

# West Street Historic District Commission



## Application for Certificate (Read instructions before completing form)

### Certificate Requested:

- Appropriateness* – for work described herein
- Hardship* – financial or otherwise described herein and does not conflict substantially with the intent and purposes of the bylaw
- Non-Applicability* – for the reason(s) described below. See guidelines for further info.

### General Information:

Property Address \_\_\_\_\_

Date built (age) \_\_\_\_\_

Owner(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Tel (h) \_\_\_\_\_ (w) \_\_\_\_\_ (fax) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Owner's Address \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant (if not Owner) \_\_\_\_\_

Tel (h) \_\_\_\_\_ (w) \_\_\_\_\_ (fax) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's Address \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's Relationship to Owner \_\_\_\_\_

Contractor \_\_\_\_\_

Tel (h) \_\_\_\_\_ (w) \_\_\_\_\_ (fax) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Architect \_\_\_\_\_

Tel (h) \_\_\_\_\_ (w) \_\_\_\_\_ (fax) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of Anticipated Work: Start \_\_\_\_\_ Completion \_\_\_\_\_

**Description of Proposed Work:** (attach additional pages as necessary) Please include a description of how the proposed work (if a change or addition) is historically and architecturally compatible with the building and the District as a whole.

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**Required Documentation to be Attached:** (see attached instructions) Failure to provide sufficient documentation could delay action upon application.

- Plans/scale drawings
- Existing and proposed site or plot plans
- Existing conditions photographs of structure and areas affected
- Material samples and/or product literature
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**I have read the attached instructions and, to the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this application is accurate and complete. I also give permission for members of the WSHDC to access the property for the purpose of reviewing this application and work done under any certificate issued to me.**

**Owners Signature(s):** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

***PLEASE SUBMIT:***

***- SEVEN (7) COPIES OF COMPLETED APPLICATION***

***- ONE COPY OF REQUEST FOR CERTIFIED ABUTTERS LIST***

***TO THE TOWN PLANNER'S OFFICE, READING TOWN HALL.***

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**FOR COMMISSION USE ONLY**

Application Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_

Hearing Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Application Information and Instructions**

### **CONTACT THE COMMISSION BEFORE YOU BEGIN ANY EXTERIOR WORK WITHIN THE HISTORIC DISTRICT:**

Property owners in the Historic District are required to obtain a certificate from the Commission prior to starting any exterior work on buildings or structures. The application is to be filled out and submitted to the Town Planner's Office at Reading Town Hall. Once an application is received, the Commission will determine within 14 days whether the proposal is subject to review by the Commission and will require a public hearing. Such hearing is to be held within 45 days of receipt of application. Please note that, by Town Bylaw, the Building Inspector cannot issue a building permit for exterior work or demolition without the necessary certificate from this Commission. Anyone contemplating exterior work should contact the Commission. Property owners are encouraged to present preliminary plans at a regularly scheduled Commission meeting to better understand Commission requirements.

### **Summary of Commission Authority:**

The Historic Districts Act, Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40C, was created to protect and preserve the historic resources of the Commonwealth through a local review system that encourages and ensures compatible improvement and development. Under Chapter 40C and Town bylaw, the Reading West Street Historic District Commission is required to review the architectural appropriateness of most proposed exterior design changes, whether they be a minor alteration, new additions, or removal of trim or structures. The applicant bears the burden of establishing that the proposed work is not inconsistent with the historic nature of the district. The Commission will issue a certificate of non-applicability for items specifically excluded from review. Failure to comply with the Reading Town Bylaws establishing the Historic District by failing to obtain a required certificate or refusing to cease uncertified work can result in penalties as described in Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 40C, Section 13.

### **Types of Certificates:**

*Certificate of Appropriateness* – Required for exterior alterations and new construction that are subject to public view unless specifically exempted by the Bylaw.

*Certificate of Non-Applicability* – Issued for matters that are specifically excluded from review under the Bylaw.

*Certificate of Hardship* – Issued when the denial of a Certificate would constitute a hardship, financial or otherwise, on the property owner and if the proposed work does not conflict substantially with the intent and purposes of the Bylaw. Approval of a Certificate of Hardship requires detailed documentation of specific hardship to an individual property owner.

**Required Documentation:** In addition to the documentation specifically listed on the application form, a “Request for Certified Abutters List” is required. This form should be filled out and submitted along with the application. Please check off the appropriate boxes on the application to indicate which of the required documentation is attached. It is best to provide as much documentation in advance of the hearing to expedite the process. Required documentation can be presented at the formal hearing, however, this may delay action on the application. Based on the complexity or unique nature of a particular project, the Commission may, as allowed by law, require additional information. Failure to provide sufficient documentation could delay approval or be cause for a negative determination.

**Contact Information:** The Commission typically meets once a month at 7:00PM. The meetings are held at the Reading Town Hall, 16 Lowell Street. Completed applications should be submitted to the Town Planner’s Office located in the Reading Town Hall. Any inquiries should be directed to the Commission’s Chair at [WSH@ci.reading.ma.us](mailto:WSH@ci.reading.ma.us).



**Town of Reading**  
**16 Lowell Street**  
**Reading, MA 01867**

**West Street Historic District Commission**  
Phone 781-942-6608  
Fax (781) 942-9071  
Website: readingma.gov

Application Process and Procedures  
*General Bylaws 7.3.*

**Step 1:**

Submit Application for Certificate to West Street Historic District Commission (WSHDC). Submit to the Community Services Department in Town Hall.

Applications should include plans, elevations, and specifications about materials, colors, demolition or removal, a statement of proposed work and description of the existing conditions.

**Step 2:**

The WSHDC will review the application and determine if it is within the jurisdiction of the Commission. A determination will be made within 14 days of the date the application was received.

If the Commission determines that the proposal is not subject to the Commission's review then the Commission will issue a Certificate of Non-Applicability.

If the Commission determines that the application involves exterior architectural features subject to review under this by-law, it may hold a public hearing; unless determined the hearing can be waived. The public hearing shall be held within 45 days from the date the application was received.

**Step 3:**

Fourteen days before the hearing, notice shall be given by posting in a conspicuous place in Town Hall and in a newspaper of general circulation in Reading. Concurrently, a copy of public notice shall be mailed to the applicant and to the owners of properties within 300 feet. The applicant is responsible for the costs of the mailing and advertising.

*Note: A public hearing may be waived by the Commission if work is determined to be insubstantial and can be reviewed without a public hearing. However, the applicant will be responsible for mailing cost to inform the abutters. Ten (10) shall elapse after the mailing of such notice before the Commission may act upon such application and after considering any responses.*

**Step 4:**

The Commission will disapprove the application or issue a certificate within 60 days from the date the application was submitted.

In the case of disapproval the Commission will write a letter to the applicant explaining the reasons for disapproval and recommendations for changes for approval. The applicant may then file the application with the changes in a subsequent application.

The Certificate or letter or disapproval will be sent to and files with the Town Clerk and Building Department.

If the Commission should fail to issue a Certificate or disapproval within 60 days of the application for a Certificate, the Commission shall thereupon issue a Certificate of Hardship due to failure to act.

Anyone aggrieved by a determination of the Commission may, within 20 days of the issuance of a Certificate of disapproval, file a written request for a review by a person acting as arbitrator and designated by the Boston Metropolitan Area Planning Agency. The finding of the review shall be filed with the Town Clerk within 45 days after the request.

**Types of Certificates:**(1) Certificate of Appropriateness (2) Certificate of Hardship (3) Certificate of Non-Applicability