



# CITY OF MELROSE

## HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

CITY HALL, 562 MAIN STREET, MELROSE, MASSACHUSETTS 02176

### CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS APPLICATION

Name of Applicant \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Address of Property \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

1. Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness in the Downtown Melrose Historic District for (check all that apply):

- ☐ Signage or Awnings
- ☐ Facade Renovation
- ☐ New Building Construction
- ☐ Exterior Features (i.e., fixtures, fences, walls)
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

2. If you are a tenant under lease, please provide the following information:

Name of Landlord \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Year of Lease Expiration \_\_\_\_\_

3. Briefly describe the proposed work and its uses, including the proposed methods of preserving existing materials, structures, designs, etc. as expressed in the Application Submission Requirements. If preserving existing materials is not proposed explain why not. (Attach the appropriate drawings as described in the Melrose Historic District Application Submission Requirements):

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4. Applications for Signage:

Dimensions of Sign \_\_\_\_\_ Materials \_\_\_\_\_ Letter Style \_\_\_\_\_  
Letter Size \_\_\_\_\_ Color \_\_\_\_\_ (S) Mounting Type \_\_\_\_\_

5. Name of Contractor or Signmaker \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Applicant \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address of Applicant \_\_\_\_\_

OFFICE USE ONLY:      Date Received \_\_\_\_\_ By Whom Received \_\_\_\_\_  
                                    Date of Hearing \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Certificate \_\_\_\_\_

FEE RECEIVED:      \$20.00 Cash/Check



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### HISTORIC DISTRICT APPLICATION CHECKLIST

This application checklist should be filed with all Historic District Commission applications. Since incomplete applications make it difficult for the Commission to review cases, they will not be accepted. A staff person at the Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) will fill out and sign this checklist prior to receiving and processing the application for the Historic District Commission. Questions concerning the application may be directed to the OPCD, Second Floor, City Hall, 781-979-4190. APPLICANT SHOULD ONLY FILL OUT THE INFORMATION REQUESTED ABOVE THE LINE.

Name of Applicant \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

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#### DO NOT FILL IN BELOW THIS LINE. FOR OFFICE USE ONLY.

- ☐ A. Application Form: signed, dated, and completed, along with \$20.00 filing fee.
- ☐ B. Supporting Documentation:

##### Signage or Awnings:

- ☐ Sketch of Sign or Awning: Scaled Drawings, indicating color(s), dimensions, letter style and size, materials, and lighting.
- ☐ Description regarding mounting.
- ☐ Location of Sign or Awning: Drawing or photograph, with dimensions, indicating location of sign or awning.

##### New Construction or Facade Renovation:

- ☐ Architectural Drawings: All affected facade elevations, at a scale of at least 1 inch = 4 feet.
- ☐ Site Plan: At a scale of at least 1 inch = 20 feet (not required where existing).
- ☐ Building Materials: Including type, color, and texture, and the type of windows, doors, lights, signs, and other fixtures.
- ☐ Photograph of existing facade or site conditions.

##### Exterior Features (Fixtures, Fences, Walls):

- ☐ Drawings: Indicating dimensions, style, materials, and placement.
- ☐ Photographs.

- ☐ C. Inspectional Services: Letter of Zoning Compliance from the Building Commissioner.

The attached application for a Certificate of Appropriateness includes all of the appropriate information listed above.

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Office of Planning and Community Development



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### APPLICATION SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

#### 1. What is the Downtown Melrose Historic District?

The Downtown Melrose Historic District was approved by the Melrose Board of Aldermen in 1979, under the provisions of the Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40C, Historic Districts Act. This state law cites three purposes for Historic Districts: (1) to preserve and protect the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places significant in the history of the Commonwealth; (2) to maintain and improve the settings of those buildings and places; and (3) to encourage new designs compatible with existing buildings in the district.

The Downtown Melrose Historic District encompasses the commercial and residential core around Main Street, principally between West and East Foster and West and East Emerson Streets. This area was selected because of its architectural character and importance to the City's development. The Historic District is administered by a local Historic District Commission, an appointed group of citizens which must review all proposed architectural changes in the District. The Commission's membership includes experts in architecture, real estate, history, and law. A map of the Historic District boundaries is available at the Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD), Second Floor, City Hall.

Enactment of the Historic District in no way requires downtown property owners to alter their properties or to conform to the architectural style of a specific historic period. Work must be reviewed only if it involves a change from conditions that existed when the local ordinance was enacted in 1979.

#### 2. What architectural changes are reviewed by the Commission?

The Commission will review proposal changes to buildings of any size or function, as well as signs, fences, walls, light fixtures, or similar devices which are visible from a public street, public way, public park, or public body of water. Building projects which must be reviewed include construction, reconstruction, demolition, and removal of architectural features. The Commission may also review the kind, color, and texture of exterior building materials and the type and style of windows, doors, lights, signs, awnings, and other fixtures. The City's Building Commissioner will not provide a building or demolition permit for any construction project or sign located in the Historic District unless the Historic District Commission has reviewed the project and issued a Certificate of Appropriateness.

