

CITY OF NEWBURYPORT  
FRUIT STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
60 PLEASANT STREET • P.O. BOX 550  
NEWBURYPORT, MA 01950  
(978) 465-4400 • (978) 465-4452 (FAX)

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**ADOPTED: August 14, 2008**

**Guidelines**

The goal of the Local Historic District (LHD) is to preserve the historic qualities of the Fruit Street neighborhood with minimal restrictions to the rights of its property owners. ***The following guidelines apply only to those portions of properties that are visible from the public way.***

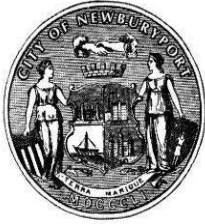
When reviewing individual applications, the Commission will be guided by the following design principles, which have been adapted from the ***Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*** (1995).

**DESIGN PRINCIPLES:**

- ***The historic character of a property should be retained and preserved.*** The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property should be avoided.
- ***Each property should be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use.*** Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding features or elements from other historic properties, should be avoided.
- ***Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right should be retained and preserved.***
- ***New additions, exterior alterations or related new construction that destroy historic materials, features and spatial relationships that characterize the property should be avoided.*** New work should be differentiated from the old, but should remain compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale, proportion and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

**DESIGN GUIDELINES:**

- ***Original elements should be retained to the extent possible.*** Preservation or restoration of original or historically appropriate features (architectural elements including doors, windows, dormers, porches, balconies, and decorative details such as cornices, columns, pediments, and railings, etc.) is preferred over replacement.

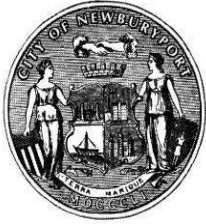


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- ***Where restoration is necessary, exact replication of the original in size, shape, orientation, and material is preferred over any alteration.*** Other alterations should not damage or hide these elements. New architectural elements should match the old in design, texture, and, where possible, material.
- ***Traditional materials such as wood, stone, slate, brick, and copper used as they were historically used are most appropriate.*** Use of modern 'synthetic' or other materials in place of the original may be considered on a case-by-case basis, but will generally only be approved where the newer material provides a substantial benefit (cost, maintainability, longevity, avoidance of hardship etc.) and is, in its proposed context, virtually indistinguishable from the original.
- ***All existing items, features and conditions are grandfathered.*** When historically inappropriate items are to be repaired on a small scale, they are likely to be approved, but, repair and replacement of inappropriate items on a large scale are likely to trigger a more rigorous review by the Committee.
- ***Architectural elements that falsify or confuse the history of a building should be avoided.***
- ***Use of vegetative screening to mask non-conforming proposals is generally not an acceptable alternative to adhering to these guidelines.*** The Commission may, however, request or require such screening as a condition to approving proposals otherwise not acceptable.
- ***In instances where some fraction of a total number of like items (windows, shutters, etc.) require replacement, and can not be replaced by accurately duplicating the originals, wholesale replacement of all the like items should not be undertaken.*** If possible, the like items should be re-distributed so that the replacements are not visible from the public way.
- ***In all cases, decisions on appropriate work will be made with careful consideration given to the amount of work involved and the total cost of various options.***

**Note:** These general design guidelines apply to all items requiring certification.



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## 1. Additions

Additions should be designed so that the character of the existing building is not radically changed, obscured, damaged, or rendered subordinate to the addition.

Additions should:

- be subservient to the original structure;
- be differentiated from the existing building (i.e., set back from the existing wall plane);
- not obstruct the visual integrity of the original structure;
- be in harmony with the original in size, scale, massing, style, materials, and detail;
- be located where least visible from the public way;
- consider the streetscape. Additional stories should be set back from the existing facades and as inconspicuous as possible.

## 2. House attachments - including entries, porches, decks & balconies

**Entryways:** The original entrance design, arrangement and size of door openings should be retained. New openings in existing walls are discouraged. Original or later contributing entrance materials, elements, details and features, including transoms and sidelights, should be retained and, if necessary, repaired. Replacement should be based on physical or documentary evidence. Entryway materials, elements, features and details shall not be sheathed or obscured. Buzzers, alarms, and intercom panels should be inside the recess of the entrance, not on the face of the building.

