when rendering their recommendations regarding the alterations of existing building features.

Rehabilitation is defined as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural or architectural values.

¹ Weeks, Kay D., and Anne E. Grimmer. *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring & Reconstructing Historic Buildings*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resource Stewardship and Partnerships, Heritage Preservation Services, 1995. Referred to throughout these Guidelines as the *Standards for Rehabilitation*. Available at www.nps.gov.

MAINTENANCE IS PRESERVATION

Regular maintenance helps to preserve buildings and property, protect real estate values and investments, and keeps Portsmouth an attractive place to live, work and visit. Lack of regular upkeep can result in accelerated deterioration of building elements and features. In the case of historic buildings, these features often represent character defining elements that are difficult and costly to replace. Long-term lack of maintenance can impact a building's structure, resulting in expensive repairs.

It is prudent to regularly inspect properties to identify potential problems. If problems are detected early, minor maintenance may not only improve a property's overall appearance and value, but also can prevent or postpone extensive and costly future repairs. Regular maintenance can include a variety of tasks such as cleaning gutters and downspouts, and painting of exterior woodwork.

The HDC encourages:

- Prolonging the life of original materials on historic structures through regular maintenance as long as possible
- Avoiding replacement of original materials with newer materials
- Referencing the *Guidelines for Exterior Maintenance* and topic-specific sections for additional maintenance information



Regular repainting with proper preparation is one of the best ways to maintain exterior woodwork and siding.

COST VS. VALUE-ADDED

While some of the recommendations in these *Guidelines* do not represent the least expensive options, the HDC strongly believes that selecting a better quality option will be less costly in the long-term.

An immediate benefit is that using traditional materials and construction methods tends to be more historically appropriate and sustainable. Another benefit is that traditional materials generally have a longer life-cycle because they are appropriate for the local climate, requiring less frequent replacement. Additionally, traditional materials tend to reduce associated landfill waste and replacement costs, as well as potentially increasing a property's value associated with authentic, higher quality construction.



The roof surface, balustrade and cornice were damaged by heavy snow and were replaced to match the historic conditions. (Refer to photograph below.)

REPAIRS & REPLACEMENT

When it is no longer feasible to maintain a historic feature due to its condition, repairs or replacement in-kind may be necessary. Repairs maintain the building in its current condition while making it weather-resistant and structurally sound, concentrating specifically on areas of deterioration. When repair is not possible, the HDC encourages replacement in-kind. Similar to a regular maintenance program, these activities can prevent or postpone extensive and costly future repairs.

The HDC encourages (Listed in order of preference):

- Non-intrusive repairs, focused at deteriorated areas, stabilizing and protecting the building's important materials and features
- When repair is not possible, replacement in-kind to the greatest extent possible, reproducing by new construction the original feature exactly, matching the original material, size, scale, finish, profile, detailing and texture
- When replacement in-kind is not possible, the use of compatible materials and techniques that convey an appearance similar to the original historic features, and the use of materials similar in design, color, texture, finish and visual quality to the historic elements



The roof, balustrade and cornice were replaced using compatible materials, that convey an appearance that is similar to the historic condition prior to storm damage.

ALTERATIONS & RENOVATIONS

Alterations and renovations are sometimes needed to ensure the continued use of a building, but have the potential to alter the character of historic properties. When considering alterations or renovations, careful attention should be given to the original building and its relationship to the alteration or renovation.

The HDC encourages:

- Identification, retention and preservation of the character defining features of the historic building
- Minimal alteration to the original design, materials and features
- The use of design elements that are compatible with the historic building and setting
- The use of materials and techniques that are compatible to the historic building and setting
- Maintaining the appropriate historic contextual setting

This historic bank building has been converted into a restaurant. The adaptive reuse project allows an iconic building in the center of downtown to continue to have a useful function into the future with minimal exterior alterations.



ADAPTIVE REUSE

In adaptive reuse projects, alterations or renovations might be necessary to use a building for a different purpose from which it is currently or was originally designed, if permitted under the Portsmouth Zoning Ordinance. Similar to alterations or renovations, great care should be given to the original building and its relationship to the alteration or renovation. In addition, careful attention should be taken with required alterations such as the modification or addition of window and door openings to accommodate the new use.

Examples of Adaptive Reuse:

- Conversion of a house to multi-family residential or offices
- Conversion of industrial/commercial buildings into housing
- Conversion of institutional buildings into commercial space

Benefits of Adaptive Reuse:

- Retention of historic character and high quality historic materials and craftsmanship
- Promotes stability of ownership and occupancy of historic resources
- Potential cost savings versus new construction
- Maintains and utilizes the established neighborhood and existing infrastructure



The rear addition is designed to be sympathetic to the form, massing and scale of the historic house. It is smaller in size and includes similar fenestration patterns, materials, detailing and trim, making it highly compatible.

