

West Street Historic District Commission



Application for Certificate (Read instructions before completing form)

Certificate Requested:

- Appropriateness* – for work described herein
- Hardship* – financial or otherwise described herein and does not conflict substantially with the intent and purposes of the bylaw
- Non-Applicability* – for the reason(s) described below. See guidelines for further info.

General Information:

Property Address _____

Date built (age) _____

Owner(s) _____

Tel (h) _____ (w) _____ (fax) _____ Email _____

Owner's Address _____

Applicant (if not Owner) _____

Tel (h) _____ (w) _____ (fax) _____ Email _____

Applicant's Address _____

Applicant's Relationship to Owner _____

Contractor _____

Tel (h) _____ (w) _____ (fax) _____ Email _____

Architect _____

Tel (h) _____ (w) _____ (fax) _____ Email _____

Dates of Anticipated Work: Start _____ Completion _____

Description of Proposed Work: (attach additional pages as necessary) Please include a description of how the proposed work (if a change or addition) is historically and architecturally compatible with the building and the District as a whole.

Required Documentation to be Attached: (see attached instructions) Failure to provide sufficient documentation could delay action upon application.

- Plans/scale drawings
- Existing and proposed site or plot plans
- Existing conditions photographs of structure and areas affected
- Material samples and/or product literature
- Other _____

I have read the attached instructions and, to the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this application is accurate and complete. I also give permission for members of the WSHDC to access the property for the purpose of reviewing this application and work done under any certificate issued to me.

Owners Signature(s): _____

Date: _____

PLEASE SUBMIT:

- SEVEN (7) COPIES OF COMPLETED APPLICATION

- ONE COPY OF REQUEST FOR CERTIFIED ABUTTERS LIST

TO THE TOWN PLANNER'S OFFICE, READING TOWN HALL.

FOR COMMISSION USE ONLY

Application Number: _____

Date Received: _____

Hearing Date: _____

Application Information and Instructions

CONTACT THE COMMISSION BEFORE YOU BEGIN ANY EXTERIOR WORK WITHIN THE HISTORIC DISTRICT:

Property owners in the Historic District are required to obtain a certificate from the Commission prior to starting any exterior work on buildings or structures. The application is to be filled out and submitted to the Town Planner's Office at Reading Town Hall. Once an application is received, the Commission will determine within 14 days whether the proposal is subject to review by the Commission and will require a public hearing. Such hearing is to be held within 45 days of receipt of application. Please note that, by Town Bylaw, the Building Inspector cannot issue a building permit for exterior work or demolition without the necessary certificate from this Commission. Anyone contemplating exterior work should contact the Commission. Property owners are encouraged to present preliminary plans at a regularly scheduled Commission meeting to better understand Commission requirements.

Summary of Commission Authority:

The Historic Districts Act, Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40C, was created to protect and preserve the historic resources of the Commonwealth through a local review system that encourages and ensures compatible improvement and development. Under Chapter 40C and Town bylaw, the Reading West Street Historic District Commission is required to review the architectural appropriateness of most proposed exterior design changes, whether they be a minor alteration, new additions, or removal of trim or structures. The applicant bears the burden of establishing that the proposed work is not inconsistent with the historic nature of the district. The Commission will issue a certificate of non-applicability for items specifically excluded from review. Failure to comply with the Reading Town Bylaws establishing the Historic District by failing to obtain a required certificate or refusing to cease uncertified work can result in penalties as described in Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 40C, Section 13.

Types of Certificates:

Certificate of Appropriateness – Required for exterior alterations and new construction that are subject to public view unless specifically exempted by the Bylaw.

Certificate of Non-Applicability – Issued for matters that are specifically excluded from review under the Bylaw.

Certificate of Hardship – Issued when the denial of a Certificate would constitute a hardship, financial or otherwise, on the property owner and if the proposed work does not conflict substantially with the intent and purposes of the Bylaw. Approval of a Certificate of Hardship requires detailed documentation of specific hardship to an individual property owner.

Required Documentation: In addition to the documentation specifically listed on the application form, a “Request for Certified Abutters List” is required. This form should be filled out and submitted along with the application. Please check off the appropriate boxes on the application to indicate which of the required documentation is attached. It is best to provide as much documentation in advance of the hearing to expedite the process. Required documentation can be presented at the formal hearing, however, this may delay action on the application. Based on the complexity or unique nature of a particular project, the Commission may, as allowed by law, require additional information. Failure to provide sufficient documentation could delay approval or be cause for a negative determination.

Contact Information: The Commission typically meets once a month at 7:00PM. The meetings are held at the Reading Town Hall, 16 Lowell Street. Completed applications should be submitted to the Town Planner’s Office located in the Reading Town Hall. Any inquiries should be directed to the Commission’s Chair at WSH@ci.reading.ma.us.