



Avon Hill Neighborhood Conservation District Commission

Cambridge Historical Commission, 831 Massachusetts Ave., 2nd Fl., Cambridge, MA 02139
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URL: <http://www.cambridgema.gov/historic/districtsHistoricProperties/avonhillncd>

APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATE

Section I:

1. The undersigned hereby applies to the Avon Hill Neighborhood Conservation District Commission for a Certificate of (check one box): Appropriateness, Nonapplicability, or Hardship, in accordance with Ch. 2.78 of the Municipal Code and the order establishing the district.
2. Address of property: _____, Cambridge, Massachusetts
3. Describe the proposed alteration(s), construction or demolition in the space provided below:
(An additional page can be attached, if necessary).

I certify that the information contained herein is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.
The undersigned also attests that he/she has read the application in full.

Name of Property Owner of Record: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Telephone/Fax: _____ **E-mail:** _____

Signature of Property Owner of Record: _____

(Required field; application will not be considered complete without property owner's signature)

Name of proponent, if not record owner: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Telephone/Fax: _____ **E-mail:** _____

(for office use only):

Date Application Received: _____ **Case Number:** _____ **Hearing Date:** _____

Type of Certificate Issued: _____ **Date Issued:** _____

Section II: To be completed by staff or applicant.

Is property listed on the National Register of Historic Places? _____ Publicly owned? _____

Current Zoning : _____ Current Use: _____

Section III. Complete entire section.

Does the property contain a use established or continued by special permit or variance? _____
or does the owner propose to continue a use that would require a variance or special permit under the
zoning ordinance? _____

Will this project require: variance? _____ special permit? _____

If yes, nature of zoning relief sought: setback _____ FAR _____ height _____ parking _____

Will this project require issuance of a demolition permit, other than for a structure originally built to
house automobiles? _____

IV. Complete applicable sections.

1. New Construction, Construction of Accessory Building, or Construction of Addition:

_____ Gross Floor Area of Proposed Construction

*Office Use Only: Increase
in Gross Floor Area _____*

_____ Gross Floor Area of Existing Construction

_____ Existing Total Lot Coverage*

*Office Use Only: Increase
in Total Lot Coverage* _____*

_____ Proposed Total Lot Coverage*

* Total Lot Coverage is defined as the combined square footage of the footprints of all structures on the premises whether or not those structures constitute floor area as defined in the zoning ordinance in effect

2. Alterations: Does this project include:

_____ the increase or reduction of the existing building envelope, including covered porches or decks over 2.5' above grade;

_____ the removal, enclosure or addition of any cornice, fascia, soffit, bay, porch, hood, corner board, window sash, window or door casing, or any other decorative element, including historic shingled siding, wood or copper gutters and downspouts, and copper, slate or wood shingle roofing;

_____ the construction of terraces, walks, driveways, sidewalks, and similar structures that involve a change in grade level, and that are to be used for parking between the street and the principal front wall plane of a building, or the principal front and side wall planes of a building occupying a corner property;

_____ the construction of walls and fences greater than four feet in height as measured from the sidewalk or the existing immediately adjacent grade and located between the street and the principal front wall plane of a building or the front and side wall planes of a building occupying a corner property; or construction of walls and fences greater than six feet high elsewhere on the property;

_____ construction of an accessory building that would create new floor area

_____ installation of exterior mechanical equipment such as air conditioning condensers, furnace exhausts, vents, etc.?

Instructions for Completing This Application

This application must be filed at the offices of the Cambridge Historical Commission, which staffs the Avon Hill Neighborhood Conservation District Commission, before any work is undertaken. **Ten copies of the completed application and all supporting materials (see below for list) must be submitted by the filing deadline.** Filing deadlines for applications may be obtained by contacting the Cambridge Historical Commission at 617-349-4683 or www.cambridgema.gov/historic/meetingdates.html. Incomplete applications cannot be scheduled for Commission consideration. Applications must be signed by the record owner of the property. The Commission staff welcomes advance inquiries for interpretation of the order or advice on the content of a proposal.

Contact the Commission staff to determine whether the scope of proposed work requires a binding or non-binding review. The difference between a binding review and a non-binding review is whether the applicant must follow the recommendations of the Commission when making alterations to his property or whether the Commission's recommendations are advisory only.

Owners should plan to attend all meetings at which their applications will be considered. If the applicant has professional consultants, such as architects, contractors, landscape architects, engineers, or attorneys, they are invited to attend as well.

Plans not larger than 11" x 17" are preferred. Plans submitted with applications are incorporated into approved Certificates. Subsequent changes to approved plans may require additional review and approval and are undertaken at the applicant's risk.