**Porches:** Size, proportions, style, detailing, decorations, and features such as columns and railings are important. Original porches and stoops should be retained. New porches should be consistent with the period and style of the building. Enclosing originally open porches and steps is discouraged.

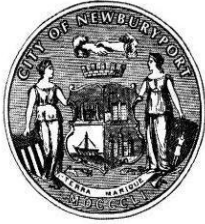
**Decks:** Decks should be designed and constructed with attention to detail and to preserve the design integrity of the structure. Appropriate vegetative screening should be considered.

**Balconies and Roof Walks:** Balconies and roof walks are generally inappropriate additions, particularly if visible from the public way. Railings should be wood or wrought iron.

## 3. Outbuildings

**Existing historic outbuildings** should be preserved and maintained. Renovations that destroy the integrity of the structure (e.g. making it look like a house) are discouraged.

**New outbuildings** include garages, sheds, greenhouses, gazebos and playhouses. Filling a lot with house and outbuildings destroys landscape, and is not appropriate. Considerations include size, scale



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and placement, as well as relation to the lot size and other structures on the lot and to adjacent and nearby lots.

#### **4. Chimneys & chimney caps**

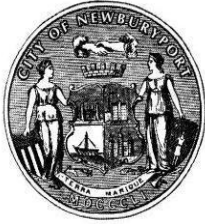
Existing chimneys should be retained unaltered in most cases and repaired if necessary, even if an interior fireplace is to be removed. New chimneys should match existing chimneys in scale, height above roof levels and finish. Details and finishes of new chimney work must be submitted. Metal caps and pipe extensions, etc. should be avoided. Clay chimney pots, where appropriate, are encouraged. Painting and plastering is appropriate if consistent with existing or neighboring chimneys.

#### **5. New construction**

New construction must be considered with particular sensitivity to the character of the surrounding area. The most critical factors are location, scale and massing, dictated in part by Zoning. The front yard setback of neighboring structures should be maintained to preserve the existing “street wall.” The scale of the structure (height, size of window and door openings, decorative trim and other architectural elements such as porches, bays, etc. and size of footprint) should be appropriate to neighboring structures. Massing specifically refers to the form of the structure and the manner in which it is articulated into primary and secondary forms such as wings, ells, etc. Careful use of massing can reduce the apparent scale of a large structure. The applicant is advised to review the other relevant sections of these guidelines for specific information related to the features of the structure (i.e. windows, doors, siding, roofs, etc.). New foundations should be of a height, material, and finish consistent with the architectural style of the structure, and in harmony with foundation heights of buildings in the surrounding area. The Commission does not insist that new construction reproduce that which is found in the original historic structures within the district, but rather that it not detract from the character of the area they collectively create. New construction should reflect the era of its birth, as the older structures do theirs, while maintaining a sensitivity to the scale, proportioning, and materials of these “respected elders.”

#### **6. Demolition**

Demolition or removal of a structure requires demolition or removal permits from both the Commission and the Municipal Building Department. There is a presumption in favor of retaining all historically significant structures with removal and relocation considered only as an alternative to demolition. If there is structural instability or deterioration, the applicant may be required to provide a technical report prepared by an architect or engineer detailing the nature and extent of the problems and a reasonably adequate estimate of the cost to correct them. Where a new structure will replace one to be demolished or removed, approval of the new structure is required as a condition of granting a certificate of demolition or removal. In addition to plans and specifications, the applicant shall submit a timetable and such guarantees and assurances for the completion and replacement as



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the Commission may require. Documentation of a structure proposed to be demolished may be required, including elevations and details of specific notable architectural features through measured drawings and photographs, in accordance with procedures established by the Historic American Building Survey.

### **7. Doors**

Existing original or later appropriate doors should be retained and repaired wherever possible, including fanlights, sidelights, surrounds, canopies, transoms, and other features. The original entrance design and arrangement of door openings should be retained. Enlarging or reducing entrance/door openings will not generally be allowed.

