



Setti D. Warren
Mayor

City of Newton, Massachusetts
Department of Planning and Development
1000 Commonwealth Avenue Newton, Massachusetts 02459

Telephone
(617) 796-1120
Telefax
(617) 796-1142
TDD/TTY
(617) 796-1089
www.newtonma.gov

James Freas
Acting Director

July 1, 2015

Dear Newtonville Historic District Resident,

As an owner or resident in the Newtonville Historic District, we hope you are aware that the purpose of the District is to preserve the historic characteristics and qualities that make the area a unique and desirable place to live. The District also protects against inappropriate development and radical change that would diminish the properties and streetscapes, fosters pride and a sense of neighborhood within Newtonville, makes residents aware of their history and roots, and encourages home improvements that strengthen the integrity and character of Newtonville's architectural legacy. A map of the Newtonville Historic District can be found on the City website in the Planning and Development Department's Historic Preservation section at <http://www.newtonma.gov/gov/planning/histpres/districts/newtonville.asp>.

The Newtonville Historic District was established in 2002 and includes almost one hundred and fifty properties. Designation as a local historic district recognizes Newtonville as a historically important and architecturally intact neighborhood, reflecting the growth and development from farmland to a middle class streetcar suburb of Boston from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. The District is characterized by spacious single-family residences in the Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, and other revival styles of this period, and by the cohesive nature resulting from the overall massing, scale, lot size, setbacks and craftsmanship of the neighborhood.

The Newtonville Historic District Commission oversees the maintenance of the District and **reviews all changes to the exterior of all properties located within the District**. Commission membership is by mayoral appointment and includes representatives from the citywide Newton Historical Commission, as well as Newton architects, attorneys, realtors and residents committed to neighborhood preservation. **Reviewable exterior changes include, but are not limited to, new construction** (additions, secondary structures, fences, etc.), **repairs and replacement** (doors, windows, roofing materials, siding, etc.), **landscaping and site elements** (driveways, walkways, retaining walls, markers, lighting fixtures, etc.), and any proposed **demolition**. Commission meetings to review and vote on applications are open to the public and are usually held on the first Thursday of each month beginning at 7:30pm in Newton City Hall, Room 205. Meeting dates and deadlines can be found on the City website in the Planning and Development Department's Historic Preservation section at <http://www.newtonma.gov/gov/planning/histpres/agenin/default.asp>. **The Commission encourages neighbors to come to meetings to learn about proposed projects and to provide input.**

Any change to the exterior of a structure located in the District requires an application to the Commission. Most applications require Commission review; however, some projects such as repair or replacement in-kind may be approved by Staff. The *Historic District Review Application* and *General Permit*

Form, and all required information, must be submitted 15 days prior to the meeting. A meeting agenda is posted to the City website and also sent to the applicants and the abutters. The owner or owner's agent must attend the Commission meeting to present the application. After reviewing the application and providing the opportunity for public comment, Commission members may vote to approve or deny the application, or to continue the review at a future meeting. A record of the vote is sent to the applicant and is filed with the Inspectional Services Department and the City Clerk's Office. Once a project is approved, the applicant is responsible for any additional permits that may be required, and is required to return to the Commission if any changes are proposed to an already approved project. Completed projects are inspected to confirm that they meet the plans approved by the Commission; non-conforming projects will not receive final approval from the Inspectional Services Department. The application forms and instructions can be found in the "Form Listing" section on the main page of the City's website at <http://www.newtonma.gov/gov/featured/formlisting.asp>.

The City of Newton has the resources to facilitate the Commission review process and staff is available to provide assistance regarding the application and review process. The *City of Newton Historic Preservation Design Guidelines* were published to assist owners and residents in developing appropriate plans for exterior alterations; the Design Guidelines can be found on the City website in the Planning and Development Department's Historic Preservation section at <http://www.newtonma.gov/gov/planning/histpres/reports/default.asp>.

Additional information, including a walking tour brochure and reports on the history and architecture of the District and Newton's neighborhoods, is available on the City website. Historical information on individual properties can be found in the Massachusetts Historical Commission's MACRIS database (<http://mhc-macris.net/>), and at the Newton Historical Society at 617-796-1450. The Newton Free Library also has a number of resources and historical collections (<http://guides.newtonfreelibrary.net/newtonhistory>).

You can find this letter, with the active links, on the Newtonville Local Historic District and Commission page of the City website. If you have any questions about the Newtonville Local Historic District, or the application and review process, please contact Barbara Kurze, Senior Preservation Planner, at 617-796-1129 or bkurze@newtonma.gov.

Sincerely,

James Gross, Chair
Newtonville Historic District Commission