#### 3. What is excluded from the Commission's review?

Storm windows and doors, antennae and similar devices, temporary signs and signs measuring one square foot or less (and, if illuminated, with indirect lighting) are exempt from review by the Historic District Commission. Landscaping, interiors, and any exterior features not visible from a public way are also exempt. Terraces, walks, driveways, and sidewalks do not require review provided they are substantially at grade level. The Historic District Commission cannot reject a project on the basis of paint colors, except for masonry or materials currently unpainted.

4. What factors are considered during the Commission's request?

The Commission considers, among many factors, the historic and architectural value and significance of the site, building, or structure, the general design, arrangement, texture, material and color of the features involved, and the relationship of these features to similar features of buildings in the surrounding area. Refurbishment or replacement in kind is generally preferred and these options need to be explored and presented for the Historic District Commission to fully evaluate projects that come before them in a timely fashion. New signage should be consistent in type, size, and style with existing signage of other businesses in the same building. In the case of new construction or an addition to an existing building in relation to its site and surrounding buildings, and in appropriate cases impose dimensional and setback requirements in addition to those required by zoning. The Commission cannot make any recommendation or requirement except for the purpose of preventing developments incongruous to the historic aspects or the architectural characteristics of the surroundings and of the historic district.

5. What does a complete application include?

Application forms for a Certificate of Appropriateness are available from the Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD), Second Floor, City Hall, 781-979-4190. Staff is available to offer guidance in preparing an application for a specific project. A completed application form and the following supporting documentation must be submitted to the Historic District Commission at the OPCD. Professional preparation of supporting documentation is recommended. A public hearing at a Historic District Commission meeting will subsequently be scheduled.

A. Applications for signage or awnings must include the following supporting documentation:

- (1) Sketch of Sign or Awning:  
Scaled drawings of the sign or awning, indicating its color(s), dimensions, letter style and size, materials, and lighting.
- (2) Location of Sign or Awning:  
A drawing or photograph of the entire facade of the building, including signs belonging to other businesses, and indicating the exact location of the proposed sign or awning on the building facade. Dimensions indicating exact placement must be provided.
- (3) Mounting:  
A description of how and where the sign or awning will be mounted.
- (4) Any other supporting documentation requested by the Commission.

B. Applications for new building construction or facade renovation must include the following supporting documentation:

- (1) Architectural Drawings:  
Architectural drawings at a scale of at least 1 inch = 4 feet for all affected facade elevations that are visible from a public way, showing all entrances and exits, windows, storefront partitions and doorways, stairways, chimneys, and other pertinent exterior features.
- (2) Site Plan:  
A site plan at a scale of at least 1 inch = 20 feet indicating placement of the building on the lot, with notations of setbacks, dimensions, location of parking, landscaping, lighting, and walkways (not required where existing).
- (3) Building Materials:

Description of the type, color, and texture of exterior building materials, and the type and style of windows, doors, lights, signs, and other fixtures.

(4) Photographs:

A photograph of the existing facade or site conditions.

(5) Any other supporting documentation requested by the Commission.

C. Applications for exterior features (i.e., light fixtures, fences, walls) independent of signage, awnings, or new construction must include the following documentation:

(1) Drawings:

Drawings of the proposed fixtures, indicating dimensions, style, materials, and its placement on the facade or site.

(2) Photograph:

A photograph of the facade or site, indicating proposed placement of the fixture or exterior feature.

(3) Any other supporting documentation.

6. What occurs after the application is submitted?

The Historic District Commission generally meets on an as needed basis. At each meeting, public hearings are held to discuss specific applications for Certificates of Appropriateness. Notice of the hearing for each individual case must be posted in City Hall for at least 14 days prior to the date of the hearing. Written notice of the hearing is also sent to surrounding property owners. The Commission must act upon the application within 45 days of its filing or a Certificate of Hardship is automatically issued.

A public hearing need not be held if such a hearing is waived by all surrounding property owners and others entitled to notice of the hearing.

A Certificate of Nonapplicability may be issued for a project which the Commission determines does not involve an exterior feature, a substantial change, or a feature not visible from a public way.

A Certificate of Hardship may be issued when refusal to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness or Nonapplicability would cause the applicant substantial hardship, financial or otherwise, as long as there is no substantial detriment to the district.

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If the Commission disapproves an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness, it must give its reasons to the applicant in writing. However, the Commission is specifically authorized to make recommendations for changes which would make the application acceptable. If the application is modified to conform to the Commission's suggestions, a Certificate of Appropriateness must be issued.

PLEASE NOTE: A \$20.00 application fee must be submitted with the application.