Storm doors should be wood framed and painted to be consistent with the overall structure. Aluminum storm doors are not appropriate.

### **8. Dormers**

New dormers, inappropriate to the historic style of the existing building, should not be installed. The original proportions of the roof should be retained. New dormers should not be visible from the public way and facades visible from the public way should not appear as though an additional story has been added.

### **9. Fire escapes**

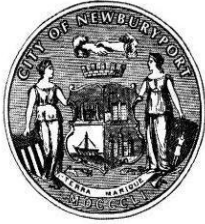
Fire escapes should not be in public view. A fire escape should be placed at the rear of the building or where least visible from a public way. If visible to the public, fire escapes should be designed and constructed with the same attention required for other major alterations.

### **10. Masonry, stucco, & foundations**

Original masonry and mortar should be retained, wherever possible, without visible surface treatment. Old mortar should be duplicated in composition, color, and texture. New mortar should reproduce the original in joint profile, size and color. In repointing, match the existing joints. Existing stucco should be repaired with a stucco mixture that duplicates the original in color and texture. The applicant may be required to provide a sample of proposed materials. The foundation height, material, and finish of an addition should match that of the existing structure.

### **11. Parking**

Providing off-street parking can significantly alter a property. Applicants are encouraged to consider all alternatives and design options. Designs should minimize the green space converted to paving. Front yards and entry walkways should not be converted to parking. Parked vehicles should not dominate the view from the public way. Landscaping should be integrated with parking areas to minimize their visual impact and to shield the view of vehicles from the street. Existing trees should



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not be removed to expand parking area. If necessary, existing front fences should be converted to gates rather than removed.

- **Driveways:** Preferred driveway pavements are brick, granite cobblestones, and packed gravel. If asphalt is proposed, it is appropriate to roll stone dust or one of the many different surface treatments available into the surface to gain the appearance of a gravel or pea stone surface. Poured concrete may be acceptable if largely out of view from the public way. Stamped asphalt and concrete made to simulate other material, or pavers of concrete or asphalt made to simulate brick or stone are generally not appropriate.
- **Walkways:** Brick and stone are appropriate in most cases. Gravel or pea stone with duckboards may also be appropriate. For more utilitarian areas, plain or exposed aggregate concrete is often acceptable. Asphalt is discouraged and concrete or asphalt simulating other materials are not appropriate.

## **12. Roofs**

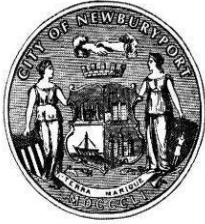
Roof shape and slope shall be preserved. Repairs and re-roofing should be of the same material and color as the existing roof, and if so, require no hearing. Re-roofing to “architectural” or other quality asphalt shingles of the same color (usually black or a dark earth-tone) requires no hearing. In new construction, harmonious roof pitches are a major consideration. The roof shape, slope, and materials should be appropriate to the style of building and reflect the color of the roofing on other on-site or neighboring buildings.

## **13. Shutters and hardware**

The placement of shutters on the outside of buildings first appeared in the Federal period (1790-1820). Existing historically appropriate shutters shall be retained and repaired whenever possible. Shutter removal requires approval. Where replacement is necessary, new shutters shall match the original or be of an appropriate style for the building. Shutters shall be made of wood. Shutters should reflect their original use. Their size should be such that they cover the entire window when closed (arched windows should have arched shutters, etc.). Shutter dimensions should be based upon window dimensions. Shutters should be hung so as to appear operable. Shutter slats should point up when shutters are open, and down when closed.

## **14. Siding**

Original siding material should be retained whenever possible and deteriorated material should be repaired or replaced with new material the same as the original or duplicating it as closely as possible. Appropriate siding materials are clapboard, brick, and on certain historical styles, wood shingles. The removal of non-original siding materials, trim and imitation clapboards is encouraged. Vinyl and aluminum siding will generally not be approved.



