

# Town of Simsbury

East Weatogue Historic  
District Handbook








2021



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## Chapters

The plan is organized around the following chapters:

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Image Credit: FHI Studio

# 1.0 Introduction



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## About this handbook and how to use it

The East Weatogue Historic District Handbook (the Handbook) provides a general overview of the East Weatogue Historic District, explaining its historical significance to the Town of Simsbury and its place in the region. The handbook includes design guidelines for buildings and their sites within the District as well as landscape recommendations.

The Handbook addresses all architectural styles within the district and ensures consistency with all State regulations. It outlines the process for obtaining a Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior architectural changes or new construction and includes necessary forms required to apply for Certificate of Appropriateness. The Handbook also includes the Ordinance of the Historic District Commission which was enacted in December 1987.

The Handbook was designed as a graphically rich and user-friendly document. It presents information in a clear and organized manor, allowing a streamlined review process for both the Commission and residents of the District.

## Where to find what

### To find a history of Simsbury:

- » Pages 6 - 8: This section provides a History of the Historic District.

### To find an Overview of the Historic District Commission:

- » Page 15: This section provides an overview of the Role of the Historic District Commission and also highlights the benefits of the District to both residents and the Town of Simsbury.

### To find a list of regulation and non-regulated activities:

- » Pages 20 and 21: These pages provide a listing of activities that are regulated by the Commission and those that are outside the jurisdiction of the Commission.

### To find information about the Certificate of Appropriateness:

- » Pages 22 and 23: This section provides a step-by-step guide to obtaining a Certificate of Appropriateness.



Signage in the District. Source: FHI Studio.

### To find design guidelines:

- » Pages 25-48: This section provides design guidelines for the different styles in the District as well as windows, siding, roofing, etc.

## Definitions in the Handbook

*Altered* – changed, modified, rebuilt, removed, demolished, restored, razed, moved, or reconstructed;

*Appropriate* – not incongruous with those aspects of the District that the Commission determines to be historically or architecturally significant;

*Certificate of Appropriateness* - Certifying document from the Historic District Commission that approves construction or alterations to be consistent with the aesthetics of the Historic District;

*Building* – any combination of materials forming a shelter for persons, animals, or property;

*Erected* – constructed, built, installed, or enlarged;

*Exterior architectural features* – such portion of the exterior of a structure or building as is open to view from a public street, way, or place;

*Structure* – any combination of materials, other than a building, which is affixed to the land and shall include, but not be limited to signs, fences, and walls.

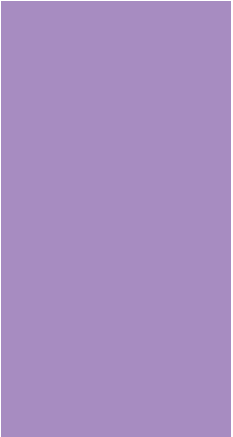
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Image Credit: FHI Studio

# 2.0 Overview



## History of the District

Simsbury is in a verdant Connecticut valley, lying on both sides of the Farmington River, bounded on the east by the Talcott Mountain Range and on the west by the West Mountains. Ancient Simsbury once embraced an area bounded to the south by Avon and to the north by the low area of Southwick or Congamond Ponds at the Massachusetts State line. Ancient Simsbury's borders once encompassed Granby, East Granby, Canton, and the western section of Bloomfield. The Farmington River, called "The Rivulet" by the people of Windsor and "The Tunxis" by the Massaco settlers, created in its wandering across the valley floor Simsbury's fertile meadow lands.

Abundant lakes, ponds, and springs endowed the valley with a network of brooks, which established an environment rich in fish and wildlife. It was the valley's bountiful environment that attracted settlers.

The Massacoe Tribe first inhabited this valley. The Massacoes belonged to the Algonquin Nation and were one of the sixteen tribes in Connecticut. The tribal lands of the Massacoes included what are now Simsbury, Barkhamsted, Canton, East Granby, and part of Granby. They were bounded by other Native American tribes: on the north by the Agawams (Southwick and Suffield), on the east by the Ponquonoeks (Windsor), on the south by the Tunxis (Farmington), and on the west by the Mohawks. They called the Farmington River "Wattunkshausepo", meaning fast-flowing or winding stream. If they where they came from, they said "Connecticut", meaning "long-river."

The indigenous people planted corn, beans, squash and tobacco, but the valley itself provided the richness of their existence. The rivers and brooks abounded in salmon, shad and trout. The wetlands, ponds and lakes supported a variety of waterfowl, beavers, muskrats and otters. The woodlands ran with bear, moose, deer, wolves and wildcats. Turkey, grouse and quail were found in the meadows. In the lowland thickets grew hopvines and a variety of berries.

In Simsbury, two village sites are known. The main one was Weatogue, meaning "home place". Native American artifacts found on three farms within the district enrich the ancient history of East Weatogue. Several sites have been the subject of study in the Farmington River Archaeological Project of the Department of Anthropology of Central Connecticut State University. Dr. Kenneth Feder, head of the project, maintains that objects discovered in these sites offer "evidence of continuous habitation from 8,000 years ago to the present."

Legend ascribes a knoll directly north of the falls of King Phillip Brook, or "Hell Hole" or "Cat Hole" as called by the indigenous people, as the site of an workshop. Noah A

Phelps' history records a burying ground near the house of the late Col. James Cornish. During the excavation for this house, human bones were found. This is probably the Louis Epstein house at 25 East Weatogue Street. Another burial ground "on a pitch of rising ground in the rear of the house of Mrs. T.L. Bissell" is most likely in the area east of what was formerly the Caldeira Nursery at 16 East Weatogue Street and north of the residence of Mr. Caldeira. Artifacts have also been found in the meadow west of Old Bacon homestead, now the Willis home at 11 East Weatogue Street.

Just how early settlers from Windsor immigrated to the land of the Massacoes is not known. The earliest record of settlement is April 1642 when the Central Court of Hartford issued the following order: "Its ordered that the Governor and Mr. Heynes shall have liberty to dispose of the ground upon that part of Tunxis River called Mossocoive, to such inhabitants of Wyndsor as they shall see cause." Simsbury then became annexed to Windsor, and was referred to as the Massacoe Plantation.

The Windsor settlers came to Simsbury for various reasons, including the acquisition of new farmland for their children, and exploitation of the natural resources of pitch and tar employed in shipbuilding. Religious turmoil in Windsor led to the migration of many prominent Anglicans, including John Moses, Michael Humphrey, Jonas Westover, and James Eno.



*Property in the District. Source: FHI Studio.*

Although no record exists to show if the 1642 order was carried out, nor that of another order of the General Court in 1647, there exist records of settlement for the East Weatogue District dating to 1660 when the Windsor Committee, acting for the General Court's order of 1653, made grants to John Moses, Josiah Hull, Nathan Gillett and Daniel Clark.

The next stage of settlement came in 1663 when the General Court appointed a committee composed of Captain Newbury, Edward Griswold, John Moore (adding later Simon Wolcott) to parcel out the remaining undivided lands of the Massacoe Plantation. Having compiled a list of subscribers, the committee began laying out lots, starting at Nod Meadow on the Avon line, going northerly up the valley to Hop Meadow, then to Terry's Plain, and on to the falls at Tariffville. In 1666 the committee stipulated that land allocated to the settler must be built upon and occupied within two years. Complying with an order of the General Court, the committee drew up and sent to the Court a list of names: "These are the stated inhabitants of Massacoe, and have been freemen for Windsor: Thomas Barber, John Case, Samuel Fillen, John Griffin, Micall Hournfrey, Josua Holcom, Thomas Maskell, Luk Hill, Samuel Pinne, Joseph Phelps, John Pettibon, Joseph Skinner, Peter Buell."

In *A Record and Documentary History of Simsbury*, written in 1888 by Dr. Lucius Barber, he quotes the Simsbury Record Book 1: "At Wetaug." "We measured the upland By John Moses his house and Mikls Humphrys, & leaving a sufficient highway by the Mountaine syde to go down to Tho: Maskills. They also measured out their several allotments to Mr. Rose, Mike Humphries, John Moses, Sam Marshall, Joseph Phelps.' Here it will be observed, the original Wetaug was on the east side of the river."

The appointment by the General Court in 1669 of John Case as Simsbury's first constable marked the beginning of the Town's independence from Windsor. Shortly thereafter, a town meeting named John Case and Joshua Holcomb to petition the General Court for town privileges. At the session on May 12, 1670, the Court granted the petition, and appointed Case and Holcomb "Deputies of the General Court for Simsbury" and established the boundaries.

Simsbury, not long an autonomous entity, had its destiny reshaped by the local tribes. Fearing an attack, the town council on March 3, 1676 instructed the inhabitants to remove themselves to other plantations. That attack transpired on Sunday, March 26, 1676. Abandoned by settlers, the town was an easy prey for the Native American who pillaged and finally burned everything, destroying about forty dwellings along with barns and outbuildings. Legend

attributes the conflagration to King Philip, who reportedly sat in the large cave on Talcott Mountain to view the spectacle. Simsbury absorbed the only Native American attack suffered by any Connecticut town.