ADDITIONS

Additions to a building within a Historic District can dramatically alter the appearance of the individual property, the District and the surrounding landscapes. Exact reproduction of historic buildings is discouraged, while both traditional or contemporary design compatible to the context of the historic resources and their surroundings is encouraged. Because of the sensitivity of the area, the property owner should take great care when proposing an addition to a designated property.

The HDC encourages:

- Preservation of the cohesive ambiance of historic resources with compatible, sympathetic and contemporary construction
- Compatible siting, proportion, scale, form, materials, fenestration, roof configuration, details and finishes to the existing building
- Construction of additions at secondary elevations wherever possible, subordinate to the historic building, and compatible with the design of the property and neighborhood
- Construction of additions so that the historic building fabric is not radically changed, obscured, damaged or destroyed
- Referencing the *Guidelines for Small Scale New Construction & Additions*

RESEARCHING HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Property owners seeking information regarding the history of their property can consult with Portsmouth Public Library and the Portsmouth Athenaeum. In the archives, property owners can reference Historic Property Survey Forms, City Atlases, City Directories and potentially historic photographs. (Refer to *Preservation Organizations*, page 01-15.)



New construction, particularly large-scale commercial projects, can provide a substantial economic impact as well as a physical impact on the surrounding streetscape. Careful design of large-scale development projects, especially at the street level, is required to ensure compatibility within the context of the Portsmouth Historic District.

NEW CONSTRUCTION

More dramatically than additions, new construction within a Historic District can dramatically alter the appearance of the individual property, the District and the surrounding landscapes. All new construction should be compatible within the property's surrounding context. As a result, those areas that are highly cohesive with strong historical integrity, will likely be more limited than those areas with a variety of building types, scales, materials and designs such as those found in some of Portsmouth's commercial corridors.

When considering a new construction or development project, exact reproduction of historic buildings is discouraged, while both traditional design or contemporary design compatible to the context of the historic resources and their surroundings is encouraged. Because of the sensitivity of the area, the property owner should take great care when proposing new construction or a new development within a Historic District or to a designated Landmark.

The HDC encourages:

- Preservation of the cohesive ambiance of historic resources with compatible, sympathetic and contemporary construction
- Compatible siting, proportion, scale, form, materials, fenestration, roof configuration, details and finishes
- Referencing the *Guidelines for Small Scale New Construction & Additions*
- Referencing the *Guidelines for Commercial Storefronts & Infill Development*

ARCHAEOLOGY & EXCAVATION

Given the area's early settlement, there are numerous archaeological sites identified and protected throughout the City, and identified areas where there is the potential for archaeological discovery. Once an archaeological site has been disturbed by untrained lay persons, the ability to reveal the site through professional interpretation might be lost forever. As a result, archaeological sites are best preserved in-situ, or "in-place", until they can be professionally investigated. As stated in *"An Architectural Survey of the Historic District of Portsmouth, New Hampshire - Application for Certification of the Portsmouth N. H. Historic District"*:

Archaeology

The former Vaughan Street Urban Renewal Area has proven to be one of the best urban historic archaeology sites in the region. Testing in 1981 by professional archaeologists at Strawberry Banke led to controlled salvage of several important sites in 1982. While this work still continues, the artifactual evidence for understanding the material culture of this area from its development c. 1700 through the 19th century had proven to be of substantial importance. This material is part of ongoing investigation of sites throughout the city. A private dig in conjunction with the moving of the Fernald House in 1980 discovered the well and trash pit of the Revolutionary doctor, Hall Jackson. The ceramic material alone established new evidence of Portsmouth's material culture in the 18th century, including forms documented nowhere else in the United States to date. Within Strawberry Banke itself, public archaeology programs have tested several areas under professional direction in the past two years. This supplements the work of Daniel Ingersol in the 1960 's in a test of Puddle Dock and the excavations by Stephen Pendery which include the earliest excavated pottery kiln site in the area.

Since the publication of the *Architectural Survey* in 1982, additional archeological sites have been investigated, including the African Burying Ground on Court Street. The New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources is available to provide technical assistance for archaeological projects.



Not all archaeological remains are as clearly marked as this cemetery. Care should be taken to minimize disruption of remains during construction projects.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Where should I begin the process?

A: It is often helpful to begin by understanding what makes your property historically or architecturally significant (see below.) Contact the City's Planning Department at (603) 610-7216 for a review of your property's significance. Obtain the *Guidelines* section applicable to your proposed project and consider whether the proposed changes are appropriate for the property. (Refer to page 5.)

Q: How can I find out about the history of my neighborhood or property?