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### **15. Skylights**

Skylights visible from the public way are strongly discouraged. Curved plastic or bubble skylights will not be approved. Other skylights may be approved only if it can be established that the skylights are appropriate for the architectural style of the building, or can be appropriately screened from view. The nighttime appearance with interior illumination will be considered as well as the daylight appearance.

### **16. Solar panels**

Installation of solar collectors shall not permanently change any architectural feature. A minimum of two (2) feet of roof surface should be visible surrounding the array. Framing, piping and insulation, etc. should match the roof surface. Piping should be concealed from view. The Commission will consider, among other things, a building's importance, prominence and historic significance, as well as the visual impact and glare from the solar panels.

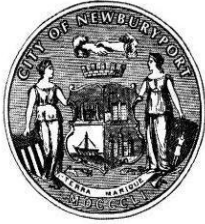
### **17. Steps, stairways, railings, and fencing**

Where possible, original features and detailing should be retained or repaired in the same design and material. When existing features are deteriorated, partially missing, or not original, replacement design and materials should be appropriate to the style of the building. Stonework should be repaired, replaced or extended using the existing type of stone or brick. New work should be appropriate to the period and character of the building. A drawing of railing design must be provided.

Traditionally, open and low fences were located along the sidewalk in front of historic structures. They complemented the structure without obstructing the view of it. Fences were constructed of wood and cast or wrought iron, combined with granite. Applicants are encouraged to preserve these fences. Traditional materials (wood, cast or wrought iron, granite and stone) are recommended. When a fence is proposed along a public street, way, or place, it should be open and low (not exceeding 42"). Fences should be compatible with the existing building in material, proportion, style and historic period and should enhance the streetscape. Architecturally significant fences should be maintained and repaired or restored whenever possible. Vinyl fences are not appropriate and will not be approved.

### **18. Trim**

Painted wood trim (corner boards, door & window casing, fascia & soffit trim, rake boards, porch columns, etc.) is found on nearly all historic structures within the district and provides essential architectural detail that both gives scale to the exterior and identifies its style. Its continued use is strongly encouraged. Property owners considering rehabilitation or renovation should preserve



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existing trim or replace it in kind if necessary. In additions and new construction, attention should be placed on neighboring historic structures to determine the appropriate application and proportioning of trim.

### **19. Gutters, downspouts, and drainage**

In the homes on Fruit Street, gutters were designed as part of the eave profile, and are a particularly important architectural feature that should be repaired whenever possible. If beyond repair, they should be replaced with like materials and design. The Commission encourages gutters to be made of wood or copper and in some cases painted aluminum. Boxed gutters are most appropriate. Unpainted aluminum for flashing, gutters or downspouts is not appropriate. Removing trim pieces from the roofline is discouraged. Eave profiles should be maintained and hung gutters (not designed as part of the eave) should be as unobtrusive as possible. Downspouts should not obstruct the view of the structure's corner wall elements. Natural stone splash beds near the foundation at the drip edge are appropriate, and should be considered.

### **20. Windows**

Original or later windows, trim and features, should be retained and repaired except when beyond repair. Retrofitting with weather-stripping and/or insulated glass is encouraged. When a determination has been made that an existing historic window is beyond repair, the replacement window shall be all wood, and of the same dimensions for muntin (mullion) and frame, same design, and same number of panes as the original or existing window.

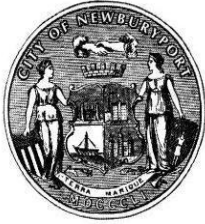
For new construction, single-paned, historically accurate, true divided light wood windows are most appropriate. If a window in new construction has insulating glass however, it should have (i) permanently applied muntins no wider than 7/8" and (ii) dark colored internal spacer bars, but it should have neither flat muntin grids applied to the inside or outside panes, nor removable muntin grids. Vinyl, aluminum or metal replacement sash, (including metal-clad or vinyl-clad) are not generally appropriate.

The number of lights within a window (e.g., 6/6, or 2/2) should be consistent with the original units, if present, or with the number of lights historically used in the period. The style of the window should be consistent with the architectural style of the building or addition. Window arrangements that create a large wall-area of glass are usually not appropriate.

