

# HOW TO DO EXTERIOR ARCHITECTURAL CHANGES IN THE PIERCE-LOCKWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT (PLNCD)

## STEP 1

[Contact the PLNCD Commission](#) and request time at the next open meeting (One will be scheduled if no date has already been set.) for an informal discussion of changes you are considering. This will give you an opportunity to discuss your plans and get input from Commission members and other neighborhood meeting participants. The [NCD Process Flowchart for Making Alterations](#) may be helpful in illustrating this process.

For those homes in **both** the East Village Historic District (handled by the [Historic Districts Commission](#), or HDC) and the PLNCD, this informal discussion may still be a very useful first step. After this informal discussion, it is advised that you proceed through the HDC process, which also involves an informal discussion for larger projects. Once you have received a Certificate of Appropriateness from the HDC, you may just need to submit that paperwork to the NCD and no further NCD requirements will be needed. Occasionally further action will be required by the NCD.

## STEP 2

With the ideas and input from that informal discussion, you will more than likely know whether your project will require a public hearing. If you intended to hire an architect or someone to produce a set of plans, you could move forward with that step at this point. A set of plans, with drawings and/or architectural renderings, and a list of materials with as much information as possible will be required for your completed formal NCD application for review.

## STEP 3

At this point, you will need to complete the [PLNCD Commission Application](#) which will require the information listed in Step 2. The Commission Chair will determine whether your application is complete and may ask for additional information. The date that the application is deemed complete will be your official filing date.

A **Certificate of Non-applicability** will be issued to you by the PLNCD Commission within 14 days after submission of a completed application for review for the following:

- a) your plans are exempt under the by-law

- b) your plans do not require a public hearing
- c) your HDC paperwork is sufficient and further NCD action is not necessary

Once the application is complete, the Commission has 45 days from the official filing date in which to schedule the public hearing. The Chair will set the meeting date, the location, post the hearing on the Town website and put a notice in the local newspaper, the Lexington Minuteman. You will be asked to sign the [Newspaper Legal Charge Authorization](#) so that the newspaper can bill you directly for the legal notice.

#### **STEP 4**

The Commission Chair will assist you in drafting the notice that must be mailed, or hand-delivered, to abutters within 100 feet of your property line at least 14 days prior to the hearing. The Chair will also assist in informing you of those addresses. All copying or mailing expenses of notifying abutters will need to be paid by the applicant.

#### **STEP 5**

At the public hearing, you will be asked to explain your project in detail and answer questions by both the Commission and the other participants. The Chair will be responsible for conducting the hearing and calling on individuals wishing to speak. You may bring your architect or anyone else who wishes to speak on your behalf. After the hearing is closed, the Commission may vote on its decision at that meeting or may take up to 60 days to notify the applicant of its decision. After sixty days, the Certificate of Compatibility will be deemed granted. All deliberations will be done at an advertised public meeting and you will be notified in writing of the decision. The Building Commissioner will be notified within 7 days of the Commission's decisions.

A **Certificate of Compatibility** will be issued if the Commission makes the decision that your project meets the regulations and guidelines of the PLNCD.

A **Certificate of Hardship** will be sent to you if your plans meet the requirements outlined in Chapter 78(5)(d)(iii) under the hardship guidelines.

#### **STEP 6**

If you receive a Certificate of Compatibility, without conditions, or a Certificate of Hardship, you may proceed to apply for a Building Permit, submitting your NCD letter

with all of the paperwork required by the Building Department. (It would be in your best interest to inquire about the Building Department's requirements while you are proceeding through the NCD process.) Inform the Building Department at that time that you are already working with the NCD Commission.

If you receive a Certificate of Compatibility, but it has accompanying conditions, you will have the choice of responding in writing that the conditions are acceptable to you and you can proceed to the Building Department step. If the conditions require additional discussion, you may notify the Chair so that a public meeting can be scheduled. Also, if you receive a notice that the project is not compatible, you may change your plans and apply for an additional review. The process will proceed as above until a Certificate of Compatibility can be issued.

**Questions** regarding the process may be answered by reviewing Town Bylaws, [Chapter 78](#), the enabling legislation, and [Article III](#), the PLNCD by-law in the Code of Lexington.

July 31, 2019