A: The Portsmouth Public Library and the Portsmouth Athenaeum are the best resources for local history (refer to *Page 4*), including historic photographs, National Register Nominations and survey forms on historic buildings. Links to information on local history are also available on the City of Portsmouth's website. Additional information regarding historic properties is available from the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources, and on its website. There are also numerous reference organizations and resources, a few of which are listed on pages 01-15 and 01-16.

Q: How do I make it more likely that my project is approved?

A: It is helpful to have an understanding of what makes your property architecturally or culturally significant when considering a project. This will allow you to make informed decisions about the proposed project with an understanding of some of the issues considered by the HDC. Each section of the *Guidelines* outlines what is and is not likely to be approved by the HDC. If considering a complex application, particularly those that include an addition or new construction, it is often helpful to engage in HDC Work Session reviews process prior to submission of a Certificate of Approval application. The Work Session process can provide feedback to guide an application towards a design that may be approved by the HDC prior to expending a lot of time and money in the development of detailed plans or Construction Documents.

Q: Is the review process expensive? Do I need to hire an outside professional?

A: The HDC charges a fee for a reviews and other City departments assess fees based on the nature of the project. Carefully review of the applicable *Guidelines* and the application requirements for an approval prior to hiring a design professional or contractor can assist in the early planning stages of your project. If not required by Code to receive a building permit, you are welcome to submit applications for work without the assistance of a design professional. However, for complex proposals or those that requires the submission of scaled drawings, consultation with a professional may be required and may expedite the review process. If you are retaining the services of a professional, it is helpful to work with architects, contractors and others familiar with the requirements of working with the HDC. Before submitting your application, confirm that it is complete with the Planning Department.

Q: I am planning a complex project. When is the best time to talk to the HDC?

A: If your project is complex or requires review from multiple land use Commissions and Boards, the best time to talk to the HDC is as early in the project as possible, before you invest significant time and money into the design process. This initial informal informational review can help move a project more quickly through the review process. Please contact the City's Planning Department at (603) 610-7216 for an appointment.

Q: Is there a way to expedite the review process?

A: It is important to thoroughly complete the application and submit all required materials to the HDC for review. It is recommended that you contact the City's Planning Department directly to understand what submission materials are required for your project; whether Commission review is required or Work Session review recommended; and the specific submission deadlines and meeting dates. Contact the City's Planning Department to determine what other reviews are required; if multiple reviews are necessary they can often be pursued simultaneously.

Q: Does my project require HDC review?

A: Proposed changes to any building, site or structure within the boundaries of the Portsmouth Historic District are required to receive an approval. This includes all work that might be considered ordinary maintenance and repair with the exception of repainting. Refer to applicable *Guidelines* sections for clarifications regarding Staff review. Most applications for maintenance and repair are reviewed at the Staff level within 7 to 10 days of a completed application filing.

Q: How do I apply for HDC review?

A: The specific submission requirements for HDC review will vary based upon whether the submission is for a Work Session or a Certificate of Approval. In most instances, the submission materials are typically similar to those required for a building permit review. For specific information regarding the submission requirements for your proposed project please refer to the applications available on the City of Portsmouth website at www.planportsmouth.com/historicdistrictcommission or contact the City's Planning Department at (603) 610-7216.

Q: Can I begin construction immediately after I get the HDC approval?

A: The HDC review is not necessarily sufficient for the granting of a building permit. Each project is also subject to review by all departments having jurisdiction over compliance with zoning, building and safety codes. HDC review is just one step in obtaining a building permit. You must complete all necessary reviews and obtain all necessary permits applicable to your project prior to proceeding with any work. However, you cannot receive a building permit without obtaining an approval from the HDC.

PRESERVATION RESOURCES

City of Portsmouth History

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Architecture of Portsmouth, NH

- Bolster, W. Jeffrey (ed.). *Cross-Grained & Wily Waters: A Guide to the Piscataqua Maritime Region*. Portsmouth: Peter Randall Publisher, 2002.
- Candee, Richard M. *Atlantic Heights: A World War I Shipbuilder's Community*. Portsmouth: Portsmouth Marine Soc., 1985(reprint ed., paperback, Portsmouth Marine Soc., 2012)
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- _____. "Wooden Buildings in Early Maine and New Hampshire: A Technological and Cultural History, 1600-1720" Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1976. UMI/ProQuest # 76-22,664.
- _____. "Old Portsmouth...Home of the Stocking Business': A Forgotten 19th Century Industry and Its Inventors," *Historical New Hampshire* 57 (Fall/Winter 2002): pp. 85-107.
- _____. "Social Conflict and Urban Rebuilding: The Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Brick Act of 1814," *Winterthur Portfolio*, 32:2/3 (Summer/ Autumn 1997): pp. 119-146.
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- _____. *A Building History of Northern New England*. Hanover: University Press of New England, 2001.
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- Gurney, C. S. *Portsmouth Historic and Picturesque*. Portsmouth, NH: 1902; reprint with index, Strawberry Banke, 1981.
- Howells, John Mead. *The Architectural Heritage of the Piscataqua*. Baltimore: Architectural Book Co., 1937; reprinted 1965.
- Openo, Woodard Dorr. "The Summer Colony at Little Harbor in Portsmouth, NH and its Relationship to the Colonial Revival Movement." Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1989.