### **21. Awnings**

Awnings are generally discouraged unless historically appropriate.





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## **22. Wiring**

Additional poles for overhead wiring are prohibited. All new wiring should be installed underground. Where underground installation is not feasible, wiring should be to rear elevations or at least arranged to be as inconspicuous as possible.

## **23. Modern equipment, mechanical and plumbing vents**

Modern equipment includes utility and other equipment outside a building, such as antennas, cellular towers, satellite dishes, propane and other tanks, dumpsters, utility meters, alarm systems, HVAC equipment (including air conditioners, heating units, ducts, fans, and solar collectors) and associated mounting devices, strapping, fasteners, cables, and related equipment. Modern equipment should, in general, be as small and inconspicuous as possible. All modern equipment should be installed in locations which: (a) create the least disturbance to the appearance of the building; (b) involve the fewest structural alterations; and (c) are screened, hidden or otherwise shielded from view to the greatest extent possible. Equipment placed on the ground should be sited in the rear of the building and should be screened. Front yard locations are strongly discouraged. If equipment is mounted on a roof, it should be located behind chimneys, sloped roofs and parapets or placed in the central portion of flat roofs behind sight lines from ground level or other portions of the roof not visible from any public way. Flues and vents should be concealed in chimneys or cupolas. Electrical wires and other cables should be run inside the building, underground, or along the foundation. Equipment should be painted to blend in with the building and surroundings. Window air-conditioning mounting equipment should be painted the same color as the window trim. Vents should be painted to match the color of the surface on which they are installed.

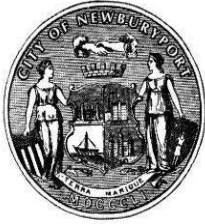
Alternatives to modern equipment (attic fans instead of A.C. units, cable TV instead of satellite dishes and antennas) are encouraged. Underground utilities are more appropriate than aerial installations.

## **24. Air conditioning units**

The Commission encourages discreet placement of air conditioning units at the rear or sides of the building.

## **25. Exterior lighting fixtures**

- **Original light fixtures** can be rare and important architectural features, contributing significantly to the structure's historic value. Applicants are encouraged to retain original or later appropriate light fixtures and to repair them using recognized preservation methods. Deteriorated or missing elements should be replaced with like materials. Replacement should be based, if possible, on physical or documentary evidence.



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- **New light fixtures** should be of a design and scale that are appropriate to the style and period of the structure.
- **Lamps** (light bulbs), in general, should be fully shielded inside the fixture. It may be appropriate in some cases to have a low lumen lamp (25 watts incandescent) as an alternative. Many historic-style (non-original) fixtures can be easily altered to shield the lamp. In the best case, light is ordinarily directed below the horizontal plane of the fixture (“full cut-off” fixture). **Light from fixtures should remain on the property, not spilling beyond the bounds of the property line.**

#### **26. Fencing, landscaping, & grading**

More solid, taller fences remote from public view are appropriate for privacy or safety but should be located where they have minimal visual impact from public streets, ways or places. These fences should also be appropriate to the structure and surrounding area.

Applicants are also encouraged to preserve natural features such as large trees and similar community assets. Before removing vegetation, careful consideration should be given to the role of such vegetation in screening. If a proposed new structure or addition is shielded from public view by vegetative screening, it may be easier to obtain approval. The Commission encourages the preservation of mature landscaping, and suggests that native trees, plants and flowers be given preference over other varieties. The existing, natural contours and topography of the landscape should be preserved to the fullest extent possible.

#### **27. Painting your house**

There are a great number of color schemes which can be safely designated as commonly found “appropriate.” The commission will gladly assist any homeowner in finding resource materials and determining a final selection. Homeowners are encouraged to recognize that color selection for painting their own property is one of their decisions that greatly impacts their neighbors and neighborhood.

#### **28. Play sets, swimming pools, and other site features**

Homeowners are encouraged to keep play structures to the rear of the property and to screen them with existing structures and/or landscaping. The scale of the structure should not overwhelm the site, and natural materials such as wood are preferred. Muted earth tones are recommended for painted structures and awnings.