The East Weatogue District of Simsbury figures significantly in the era of rebuilding after King Philip's War. Finding many landowners hesitant to reinhabit Simsbury after the fire, the town council sent a petition in 1679 to persuade the General Court to order the owners to rebuild. They determined that five proprietors should build at Terry's Plain, fifteen at Hop Meadow, eleven at Hoskin's Station, four at Weatogue, and thirteen at East Weatogue. The homes in the East Weatogue Street District of today show, in their respective construction, the evolution of Simsbury after King Philip's War.

By 1710 Simsbury had begun to rebuild. There were fifty houses stretching along both sides of the river. During the period of the Seven Years War, the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, this area revolved largely around a simple agricultural life. The few industries could be termed "home and farm industries" such as soap and candle making.

The Revolutionary War produced one of Simsbury's noted heroes. He was Noah Phelps, who was born in the house of 11 East Weatogue Street, which is now the home of Mark and Patricia Willis. Phelps played a little-known but decisively important role in the capture of Fort Ticonderoga by Ethan Allen and his Green Mountain Boys. Though a ruse, he managed to get inside the fort and observed the conditions, such as crumbling wall and wet gunpowder. With this information, Ethan Allen was able to capture the fort with but slight injuries to his men, one a sentry and the other an officer.

In 1776 the General Assembly recognized Phelps' valor and appointed him Captain of a company to be raised for the Continental Army. In 1777 he became Lieutenant Colonel and later Major General of the Militia. He was at the battle of Fort Lee and battles of Trenton and Princeton.

Simsbury's first industry originated when a rich deposit of copper ore was found in what is now East Granby on the site of Newgate Prison. The town began to mine the copper and it became incumbent on the property owners to share the responsibility of the operation as well as their right to a share in the profits. The more taxes paid by a property owner, the greater his share of the profits. Some of the largest property owners and wealthiest men lived on East Weatogue Street; this first industry had a bearing on their lives for as long as the mine was in production.

In 1750, the English Parliament passed a law forbidding such industrial development in the colonies because the Crown wanted the New World to be a market for their goods. This was one of the factors that contributed to the Revolutionary War.

In a way, the first industry of Simsbury was responsible for the second industry in Simsbury. In 1827 the state gave up its lease of Newgate Prison, and the Phoenix Mining Co., with Richard Bacon as manager, began to mine copper. In need of a more dependable fuse, Mr. Bacon went to England to investigate a safety fuse invented by William Bickford. He returned to the United States as the agent for the English firm and soon after a partnership was formed. The fuses were produced in barns on Bacon's property, 11 East Weatogue Street. After these barns, as well as a small factory building, burned down, a new factory was built on the site where the brook known as Devil's Stairs issues from the hillside. This is now 34 East Weatogue Street.

In 1839 a young bookkeeper, whose name was Joseph Toy, was sent from England to America to safeguard the interests of the English firm. His English partners felt that Richard Bacon's wide range of interests and undertakings did not leave sufficient time for him to concentrate on the fledgling safety fuse company.

When his factory burned down in 1851, there was reluctance on the part of Richard Bacon to rebuild. Joseph Toy carried a letter which authorized him to do what was necessary to protect the interest of the parent company. The partnership with Richard Bacon was dissolved, and Joseph Toy bought property across the river on Hop Brook where the company now known as Ensign-Bickford stands. When the company left East Weatogue Street, it no longer played a part in the future of the district; however, it certainly figures largely in the history of Simsbury. In William Vibert's book *Three Centuries of Simsbury*, he writes, "To say that the company has a vested interest in the town would be an understatement, as it would also be to say that the town has a vested interest in Ensign-Bickford."

Besides the district schoolhouse which was known as Weatogue East, now the home of Howard Stewart at 19 East Weatogue Street, the home of Andrew and Heidi Golden at 57 East Weatogue Street was once a private school and was also a place where religious services were held.

Simsbury had two local newspapers in the late 19th century. Both were published in the year 1887. The first was the *Simsbury Siftings* and was printed by Henry E. Case on his property on 42 East Weatogue Street. This is now the property of his descendant, Elnora Case. When the *Siftings* stopped printing, Mr. Case published and printed his own paper called *The Simsbury Echo*. This paper was printed for two years until his death. Copies of *The Echo* are in the possession of the Case family and some copies of *The Siftings* may be seen at the Simsbury Historical Society.

Simsbury remained relatively unchanged through the years until World War II. A change in labor patterns greatly affected the town. War plants took workers from Simsbury, and Ensign-Bickford, which had a policy of employing local help, began to replace these losses with outsiders. This pattern turned Simsbury outward to an extent that had never been experienced before. The rapid increase in population began after the war, and was reflected in the East Weatogue Street area, as the majority of the 20th century houses began to be built from this time on to the present.

Standing on Talcott Mountain above the same cave where King Phillip witnessed the destruction of Simsbury, one may enjoy the entire vista of the East Weatogue Street District. What is immediately striking is that its character remains unspoiled. In the 300 years since that petition of 1679, the hand of man has been respectful of this area. The road retains its original placement, running very close to the hillside. The meadows and wetlands that gently slope to the meandering, tree-lined Farmington River are a verdant and unspoiled as they were when the Massacoe Tribe inhabited them. Somewhere in those meadows are two Native American burial grounds. Somewhere, too, is a barrel full of pewter hidden during the evacuation of 1676 but never found.

The East Weatogue District stands as a living monument to our cultural heritage. Looking at the valley from the mountain, its beautiful character seems timeless.

## The District Today

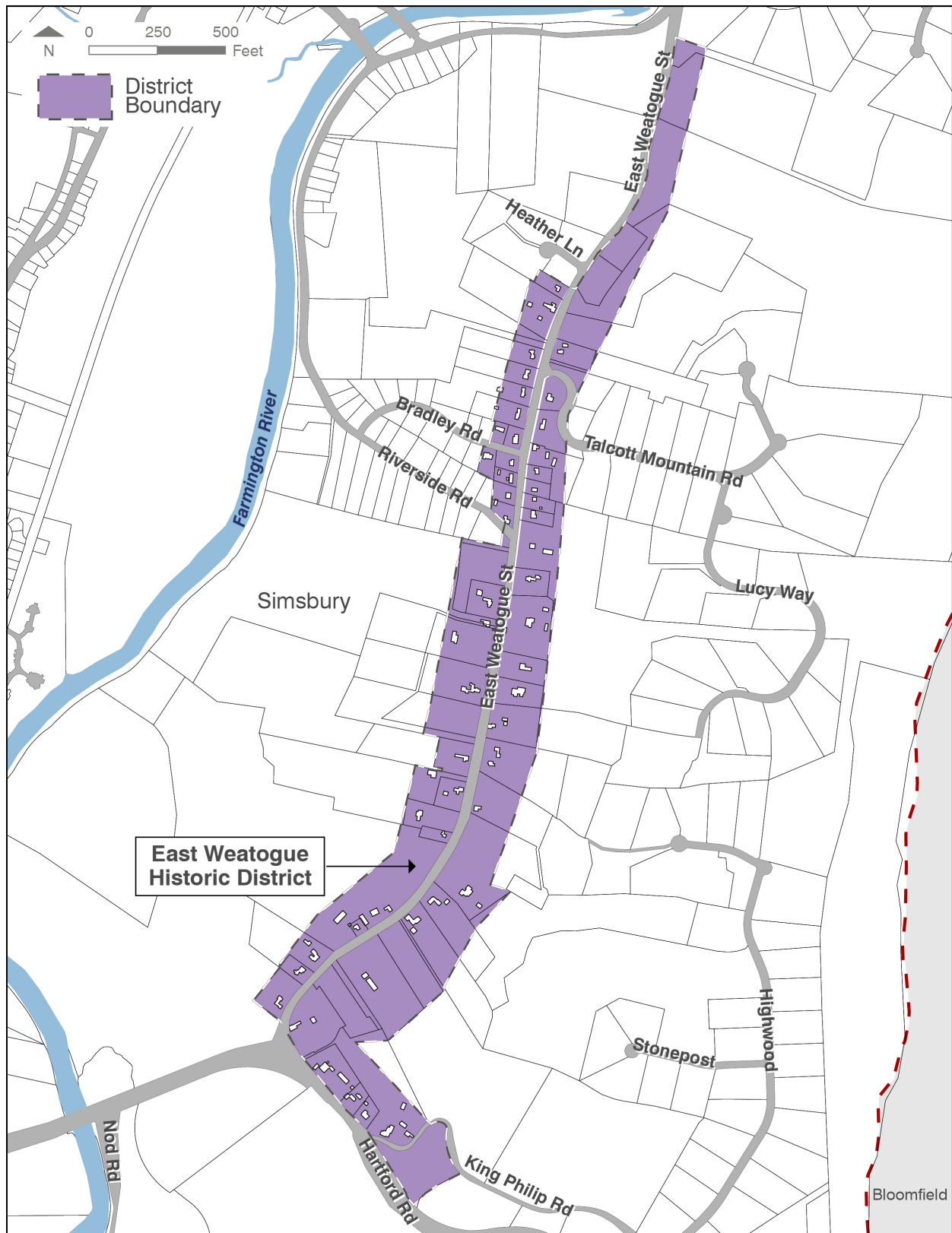
The East Weatogue Historic District is a Local Historic District (LHD) that consists of a contiguous area of buildings and structures that represents a distinct period of significance in Simsbury's history. The District is an area with clear boundaries that contains historically or architecturally significant structures that are related through proximity, ownership, history or use and that together tend to visually represent the community's heritage.