Pendery, Steven R. "Urban Process in Portsmouth, New Hampshire: an Archeological Perspective," in *New England Historical Archeology*. Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife Annual Proceedings 1977. Boston: Boston University, 1978.

Sturgis, R. Clipston. "Architecture," *The Portsmouth Book*. Boston: George Ellis [1899].

Historic Maps & Deeds

- Portsmouth Athenaeum (search for titles, photographic images or manuscript archives)
<http://www.portsmouthathenaeum.org/>
Special Collections, Portsmouth Public Library
- Sanborn Insurance Maps
<https://libarchive.dartmouth.edu/cdm/search/collection/sanborn/searchterm/Portsmouth/field/all/mode/all/conn/and/order/title>
- New Hampshire Deeds
<http://www.nhdeeds.com/rockingham/RoHome.html>

Reference

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- Poppeliers, John C. and S. Allen Chambers, Jr. *What Style is it? A Guide to American Architecture*, Revised Edition. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2003.

Building & Landscape Preservation

- Bernhard, Sandy and Tom Ela. *The House Journal: A Resource to Evaluate and Document the History, Alterations, and Records of Your House and Property*. Washington, DC: The Preservation Press, 1993.
- Favretti, Rudy and Joy Favretti. *For Every House A Garden: A Guide for Reproducing Period Gardens*. Chester, CT: The Pequot Press, 1977.
- Moss, Roger W. ed. *Paint in America: The Colors of Historic Buildings*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1995.
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- Preservation Briefs*. Washington, DC: National Park Service, Technical Preservation Services.
www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/briefs/presbhom.htm
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- Weaver, Martin E. *Conserving Buildings: A Manual of Techniques and Materials*, Revised Edition. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1997.

PRESERVATION ORGANIZATIONS

Local Organizations

City of Portsmouth Planning Department

City Hall; 1 Junkins Avenue, Portsmouth, NH 03801;
www.planportsmouth.com/historicdistrictcommission

Portsmouth Historical Society

10 Middle Street; Portsmouth, NH
(603) 436-8433; www.portsmouthhistory.org

Portsmouth Athenaeum

9 Market Square; Portsmouth, NH
(603) 431-2538; www.portsmouthathenaeum.org

Strawbery Banke Museum

14 Hancock Street; Portsmouth, NH
(603) 433-1100; <http://www.strawberybanke.org/>

State and Regional Organizations

New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources

19 Pillsbury Street; Concord, NH 03302
(603) 271-3483; preservation@dcr.nh.gov

New Hampshire Preservation Alliance

7 Eagle Square; Concord NH 03302
(603) 224-2281; www.nhpreservation.org

Historic New England

Otis House; 141 Cambridge Street; Boston, MA 02114
(617) 227-3956; www.historicnewengland.org

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Portsmouth Historic Commission

Joseph Almeida, Chairman
William Gladhill, Vice-Chairman, Planning Board Rep.
Nancy Pearson, City Council Representative (current)
Esther Kennedy, City Council Representative (2012 - 2015)
Jon Wyckoff, Member
Reagan Ruedig, Member
Daniel Rawling, Member
Vincent Lombardi, Member
Richard Shea, Alternate
John Mayer, Alternate

Planning Department

Nicholas Cracknell, Principal Planner
Rick Taintor, Planning Director



The North Church of Portsmouth is a visual anchor to Market Square and its steeple is a focal point of the City's skyline.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

Repair and maintenance of a building can potentially be dangerous work. It is recommended that all manufacturers' recommendations be followed and appropriate safety precautions with ladders, tools, materials and processes be taken. Property owners should consult a professional for work that is unfamiliar or potentially unsafe. Work on older buildings can uncover hazardous materials such as asbestos, lead, radon and mold. Property owners should familiarize themselves with these materials and their building's conditions prior to beginning work. Property owners who are unfamiliar with how to properly handle or work around potentially hazardous materials are strongly encouraged to consult with a trained or certified contractor.

Information about common hazardous materials can be found on national and state organizations web sites:

Asbestos

US Environmental Protection Agency Hotline
(800) 368-5888 www.epa.gov/asbestos

Lead

National Lead Information Clearinghouse
(800) 424-LEAD www.epa.gov/lead

Radon

The National Safety Council's Radon Hotline
(800) SOS-RADON www.epa.gov/radon

Mold

Indoor Air Quality Information Clearinghouse:
(800) 483-4318 www.epa.gov/iaq/molds/index

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