Application Requirements:

1. Completed application form with a written description of the work to be done, including all pertinent information of which you think the Commission should be aware
2. Assessor's plan of the area showing neighboring buildings
3. For alterations:
 - Documentation of existing and proposed conditions including dimensioned site plans, elevations, photographs, or manufacturer's documentation as needed to provide the Commission with sufficient information to understand the details of the work proposed.
4. For new construction and additions:
 - Dimensioned site plans of existing and proposed conditions, including the footprints of all existing and proposed buildings, parking areas, and driveways, fencing, and landscaping. Please indicate compass orientation and removal of any mature trees.
 - Detailed, dimensioned elevations and floor plans for any proposed construction, including rendering of window treatment and schedule of materials
 - Sun and shadow study (winter and summer solstice, AM and PM)
 - For new construction only: Streetscape elevation at 1/8th scale showing relative heights and distances of the surrounding buildings in comparison with any proposed new construction
5. When zoning relief is required, please include a copy of the completed Dimensional Form from the Board of Zoning Appeal's variance application

Statement of Principles, Standards, and Guidelines for Review

(from the revised Avon Hill Neighborhood Conservation District Order, 12/14/09)

The Commission, including the Staff with respect to the matters described in Paragraph B of the preceding section IV, shall apply certain principles, standards, and guidelines for review in addition to the factors set forth in Section 2.78.220 of the City Code in considering applications for certificates of appropriateness, non-applicability, or hardship.

A. Principles of Review:

The Commission shall:

1. encourage property owners to invest in their properties and seek to guide change so that it is compatible with the visual character of the neighborhood.
2. recognize the capacity of certain properties in the District for additional development under applicable provision of the zoning code and affirm its consideration of proposed additions and alterations to such properties consistent with the terms of this order.
3. recognize that the District and the greater neighborhood developed incrementally and in different eras and shall review applications with regard to the architecture and period of the building and the development pattern of its surroundings.
4. seek to achieve consensus determinations based on the available historical record, recommendations from members, alternates and Staff, and comments from applicants and abutters and consistent with the terms of this order.
5. affirm its and the Staff's role as a technical advisor to applicants on issues of conservation and preservation.

B. General Conservation Standards:

All applications shall be considered in terms of the visible impact from the public way of the proposed new construction or alteration, relocation or demolition of an existing building on the District as a whole, and in addition with regard to the potential adverse effects of the proposed construction, alteration, relocation, or demolition on the surrounding properties and on the immediate streetscape. General conservation standards shall be to:

1. Balance the interests of homeowners desiring to make changes in their property with the District's interest in conserving the historic development patterns of the District, including its Green Space, open vistas and generous setbacks;
2. Enhance the pedestrian's visual enjoyment of the District's buildings, landscapes, and Structures;
3. Encourage the preservation of the visual form of the District's buildings, landscapes, and Structures;
4. Maintain the diversity of the District's architectural styles.
5. Protect Structures in the Avon Hill National Register District;

C. Conservation Guidelines for the District:

The following guidelines establish the conservation principles to be encouraged within any given application.

1. **Infill Construction and Additions:**
In the A-2 zone, infill construction (including accessory buildings) and additions should not cause Total Lot Coverage to exceed 35%; in the B and C-1 zones, infill construction and additions should not cause Total Lot Coverage to exceed 45%. In addition to considering streetscape impacts of infill construction and additions, vistas into and through the site from surrounding public ways should be conserved. Impacts on significant landscape features and mature plantings should be minimized. Additions should be compatible with the architectural character of the principal building and its surroundings, should be sited away from principal elevations, and should respect the cornice height of the original building.

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2. **Parking:**

Where parking between the principal front wall plane of a building and the street is proposed, curb cuts and the square footage of paved area devoted to parking should be minimized. Paving in permeable materials is encouraged. Low fencing, low walls, and plant materials to screen parking areas are encouraged.
3. **Fences:**

Fences should be low and transparent to conserve vistas into and through properties and to enable the pedestrian's visual access to the character of the District. The desire for enclosing private spaces should be balanced against the historically-open character of vistas in the District. Fences needed for privacy should enclose the minimum area necessary to achieve their intent and should leave a portion of the premises open to view from the public way. Where safe and appropriate, privacy fences should be set back behind a planting bed to avoid creating a vertical plane directly on the public way.
4. **Materials:**

The materials of Exterior Architectural Features such as siding, trim and windows should be compatible with the style of the Structure. Vinyl fences, vinyl siding, and vinyl windows should not be used.
5. **Construction of a New Building, including Accessory Buildings:**

Review of the design of a proposed new building, accessory building, or relocated building shall be made with regard to the compatibility of the building with its surroundings, and the following elements of the project shall be among those considered:

 - a. site layout;
 - b. volume and dimensions of the building;
 - c. the scale of the building in relation to its surroundings;
 - d. provisions for open space and landscaping;
 - e. provisions for parking.
6. **Demolition or Relocation of an Existing Building:**

The Commission shall apply the provisions of Article III of Chapter 2.78 of the City Code with regard to the proposed demolition of an existing building, and in addition shall consider the following factors:

 - a. the architectural and historical significance of the building to be demolished, recognizing listing of the building on the National Register of Historic Places or a written determination of eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places from the National Park Service;
 - b. the physical condition of the building;
 - c. a claim of substantial hardship, financial or otherwise; and
 - d. the design of the proposed replacement building, if any.
7. **Alterations to Existing Buildings:**

Review of proposed alterations to an existing building, and of all features not exempted from review under Section IV.C. above, shall be made with regard to the following factors:

 - a. the architectural and historical significance of the building to be altered;
 - b. the extent to which the integrity of the original design has been retained or previously diminished; and
 - c. the potential adverse effect of the proposed alteration on the existing building, surrounding properties, and the District as a whole.
 - d. extent of conformity of new or altered dormers to the Design Guidelines for Roof Dormers (1996) prepared for the Board of Zoning Appeal and compatibility of new dormers with the style, materials, and fenestration of the building.