The LHD is different from a National Register or State Register historic district in that it provides for the local review of any exterior work that is visible from a public street, place or way. Properties within the LHD are subject to review, regardless of the age or condition of the specific building or structure. There are exceptions which include properties owned by higher education institutions and state owned properties.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Handbook for Historic District Commissions and Historic Property Commissions in Connecticut, 2010.*

## Where is the East Weatogue Local Historic District Located?

The East Weatogue Historic District is a well-preserved example of a rural Connecticut village. The district is located along East Weatogue Street, between Hartford Road and the northern end of Riverside Road. Its designation as a Local Historic District aids in the preservation of the historic character of the area.



## The East Weatogue National Register Historic District

2.0

On July 19, 1990, the East Weatogue National Register District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The district is significant historically because it is an exceptionally well preserved rural village which has survived in spite of its proximity to the major city of Hartford, Connecticut. The district is significant architecturally because it displays good examples of architectural styles from the Colonial to the Colonial Revival in their original setting and relationship to one another, little altered over time. There are 124 contributing resources located within the National Register Historic District.



### The National Register Does:

- » 1. Identify historically significant buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts, according to the National Register Criteria for Evaluation.
- » 2. Encourage the preservation of historic properties by documenting the significance of historic properties and by lending support to local preservation activities.
- » 3. Enable federal, state, and local agencies to consider historic properties in the early stages of planning projects.
- » 4. Provide for review of federally funded, licensed, or sponsored projects, which may affect historic properties.
- » 5. Make owners of historic properties eligible to apply for federal grants-in-aid for preservation activities.
- » 6. Encourage the rehabilitation of income-producing historic properties, which meet preservation standards through tax incentives.
- » 7. Provide protection from unreasonable destruction, pursuant to the provisions of Connecticut General Statutes, Section 22a-19a.

Images:

*Top Right- Photo of historic property submitted with the 1990 National Register Nomination Form.*

*Bottom Right- Sample first page from the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.*

### The National Register Does Not:

- » 1. Restrict the rights of property owners in the use, development, or sale of private historic property.
- » 2. Lead automatically to historic district zoning.
- » 3. Force federal, state, local or private projects to be stopped.
- » 4. Provide for review of state, local or privately funded projects, which may affect historic properties.
- » 5. Guarantee that grant funds will be available for all significant historic properties.
- » 6. Provide tax benefits to owners of residential historic properties, unless those properties are rental and treated as income-producing by IRS.

NPS Form 10-900  
(Rev. 9-88)

OMB No. 1024-0118

RECEIVED  
JUN 20 1990  
NATIONAL REGISTER

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

**1. Name of Property**  
historic name East Weatogue Historic District  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Location**  
street & number See continuation sheet NA  not for publication  
city, town Simsbury NA  vicinity  
state CT code 06 county Hartford code 003 zip code 06070

**3. Classification**

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	102	30
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	10	3
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	11	3
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	1	3
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	124	33
			Total

Name of related multiple property listing: NA  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

**4. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official John W. Shannahan State Historic Preservation Officer Date 6/14/90

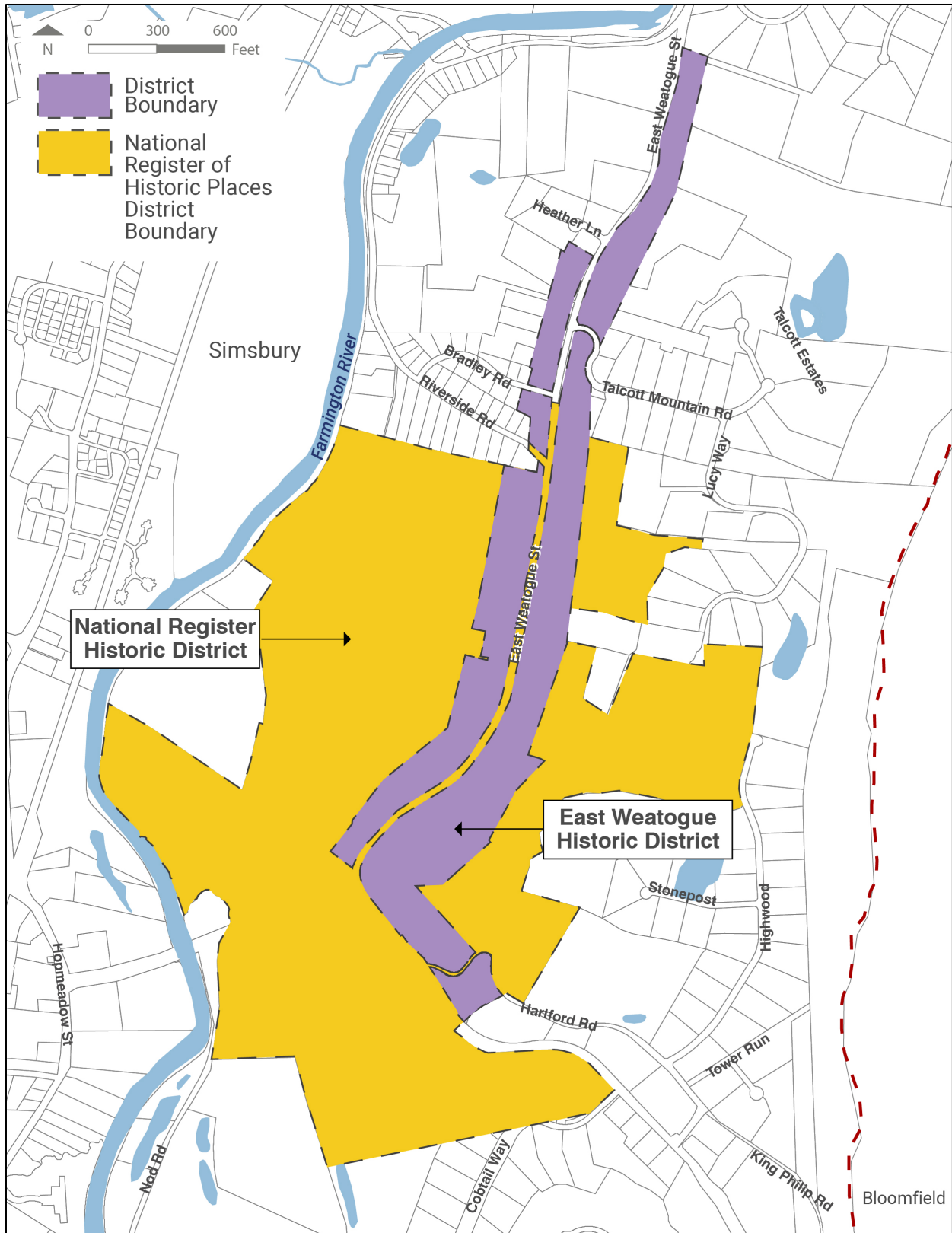
State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Where is the National Register of Historic Places District Located?

The East Weatogue Historic District and the National Register of Historic Places have different boundaries. These differences are shown in the map below. The National Register District is located further south on East Weatogue Street and extends as far west as the Farmington River and occupies approximately 490 acres of land, some of it in the flood plain, between the river and the hills to the east.



## What is the Historic District Commission?

The Simsbury Historic District Commission was established in 1987 and is composed of five members and three alternates. All members of the Commission live in Simsbury and are volunteers. None of the members are paid employees of the town. At least three regular members and two alternate members of the Commission are residents of the East Weatogue Historic District.

The Historic District Commission reviews all exterior changes to buildings in the Historic District and issues Certificates of Appropriateness. The Commission follows national standards for preservation and reports to the Town.

## What is the Role of the Historic District Commission?

The Historic District Commission's role is to review proposed changes to properties in the historic district that are visible from the public right-of-way, in order to protect and preserve the character and integrity of the historic district. The Commission reviews architectural and site changes such as architectural feature alterations, additions, outbuildings, paving, lighting, fences, signs, HVAC equipment, etc. If an application is approved, the Commission issues a Certificate of Appropriateness, which goes on file with the Building Department.

## What are the Benefits of the Historic District for the Town of Simsbury?

The East Weatogue Historic District provides the Town of Simsbury with many benefits. These include educational advantages, as the District creates a visible public connection to Simsbury's rich heritage. Preserving historic buildings also adds to the architectural and visual richness of the community and establishes a strong neighborhood identity. This identity can increase tourism and promote thoughtful and creative design. In addition, the historic designation process encourages residents and property owners to take an active role in defining the future of the community.

