

Dorchester Common Historic District Regulations
Approved by Dorchester Historic District Commission
January 8, 2013

- 1) Within the Dorchester Common Historic District no building or structure shall be erected, reconstructed, altered, restored, moved, demolished, or changed as to use except in accordance with these regulations, unless a Certificate of Approval shall have been issued by the Dorchester Historic District Commission. An Application for Certification of Approval, which may be obtained from the Town Office, must be completed and submitted to the Dorchester Historic District Commission. Any site plans, building plans, elevations, photographs, sketches, data as to material, color and texture, or other information reasonably requested and required by the Commission to determine the appropriateness of the project in question shall be made available by the applicant at the time of the evaluation. However, the foregoing approval shall not be required for routine maintenance and repair of existing structures, nor for interior alterations or improvements, provided the work to be performed does not change the exterior appearance or the use of the building. These regulations shall apply to both municipal and private property within the Historic District.

- 2) Within a period of forty-five (45) consecutive calendar days after the filing of an application, or within such further time as the applicant may in writing allow, the Commission shall determine whether the action or usage proposed will be appropriate within the Dorchester Historic District. The Commission shall file an approved or disapproved Certificate of Approval with the Town Clerk of Dorchester, with copies to the Selectmen and to the applicant. If the Commission fails to act in the 45-day period, the application will be deemed approved. A Certificate of Approval is good for one (1) year from date of issuance.
At the completion of the work for which a Certificate of Approval has been granted, the applicant shall notify the Commission in order to schedule final review of the work. If the applicant has not been notified within a period of forty-five (45) consecutive calendar days, the Certificate of Approval will be deemed approved. If the work does not match the approved application, the Commission will require that it be corrected before issuing the final notice of approval.

- 3) Any work performed must conform to the plan for which a Certificate of Approval was issued.

- 4) Approval by the Historic District Commission shall not in any way relieve or excuse the applicant from conformance with other applicable Federal, State, or local regulations.

- 5) **Permitted Use of Buildings and Land**
 - a) Single-family residential, agricultural and municipal uses are permitted without limitation as long as architectural and environmental criteria are met.
 - b) Multi-family use is permissible as long as architectural criteria are met. However, multi-family use of structures shall not be permitted where it would result in violation of environmental criteria or where it would be conducive to physical conditions (noise, parking, traffic, congestions, etc.) incompatible with the characteristic appearance and atmosphere of the District.
 - c) Institutional uses are limited to museums, libraries, churches and Town Hall.
 - d) Professional occupations may be practiced either as a combined residence/office or solely as a business office as long as architectural and environmental criteria are met and traffic flow constitutes no hardship or annoyance to residents of the District.

- e) Businesses consistent with the character of the District are permitted as long as architectural and environmental criteria are met, and such factors as level of employment, traffic flow, parking, and noise constitute no hardship or annoyance to residents of the District.
- f) Factory type manufacturing operations and the use or outdoor storage of heavy machinery, equipment and/or accessories are not permitted. Other outside storage consistent with the character of the District is permitted with approval of the Historic District Commission.

6) Architectural Criteria

- a) New building sizes shall be no larger than those prevalent within the District and new buildings shall be consistent and harmonious in shape and design with the architectural attributes of existing structures.
- b) Roof lines of all new buildings or additions shall be gabled with a minimum 7" rise per foot and outbuildings can be shed with a 4" rise per foot.
- c) Fenestration (windows) shall agree with generally established patterns in the District.
- d) Height of new structures shall be no greater than 35 feet.
- e) The general and basic requirement for exterior surface materials and finish is that they shall be authentic and harmonious in appearance in relation to the architecture of the structure to which they are applied. Traditional materials, following, are considered as standard but will require specific consideration and approval by the Commission before work is begun:
 - 1) Main vertical surfaces shall be wood, clapboards, shingles or aluminum/vinyl siding with the appearance of clapboard.
 - 2) Roof surfaces shall be of slate, wood shingle or any dark colored composition/material, with the appearance of slate or wood shingle.
 - 3) If existing structures exterior color is to be changed, that color requires approval from the Historic District Commission. The exterior paint of new home construction requires approval from the Historic District Commission.
 - 4) Fences shall be no higher than four feet and shall be of stone, hedge, or wood. Wood fences shall be picket or rail.
- f) Radio and television antennae shall be hidden from view from the street insofar as is reasonably possible. The erection of transmitting or receiving antennae or towers other than those used in normal broadcast reception requires specific approval of the Commission.
- g) All external lighting requires specific approval by the Commission. Criteria include down lighting, being non-reflective into the night sky and in keeping with the style of the 1850's.

7) Signs

- a) For institutional and governmental uses involving multiple buildings, one primary sign is permitted, the total area of which does not exceed twelve square feet. Secondary signs, the total area of which do not exceed two square feet per sign, are permitted to indicate essential directions or to identify a single structure. (Requires specific approval by the Commission)
- b) For professional and business uses, one primary sign shall be permitted, the total area of which does not exceed two square feet. (Requires specific approval by the commission). Reference Dorchester's Land Use Regulations—Commercial Signs.
- c) All signs shall be attached to the buildings and designed in a manner consistent with the 1790-1850 period. Dark colored letters on a white background are preferred, and any deviation from this, or any use of a commercial trademark or device in a sign requires specific approval by the Commission of the proposed design.

- d) No neon, gaseous type signs or flashing lights are permitted. Illumination of all signs shall be placed so that no direct light can reach any street or adjacent property.
- e) One "For Sale" sign (per realtor) shall be permitted upon any lot of land within a single ownership.
- f) All signs shall be constructed of durable material, shall be lettered in a professional manner and shall be maintained in good repair.

8) Environmental Criteria

- a) Reference Dorchester's Land Use Ordinance.
- b) No new construction or addition shall be so placed as to constitute an annoyance or impose undue hardship upon adjacent property owners.
- c) Roads within the district shall be no wider than their present width of 15 feet traveled way.
- d) Any proposed driveways in a Historic District shall be natural gravel.

9) Appeals

Within 30 days after any order or decision of the Commission, the applicant or any person directly affected may file for a rehearing with the Historic District Commission, stating the grounds for appeal. Appeal from the Commission's decision on rehearing will be made to the Dorchester Board of Adjustment within 30 days under RSA 677:17. (RSA 677:17 empowers the board of adjustment...to hear appeals from decisions of the historic district commission and provisions of the district regulations.)

10) Enforcement

- a) The Commission shall administer the provisions of this ordinance.
- b) In the event of a violation of any of the provisions of this ordinance the Board of Selectmen shall determine whether to proceed with enforcement by way of civil or criminal penalties as provided in RSA 676:17 or injunction as provided in RSA 676:15

11) General

- a) These regulations shall supersede existing regulations in the Dorchester Common Historic District.
- b) The invalidity of any section or provision of these regulations shall not invalidate any other section or provision thereof.