*“Historic buildings and neighborhoods provide well-built and human-scaled environments that are attractive places to live, work, or visit.”*

*– Handbook for Historic District Commissions in Connecticut*

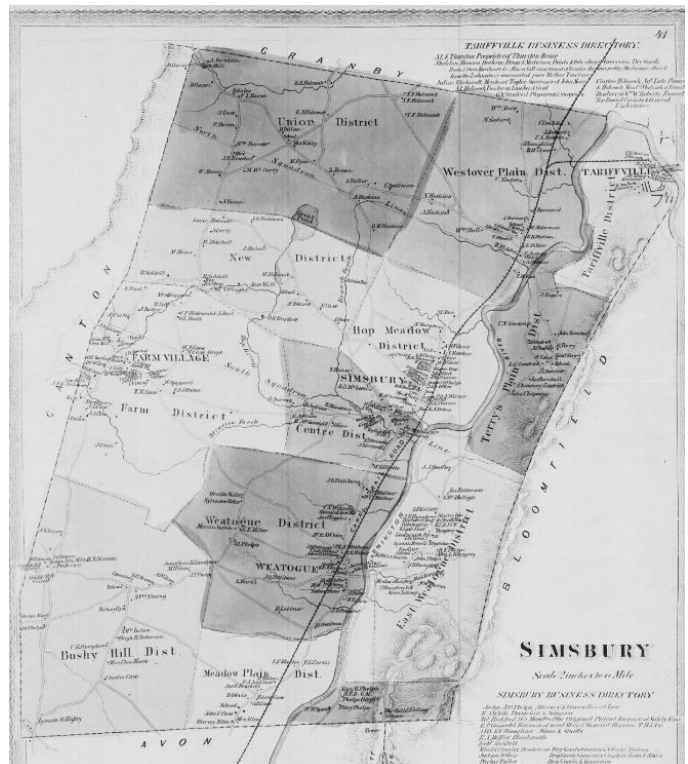
## What are the Benefits of the Historic District for Property Owners?

The Historic District is an effective tool for historic preservation that fosters local pride and a sense of place and community. The district encourages changes and designs that are compatible with and enhance the character of the neighborhood. Property owners have assurances that the district will not change drastically. Property values are generally protected and foreclosure rates are often low. There is the possibility of financial incentives for qualified projects in the district.

## What is a Certificate of Appropriateness?

A Certificate of Appropriateness is an approval which acknowledges that the proposed work is in conformance with the intent and purpose of Connecticut General Statutes Section 7-147a through 7-147y and the East Weatogue Historic District Commission Handbook.

If you are planning exterior work to a building in the Historic District, a Certificate of Appropriateness may be required. A Certificate of Appropriateness must be issued by the Historic District Commission prior to beginning work.



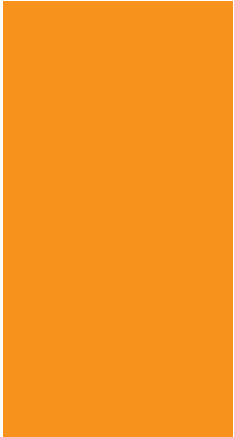
Historic map of Simsbury, dating from 1868. Source: MAGIC Historical Map Collection, UCONN Map and Geographic Information Center.





Image Credit: FHI Studio

# 3.0 Guide to the Review Process



## When is a Certificate of Appropriateness Required?

No building or structure shall be erected, added to, moved or demolished, nor shall any exterior architectural feature of any building or structure be altered, within a historic district without first obtaining a Certificate of Appropriateness from the East Weatogue Historic District Commission, except as specifically exempted below. However, because a construction activity is regulated does not mean that it necessarily is prohibited – the appropriateness or inappropriateness of all regulated activities will be reviewed and decided upon by the Historic District Commission during the application and review process described in the following sections of this handbook.

To fall under the jurisdiction of the Historic District Commission, a proposed construction activity must be visible from the public view. Public view is not necessarily limited to public streets, sidewalks, and parks, but may include any place customarily open to the public, such as private parking lots. A building or structure which is hidden by landscaping is considered to be in the public view if it would be visible without such landscaping.

The Land Use Office will require a Certificate of Appropriateness approved by the Historic District Commission before issuing a building permit for any construction activity in the District. Moreover, a Certificate of Appropriateness may be required whether or not a building or zoning permit also is required. Failure to comply with Historic District regulations may make a property owner and his or her agents liable for both fines and related legal expenses, and any unauthorized and inappropriate construction work can result in a court injunction requiring the removal or rectification of the same as approved by the Historic District Commission.

Regulated activities are those that require a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic District Commission. These include:

- » Masonry replacement and repointing.
- » Extensive or total replacement of any siding and roofing materials whether similar to or different from the original.
- » Any visible temporary or permanent additions to the dwelling, accessory buildings or site, whether structural or technological. This includes signs, T.V. antennas, solar panels, fences, pools, decks, outbuildings, and outdoor lighting fixtures.
- » Any construction, alteration or enlargement to driveways or parking areas, walkways, walls and patios.

- » The methods and reasons for total paint removal.
- » Any partial or entire window, storm window, door, storm door modification, or replacement, except exact replacement.
- » The addition, removal or replacement of window shutters.
- » The addition, removal or replacement of any architectural detail or ornament as defined in the Guidelines.
- » Outdoor signs and billposters. Please see page 24 for Signage Guidelines.
- » When a building permit is issued, you need a Certificate of Appropriateness first.

## When is a Certificate of Appropriateness Not Required?

Non-regulated activities are those that are outside the scope of the Historic District Commission. Such activities include:

- » Choice of color of exterior paint used on any building or structure.
- » Ordinary maintenance or repair of any exterior architectural feature in the District that does not involve a change in appearance or design.
- » The erection or alteration of a feature that the Building Inspector or a similar agent certifies is required by the public safety because of a condition which is unsafe or dangerous due to deterioration.

## What Are the Application Procedures for a Certificate of Appropriateness ?

### Pre-Application Meeting

Any architect, builder, property owner, or any other person with an interest in a property located in an Historic District is encouraged to meet with the Commission to discuss contemplated work before preparation of detailed plans and prior to submission of a formal Application for Certificate of Appropriateness. Pre-application discussions on matters that will require a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals are discouraged. To determine if a structure is within an Historic District, the applicant must consult the maps in the Building Department. Historic Properties, which are listed with the Building Department, also require an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness.

### Application Procedures

Applications for a Certificate of Appropriateness can be found on page 58 of this Handbook. Additionally, they can be obtained from the office of the Building Inspector at the Town Office or from any Commissioner.

- » Applications should be accompanied by drawings, showing the nature of the work to be performed as well as by a list of materials to be used.
- » The Commission may request such plans, elevations, photographs, specifications, materials, and other information, including in the case of demolition or removal a statement of the proposed condition and appearance of property after such demolition or removal, as may be reasonably deemed necessary by the Commission to enable it to make a determination.
- » With respect to signs, the application should state the style, materials, size, and location(s).
- » The completed application must be returned to an officer of the Commission. It will then be dated and numbered. The formal filing date is established by the Commission.
- » Completed applications will be heard at the next scheduled meeting of the Commission, provided applications are received three (3) weeks in advance of that meeting. Applications received after that date will be carried over to the next meeting.
- » Please refer to “Public Hearings”, of this document for the Public Hearing procedure. Legal notice will also be sent to each applicant stating the date, time, and place of the Hearing for the application.

## Standards for Determining Appropriateness

- » In passing on appropriateness as to exterior architectural features, buildings, or structures, the Commission shall consider, in addition to other pertinent factors, the type and style of exterior windows, doors, light fixtures, signs, aboveground utility structures, mechanical appurtenances, and type and texture of building materials.
- » The Commission shall also consider, in addition to other pertinent factors, the historical and architectural value and significance, architectural style, scale, general architectural features involved and the relationship thereof to the exterior architectural style and pertinent features of other buildings and structures in the immediate neighborhood.

### Parking Areas

- » No area within an Historic District shall be used for industrial, commercial, business, home industry, or occupational parking, whether or not such area is zoned for such use, until after an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness has been applied for and granted. This shall apply to the enlargement or alteration of existing lots.
- » The Commission shall consider the size of a parking area, the visibility of cars parked therein, the closeness of such area to adjacent buildings, and other similar factors.

### Variations

If there is an unusual circumstance with respect to a certain parcel of land that does not generally affect the Historic District, and which causes undue hardship upon the owner, the Commission shall have the power to vary or modify strict adherence to General Statutes Sections 7-147a-k (Regulations related to Historic Districts). The Commission can relieve such difficulty or hardship on the owner provided that such variance, modification, or interpretation shall remain in harmony with the general purpose and intent of said Sections of the Statutes so that the general character of the District shall be conserved and substantial justice done. The Commission may impose such reasonable and additional stipulations and conditions as well, in its judgment, better fulfill the purpose of said Statutory Sections.

# Certificate of Appropriateness Application Procedure

3.0

If you are planning exterior work to a building in the Historic District, a Certificate of Appropriateness may be required. A Certificate of Appropriateness must be issued by the Historic District Commission prior to beginning work. No building or structure shall be erected, altered, demolished, or removed within the district until an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness as to exterior architectural features has been submitted to, and approved by, the Commission.

### Application Procedures:

1. Obtain Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness. Available from the Office of the Building Inspector, Town Office, or Appendix of this Handbook

If signage is involved, the application should describe the style, materials, and location of signs.

2. Submit Application along with drawings explaining work and materials list. Plans, elevations, and specifications may be required. Completed Application must be returned to the Commission. A formal filing date will be established by the Commission.

If demolition or removal is required, a description of the proposed condition and appearance of the property after the removal will be required.

3. Completed Applications will be heard at the next scheduled meeting of the Commission. Applicant may be asked to describe the project at the meeting.

### Determining Appropriateness:

Within 65 days after the filing of an Application, the Commission is required to make a determination regarding the Application. See below:



- If the Commission approves the Application, a Certificate of Appropriateness will be issued. Certificates will be valid for one year.
- The Commission may issue a Certificate of Appropriateness with stipulations.
- If the Commission denies a Certificate of Appropriateness, the Commission shall provide the applicant reasons for its determination, and will explain why the proposed activity would not be appropriate. The Commission may make recommendations relative to design, arrangement, texture, material, and similar features.
- If the Commission fails to act within a 65-day period, the Application will be considered approved. No other evidence of approval shall be needed.

## Suggested Supporting Materials

A sample application form follows in this section of the handbook. In addition to the completed application, supporting materials should be submitted that delineate the proposed construction activity in sufficient detail for the Historic District Commission to render a decision as to appropriateness.

Application Procedures - Supporting Materials	Demolition and Removal	New Construction	Additions and Alterations	Parking Areas	Site Improvements	Signs
Photographs which show nearby structures, and the spatial relationships of these buildings within the immediate neighborhood. Photographs should be arranged to show the entire street frontage for at least 2 successive properties in all pertinent directions.	X	X	X	X	X	X
Photographs showing all facades of related buildings and/or structures on the subject property, and/or of subject grounds if site features are affected or site improvements proposed.	X	X	X	X	X	X
Historic photographs of the subject property and environs are recommended	X		X		X	
Vicinity plan showing at least 2 successive properties in all pertinent directions, and any related street and topographic features. This vicinity plan may be in sketch form, but shall adequately describe the general scale and relationships of nearby buildings. (Aerial photographs might be a source of some of this information).	X	X	X	X	X	
Sketch site plan showing proposed location and relationship to immediately adjacent properties, at a minimum scale of 1" = 10', is recommended.	X				X	X
Detailed site plan showing proposed new construction, any proposed site improvements such as parking areas, driveways, walkways, fences, decks etc., and the relationship of the same to immediately adjacent properties, at a minimum scale of 1" = 10'.		X	X	X		
Sketch perspective drawing of proposed work is recommended		X	X			
Scale drawings and plans of existing subject property, if deemed architecturally significant by the HDC, at a minimum scale of 1/4" = 1'.	X					
Architectural drawings (elevations) of all proposed building facades and relevant site features, at a minimum scale of 1/4" = 1'.		X	X		X	
Architectural floor plans of all new, added, and/or altered exterior architectural elements, at a minimum scale of 1/4" = 1'.		X	X			
Details of proposed primary architectural and site features, at a minimum scale of 1-1/2" = 1', are recommended.		X	X	X	X	
Detailed drawings and specifications for lighting, signage, and other related fixtures, showing size, materials, colors, lighting source etc.				X	X	X
Copies of product literature with photographs for any proposed prefabricated site fixture or structure.					X	
A written statement of the proposed condition and appearance of the subject property after demolition or removal.	X					
Copy of all applications and approvals required by other jurisdictions for demolition or removal of the designated historic structure, including but not necessarily limited to the Connecticut Historic Commission.	X					

## Jurisdiction

The Commission will operate in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes Sections 7-147a-k inclusive, and the enabling Ordinance of the Town of Simsbury, dated December 16, 1987, as said Statutes and Ordinance may be amended from time to time.

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- » The boundaries of the District are shown on a map entitled “East Weatogue Historic District” and dated June 1987, which is on file with the Town Clerk and the office of the Building Inspector.
- » As used in these regulations, “altered” means changed, modified, rebuilt, removed, demolished, restored, razed, moved, or reconstructed; “erected” means constructed, built, installed, or enlarged; “exterior architectural features” means such portion of the exterior of a structure or building as is open to view from a public street, way, or place; “building” means any combination of materials forming a shelter for persons, animals, or property; “structure” means any combination of materials, other than a building, which is affixed to the land, and shall include, but not be limited to, signs, fences, and walls; “appropriate” means not incongruous with those aspects of the District which the Commission determines to be historically or architecturally significant.
- » No building or structure shall be erected or altered within the District until after an application for a Certification of Appropriateness as to exterior architectural features has been submitted to the Commission and approved by said Commission. A Certification of Appropriateness shall be required whether or not a building permit is required. The provision of General Statutes Sections 7-147a-k inclusive, and these regulations shall not apply to any property owned by a non-profit institution of higher education, for so long as a non-profit institution of higher education owns such property.

## Organization of the Commission

### Membership

The Commission shall consist of five (5) members and three (3) alternate members, all of whom shall be electors of the Town, holding no salaried Town office. At least three (3) of the regular members and two (2) of the alternate members shall be owners of record or residents of the Historic District; and at least one of the regular or alternate members shall be a resident of the Historic District who is willing to serve. The members of the Commission shall be appointed by the Board of Selectmen, and the regular members shall be appointed in such a manner that the term of one member shall expire each year from the effective date of the Ordinance establishing the Commission; and the Board of Selectmen shall also appoint three (3) alternate members to the Commission, whose terms shall expire three, two, and one year from said effective date. Thereafter, the Board of Selectmen shall appoint successors to regular and alternate members to fill a vacancy shall be for the duration of the unexpired term of a regular or alternate member. Any member or alternate may be appointed for another term or terms. All members shall serve without compensation. Each member and alternate member shall continue in office until his successor is duly appointed.

### Officers and Duties

Within thirty (30) days after the appointment of the regular members of the first Commission, and thereafter at the regular January meeting of the Commission, the members shall meet, organize, and elect a Chairman, Vice Chairman, and a Clerk from its own number. Alternate members shall not participate in any election of officers of the Commission.

#### 1. Chairman

- » The Chairman shall preside at all meetings and hearings of the Commission;
- » Shall appoint alternatives to fill a vacancy caused by the absence of a regular Commission member at a meeting;
- » Shall appoint committees;
- » Shall appoint a Clerk in the absence of the elected Clerk;
- » Shall file with the Connecticut Historical Commission and the Town Clerk of Simsbury any publication of the Historic District Commission, the roster of the Commission’s membership,

and at least once every year a brief summary of the Commission’s actions during that year, including a statement of the number and nature of Certificates of Appropriateness issued, any changes in the membership of the Commission, and any other information deemed appropriate by the Commission; and

- » Shall be an ex officio member of all committees.

**2. Vice Chairman**

- » The Vice Chairman shall act for the Chairmen in the Chair’s absence and shall have the authority to perform duties prescribed for that office; and
- » Shall maintain a monthly record of the Commission’s expenditures on a fiscal year basis.

**3. Clerk**

- » The Clerk (or a secretary under the supervision of the Clerk) shall keep the minutes and records of the Commission;
- » Shall provide notice of all meetings to all Commission members;
- » Shall arrange proper and legal advertisements of Public Hearings;
- » Shall attend to the correspondence of the Commission; and
- » Shall perform other duties as are normally carried out by a Clerk.

**4. Alternates**

- » Alternates to the regular Commissioners shall be appointed on as close to a rotating basis as possible so that they shall act as nearly an equal number of times as possible. When any alternative is not available in accordance with the rotation schedule, such fact shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting
- » Alternate members shall, when seated, have all powers and duties of a member of the Commission.
- » Alternates may serve on any committees.

**5. Committees**

- » Committees will be appointed and dissolved as needs and projects require. Membership will be at the discretion of the Commission.

**Meetings and Public Hearings**

**Meetings Defined**

There are three types of meetings other than Public Hearings. The meetings consist of regular monthly meetings and special and emergency meetings. The special meetings are held to transact business on an exception basis or to permit the Commission to develop rules or procedures for the administration of the District or with respect to establishing guidelines for architectural renovations. All meetings are open to the public and are conducted in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act.

**Schedule**

- » Regular meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM in the Town Offices, 933 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury. The schedule of regular meetings for each new calendar year is available from the Town Clerk. The annual meeting for election of officers and regular changes in Commissioners’ terms will be January.
- » Special meetings are held on an as-needed basis. Meeting notices will be posted with the Town Clerk at least twenty-four (24) hours prior, stating time, place, and business to be transacted. No other business except that posted on the notice shall be considered at special meetings.
- » Emergency meetings may dispense with the notice requirements, but minutes explaining the nature of the emergency and the business transacted will be filed with the Town Clerk within seventy-two (72) hours.

## Conduct of Meetings

- » Quorum shall consist of three (3) members of the Commission or their designated alternatives for the transaction of all business either at meetings or Public Hearings.
- » No resolution or vote, except a vote to adjourn or to fix the time and place of the Commission's next meeting, shall be adopted by less than three (3) affirmative votes.

### Order of Business

- » Roll Call and Appointment of Alternatives, if necessary
- » Public Hearing, if applicable
- » Reading and Approval Of Minutes of Preceding Meeting
- » Public Audience
- » Unfinished Business
- » Report of Committees
- » New Business
- » Adjournment

## Public Hearings

### Frequency. Public Hearings shall be held:

- » Upon the receipt of an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness;
- » At the discretion of the Commission when significant questions or concerns arise relating to the administration of the District; or
- » To adopt the Rules and Procedures of the Commission.

### Legal Notices

- » Legal notices will be sent to The Farmington Valley Herald or The Hartford Courant. Publication will occur once between the 15th and 5th day before the Public Hearing date. An additional copy of the notice will be posted in the Town Office.
- » The legal notice will contain the purpose as well as the time, date, and place of the Hearing.
- » A copy of the legal notice will be mailed to the owner of record who is applying for the Certificate of Appropriateness.

- » Notice of Public Hearings may be mailed to abutting landowners.

### Conduct of Public Hearings concerning Certificate of Appropriateness

- » Any individual may appear in person, by agent or attorney, or by written communication.
- » Applications are heard in the order in which they are placed on file and as shown on the call for the Hearing.
- » In order to maintain procedural order and promote fairness, the following order has been adopted:

### Evidence at Hearings

- » The proceedings for each application, in addition to the minutes taken by the Clerk, will be recorded by a sound recording device.
- » Attachments to each application will be recorded by the Clerk as exhibits in numerical order. Additional material presented during the Public Hearing will be recorded in like manner.

Within not more than sixty-five (65) days after the filing of any application as required herein, the Commission shall pass upon such application and shall give written notice of its decision to the applicant by certified mail. When a Certificate of Appropriateness is denied, the Commission shall place upon its records and in the notice to the applicant the reasons for its determination, which shall include the basis for its conclusion that the proposed activity would not be appropriate. In the notice to the applicant, the Commission may make recommendations relative to design, arrangement, texture, material, and similar features. The Commission may issue a Certificate of Appropriateness with stipulations. Evidence of approval, as referred to in General Statutes Section 7-147d, shall be by Certificate of Appropriateness issued by the Commission. Failure of the Commission to act within said sixty-five (65) days shall constitute approval, and no other evidence of approval shall be needed. The notice of the Commission's action shall be mailed to the applicant by certified mail within forty-eight (48) hours of the rendering of the Commission decision, exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays. If the Commission approves the application, a Certificate of Appropriateness will be issued. Certificates will be valid for one year. Extension of a six-month period may be granted upon request. Three (3) copies of the Certificate will be issued: one to the applicant, one to the Building Inspector, and one for the Commission's records.

Any person or persons severally or jointly aggrieved by any decision of the Commission or of any officer thereof may, within fifteen (15) days from the date when such decision was rendered, take an appeal to the Superior Court for the



Judicial District of Hartford/New Britain in accordance with General Statutes Section 7-147i. Notice of such appeal shall be given by leaving a true and attested copy thereof in the hands of or at the usual place of abode of the Chairman or Clerk of the Commission within twelve (12) days before the return date to which such appeal has been taken.

## Rules And Procedures For A Public Hearing Concerning A Certificate Of Appropriateness

1. Call to order.
2. The roll call will be read by the Clerk.
3. The Clerk shall read notice of the Public Hearing from the legal notices.
4. The Clerk shall read the rules for speaking:
  - » Only one person may speak at a time.
  - » Person must be recognized by Chair before he/she may speak.
  - » Even Commissioners must be recognized by Chair in order to speak or question other speakers.
  - » Each speaker other than a Commissioner must identify self by name and address.
  - » If speaker is an expert or consultant, he/she must give his/her credentials as they apply to the case.
5. The applicant and his/her expert consultants shall give a detailed description of the application as well as present any supporting evidence such as blueprints, drawings, specifications as to materials, etc.
6. Upon completion of the presentation, the Commission shall have the opportunity to question the applicant and his/her consultants.
7. The Chairman will ask for supporting testimony or comments of interested parties.
8. The Commission shall then have the opportunity to question those in support of the application.
9. Upon the close of hearing supporting comments, the Chairman will ask for comments by those in opposition to the application.
10. The Commission will then have the opportunity to question those in opposition to the application.

11. Applicant (or his/her agent) may briefly rebut objections raised.

12. Those in opposition may briefly comment if they have anything new to offer.

13. Determination is made if Hearing is to be closed, continued, or record kept open.

## Administrative Procedures

### Agenda

- » The Chairman shall be responsible for the compilation of the agenda.
- » The agenda and relevant resource material shall be distributed to Commissioners and interested parties no later than five (5) days prior to a regular meeting.
- » A copy of the agenda shall be submitted to the Town Clerk for posting in the Town Office not less than twenty-four (24) hours before the meeting.
- » The Commission may discuss items not listed on the agenda of a regular meeting upon the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of those members present.
- » Any person who is not a regular, alternate, or non-voting member of the Commission may have a matter placed upon the agenda of a regular meeting after filing a request with the Chairman at least seven (7) days before the date of such a meeting.



## Minutes

- » Minutes of meetings of the Commissions shall be taken by the Clerk or, in the Clerk's absence, by another person designated by the Chairman.
- » Minutes and the record of the vote of each member will be available in the office of the Town Clerk for public inspection within the time period prescribed by the Freedom of Information Act.
- » Typed copies of the minutes will be sent to each Commissioner with the next meeting's agenda.
- » The Clerk has the option to use a tape recorder to assist in accuracy. Tapes shall be kept on file until minutes are approved.
- » The Commission shall keep a permanent record of its resolutions, transactions and determinations, and of the vote of each member participating therein. These records shall be maintained by the Clerk of the Commission in the office of the Town Planner, in addition to any records already on file with the Town Clerk.

## Regulation Enforcement

- » The Historic District Enforcement Officer will be the Town Building Inspector.
- » The Commission will take action to prevent the violation of any Rule or Procedure contained herein, or any Section of the applicable Connecticut State Statutes, specifically Section 7-147h.
- » Fines of not less than ten dollars (\$10.00) nor more than one hundred dollars (\$100.00) per day shall be imposed on any individual in the violation. Where the violation is found to be willful, the fine shall be not less than one hundred dollars (\$100.00) nor more than two hundred and fifty dollars (\$250.00) for each day that such violation continues.

## Conflict of Interest

All members shall conduct their activities in accordance with the provisions of Chapter XII, Section 1203, of the Charter of the Town of Simsbury, and any Code of Ethics Ordinance of the Town of Simsbury then in effect.

## Amendments and Revisions

- » Amendments and revisions to these Rules and Procedures will be sent in writing to each regular member and alternate at least ten (10) days in advance of the meeting at which it is proposed that they be considered.
- » A majority vote of the Commission is required to adopt any revision or amendment.



Home in the District, Image Credit: FHI Studio

# 4.0 Design Guidelines

# Design Guidelines

Simsbury's Historic District Commission is responsible for protecting and preserving the character and integrity of its historic districts. The Commission determines the appropriateness of any proposed exterior alteration, erection, or demolition visible from a public road, way or place.

4.0

The following Guidelines will be used by the Commission as a standard upon which to base its decisions, and will be useful to anyone in Simsbury who is considered work which alters historic architecture features.

The Guidelines are divided into sections covering maintenance, repairs, replacement, and new construction. "Maintenance" and "Repairs" generally do not require a Certificate of Appropriateness, but are included as a guide for Historical District homeowners. Work involving "Replacement" or "New Construction" will generally require a Certificate of Appropriateness. The Guidelines provide alternatives to assist the homeowner in making decisions concerning some options to be considered or avoided in building or restoration. While the Guidelines do not cover every situation or condition which may arise in the historic district, information can be found in the References and Resources section of the Appendix.

Slight changes may not affect a building's character and integrity; however, it is the position of the Commission that even small changes over the years can radically alter the appearance of a building. Therefore, the Commission attempts to be sensitive both to the contemporary needs of homeowners and to the historic significance of the district as a whole.



Example of a home in the District with 12 over 12 windows and columns. Source: FHI Studio.

## Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation set forth the principles and purposes of historic preservation and provide a good introduction to the more specific guidelines, which follow them. The Standards are summarized below<sup>1</sup>:

- » A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
- » The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
- » Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
- » Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
- » Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
- » Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities, and where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
- » Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
- » New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

<sup>1</sup> The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, 36 CFR 67. <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation.htm>

# Colonial - ca. 1700-1780

## Character-Defining Features

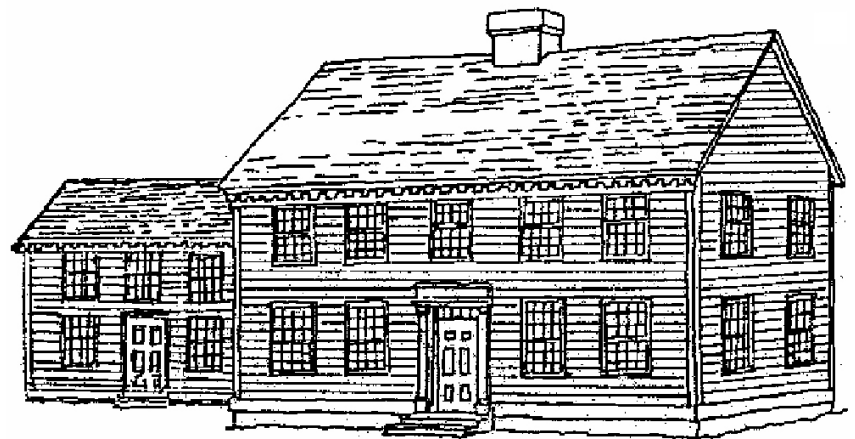
- » Small window panes, usually 9/9, 12/12, or 12/8, 9/6 or reverse.
- » Windows aligned vertically and horizontally in symmetrical rows with five across the front facade.
- » Decorative dentil moldings.
- » Panelled door, decorative pilasters, crown molding, rows of "lights" within or above door transom.
- » Side-gabled roof more common than gambrel, hipped, or centered-gabled.
- » Central chimneys or paired interior chimneys.



4.0

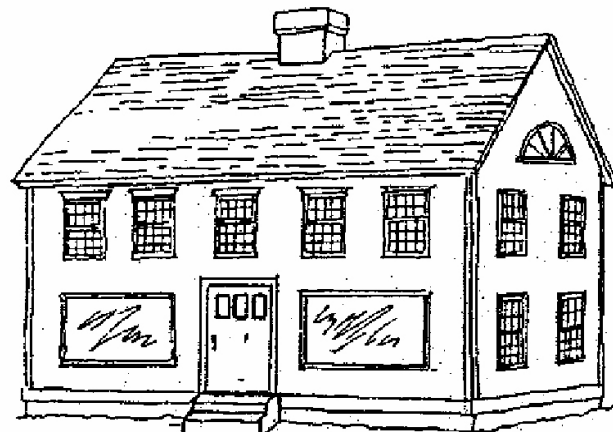
## Appropriate Modifications

- » Additions that are in proportion to existing structure.
- » Additions that use materials, forms, and details similar to the existing structure, but that distinguish the addition through massing.



## Inappropriate Modifications

- » Stylistic alterations to original materials or design such as replacement of first story windows with modern styles.
- » Modern glass paned doors.
- » Covering of original horizontal clapboards with artificial siding.



# Federal - ca. 1780-1820

4.0



## Character-Defining Features

- » Hipped roof or gable roof.
- » Often with prominent two chimneys.
- » Corner boards.
- » Semi-circular or elliptical fanlight over paneled door, typically accompanied by sidelights, elaborated crown moldings or small entry porch.
- » Cornice emphasized with tooth-like dentils or other decorative molding.
- » 6/6 or 12/12 double-hung sash windows.
- » Brick or wood construction.

## Appropriate Modifications

- » Restoration of original wood siding.
- » Additions that use materials, forms, and details similar to the existing structure, but that distinguish the new form through massing.

## Inappropriate Modifications

- » Replacement of original window sash with various modern window types.
- » Removal and replacement of entry details such as porch or decorative moldings
- » Covering of original horizontal clapboards with artificial siding.

# Greek Revival - ca. 1825-1860

## Character-Defining Features

- » Entry is often off-centered, allowing space for parlor and dining hall.
- » Often with gabled roof low to medium in pitch with gabled end facing street.
- » Windows typically 6/6.
- » Porches, which may be front or full width, supported by prominent square or rounded columns.
- » Front door may be flanked by narrow side lights.
- » Narrow reveal wood clapboard siding.



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## Appropriate Modifications

- » Consideration for scale and proportion.
- » Continuation of the character of the main portion of home, such as consistent window patterns carried into any addition.



## Inappropriate Modifications

- » Windows that are a different style and size than the originals.
- » An addition that is inconsistent with the structure's scale and massing.
- » Siding replacement.
- » Removal and replacement of entry.



# Italianate - ca. 1840-1885

4.0



## Character-Defining Features

- » Two or three stories, typically asymmetrical in form.
- » Tall, narrow windows frequently embellished with heavy crown molding or pediments.
- » Porches common, centered or full width.
- » Shallow or flat roof with moderate to widely overhanging eaves.

## Appropriate Modifications

- » Restoration of original windows and porch.
- » Additions that maintain mass and scale.

## Inappropriate Modifications

- » Removal of porch.
- » Insertion of inappropriate features such as a picture window.
- » Siding replacement with a modern material.



# Queen Anne Victorian- ca. 1880 - 1910

## Character-Defining Features

- » Varying textures of siding: cut shingles, plain clapboard, flushboard, and molding.
- » Asymmetrical massing.
- » Often has a porch with turned and/or carved woodwork.
- » Unique bracket and/or gingerbread under eaves.
- » Steeply pitched roof.



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## Appropriate Modifications

- » Restoration of features which are clearly missing, as shown by marks on the building, old photographs, etc.
- » Addition of authentic wood shutters.
- » Painting of trim and siding in different colors; three to four harmonizing colors were standard.



## Inappropriate Modifications

- » Removal of original features, e.g. the porch, front door and windows.
- » Creation of a uniform texture in the siding.
- » Additions which obscure the original asymmetrical design.



# Colonial Revival - ca. 1880-1955

4.0



## Character-Defining Features

- » Windows with double-hung sashes, usually with multi-pane glazing.
- » Facade normally with symmetrically balanced windows and center door (less common with door off-center).
- » Accentuated front door, normally with decorative crown, supported by pilasters or supported by columns and front entry porch.

## Appropriate Modifications

- » Restoration of original wood siding.
- » Additions that maintain mass, scale and symmetrical features of original building.

## Inappropriate Modifications

- » Replacement of original window sash with various modern window types.
- » Removal and replacement of entry details.
- » Covering of original horizontal clapboards with artificial siding.

# Vernacular Style - ca. 1930 to Present

## Character-Defining Features

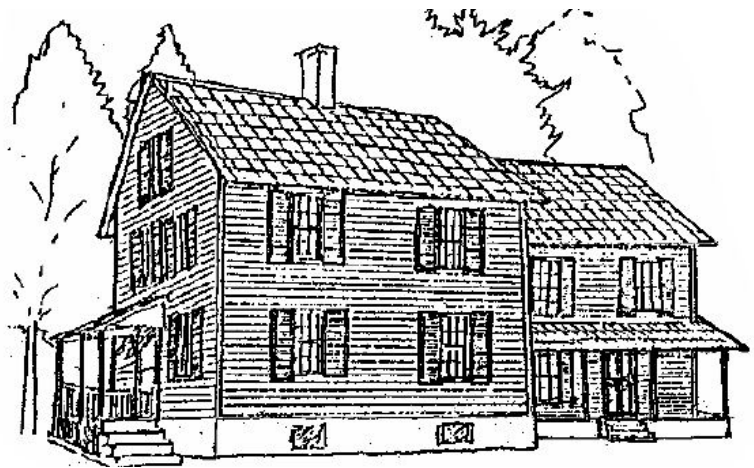
- » Simple geometric forms.
- » Utilitarian styling.
- » Larger window panes than in original colonial homes.
- » Walls clad with one dominant material - generally wood, stone or brick.



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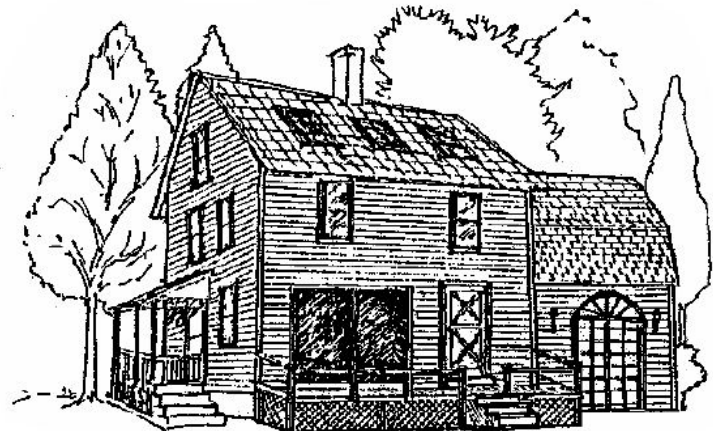
## Appropriate Modifications

- » Consideration for the scale and proportions of the main structure.
- » Configuration of character of the original structure, e.g. continuation of rectangular window patterns.



## Inappropriate Modifications

- » Use of different forms, details and materials than the existing building.
- » Windows that are a different style.
- » Additions that don't respect the scale of the existing building.



# Mid-Century Cottage - ca. 1970's

## Character-Defining Features

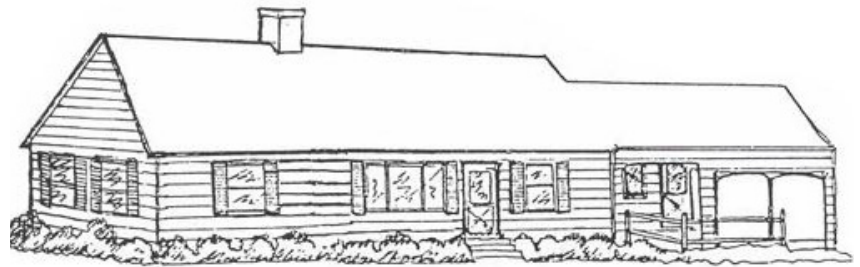
- » Single story.
- » Low-pitched roof sloping towards the street.
- » Asymmetrical.



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## Appropriate Modifications

- » Similar lines and proportions.
- » Similar details and styles.



## Inappropriate Modifications

- » Additions that dwarf are out of scale with the main house.
- » Styles that clash, such as the two-story arched window that contrasts with the simplicity of the main structure.



# Exterior Walls and Siding

## Maintenance

Exterior walls and siding provide the building with an overall texture. The choice of materials and their relationships to each other help in defining the historic character of the building.

**Wood clapboard** is the most prevalent siding material within the Historic District. Other siding materials include wood shingle, vinyl and aluminum siding, and brick.

**Masonry** is a very durable material and with proper care can last indefinitely. The major cause of deterioration is inappropriate cleaning and waterproofing which leads to water damage. Decay is usually found near the roof, at ground level, around mortar joints, or on any horizontal surface such as windowsills. Air pollution can lead to masonry decay. Maintenance for masonry walls and foundations includes proper drainage systems and, when necessary, cleaning of the exterior surface.

**Wood siding** is also a very durable material when properly maintained. Routine painting and caulking are usually the best preservatives: water, insects, fungi, and vegetation growing too close to its surface can all contribute to siding damage. Handcrafted detailing and finishing should be carefully preserved when maintenance and/or repairs take place.

**Foundations** within the historic district are predominately brick and stone.

## Repair

Masonry repair normally consists of repointing and limited replacement. Both are rather technical procedures which require research on the part of the homeowner. When repairing, try to match the original color, texture, size, and pattern of the existing mortar joints and masonry. Special care should be taken when repointing. Historic mortars are generally softer and use more lime than Portland Cement. Today's standard mortars can destroy historic masonry walls. See *Preservation Briefs 2: Repointing Mortar Joints in Historic Brick Buildings* for additional information.<sup>1</sup> Hiring of a professional mason to complete repairs is recommended.

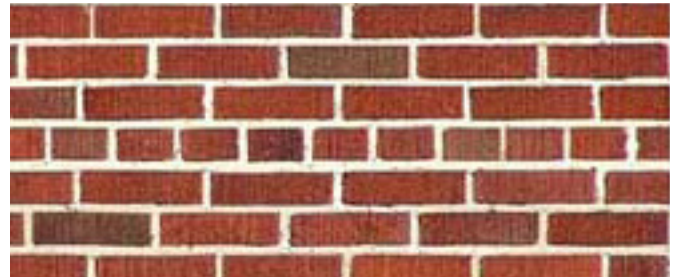
1. *Preservation Briefs*, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Preservation Assistance Division, Technical Preservation Services, Washington, D.C.

## Basic Exterior Features

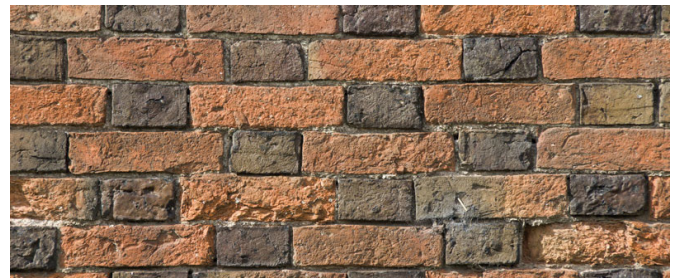


4.0

## Brick Bonding Patterns



American Bond



Flemish Bond



Running Bond

*Brick Patterns*. Source: *Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia*. "English bond". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 5 Apr. 2010, <https://www.britannica.com/technology/English-bond>. Accessed 26 May 2021.

## Paint

Paint is used on both masonry and wood to provide protection, color, and articulation of details. When reapplication is needed, normally every five to eight years, cleaning, light scraping and hand sanding is generally sufficient and recommended. Different paint problems require different treatments. In most instances, total paint removal is not recommended or necessary, and if removed, a new coating should be reapplied to the exposed surface. There are several paint removal methods, some of which are not satisfactory for historic surfaces. Among the most destructive methods is sandblasting. Although it is a quick and easy way to remove paint, it is highly inappropriate for the Historic District, and alternative methods should be used. See *Preservation Briefs 6: Dangers of Abrasive Cleaning to Historic Buildings* and *Preservation Briefs 10: Exterior Paint Problems on Historic Woodwork*.<sup>1</sup>

## Replacement

In Simsbury, clapboards and weatherboards were the most siding types in the 18th and 19th centuries. When replacing siding, the use of historically traditional building materials is strongly encouraged. Synthetic siding is a 20th century invention. Synthetic siding does not enhance historic structures, as it cannot duplicate the texture, relief and detail of wood. Texture, relief and patterns give the walls their light, shadow, and character, and give sillboards, corner boards and rooflines their edges. Changes in material between stories and/or gables reflect original stylistic intentions. Try to be sensitive to these effects when replacing original siding.

## Additions

Any addition should be compatible in material to the existing structure. In some cases, synthetic siding may be permitted for additions. When such a material is installed, care should be taken to match width, spacing and direction of original siding, and to replicate or preserve surrounding architectural features such as window and door trim, corner or sillboards, cornices, brackets, and/or eave details.

## Original Siding Found in the Historic District



Wood Shingle



Horizontal Clapboard



Original Shingles

1. *Preservation Briefs*, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Preservation Assistance Division, Technical Preservation Services, Washington, D.C.

# Windows

## Maintenance

Window material, type, arrangement details/ornamentation, and construction are an important part of the character and style of a building. Window evolution has been parallel to advancements in glass making and changes in building style. Consequently, a good fenestration study can help in dating a building. The earliest known window type in our district is the 12-over-12 double hung window. Other traditional windows include 9-over-6 and 12-over-8 double hung. There are also more decorative and unusual styles, especially in houses of the 19th century. Routine maintenance can help insure the building's character and style, as well as thermal efficiency. Good reproductions are available.

## Repair

A window can often be repaired through patching or replacing deteriorated parts. It is recommended that this alternative be studied and considered before replacing the entire window.

## Replacement

When replacing an entire window, the original features should be duplicated. Since most windows in the historic district are of wood construction, it is recommended that windows be replaced using the same material. If this is not possible, a substitute material, such as metal, should match the color of other windows or surrounding elements. When replacing a non-original window, attempt to obtain window types appropriate to the building's style and period.

## Addition

New windows can easily destroy a building's integrity. The placement, type, and number of windows contribute and conform to both the original function and appearance of the building. Attempts should be made to conform to the building's overall style, proportion, scale and material.

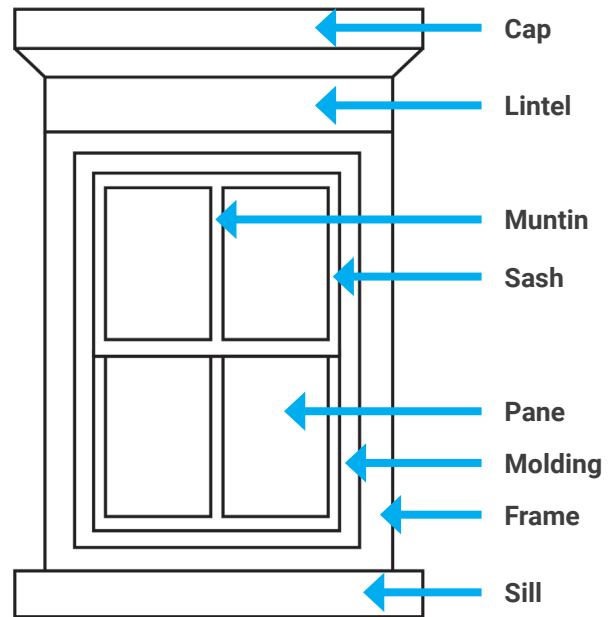
## Storm Windows

Storm windows and screens can be both appropriate and energy efficient for historic buildings and when present, should be retained.

## Shutters

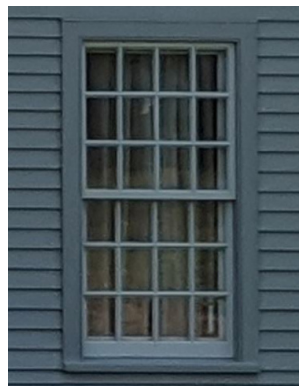
Adding non-original shutters to historic homes is not recommended. If shutters are desired, they should be the traditional woodslat type capable of closing and covering the window completely, in line with their original historic function.

## Basic Window Features



4.0

## Basic Window Types



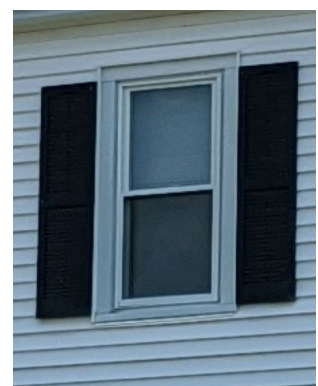
12-Over-12



6-Over-6



2-Over-2



1-Over-1

# Entrances and Porches

## Maintenance

Entrances and porches can be the focal point of a building's façade. Together with their functional and decorative features such as doors, steps, balustrades, pilasters, and entablatures, they can be extremely important in defining the overall historic character of a structure. Furthermore, they can be the most individually expressive part of the building with many variations existing within each architectural style. Unfortunately, particularly for porches, they are also often the part of the house which undergoes the most change. This phenomenon is a result of faster deterioration due to greater exposure, stylistic trends, personal taste, or the inhabitants special needs.

## Repair

Most entrances and porches in older homes are constructed of wood, and, for reasons mentioned above, are more easily prone to deterioration, and need to be monitored in order to keep replacement and reinforcement to a minimum. Decorative woodwork often gives the structure its unique character. When repairing, try to match new parts with existing features as best and accurately as possible.

## Replacement

Replacement of doors and their features, such as transom-, fan- and side-lights, pilasters, caps, panels and hardware, should try to confirm to the original building style, façade proportion, and material. It is sometimes possible to find used doors of the same period, and this may be a good solution if size or design is a problem. Certain woodworkers also specialize in period reproductions. Avoid removing the original features on an entrance without replacing them with visually compatible elements.

Porches did not come into use until the middle of the 19th century, and, like shutters, they were added to older homes. When replacing a porch, try to determine whether it is original or a later addition. If the porch is original to the house, it is an integral part of the total design, and its replacement should convey the same visual appearance. When adding a porch to a house which originally had one, photographic or physical documentation is particularly helpful. The Simsbury Historical Society is one source for old photographs. A new porch which resembles the old material, arrangement, scale and proportions may often be appropriate and even help restore the house's original character and integrity.

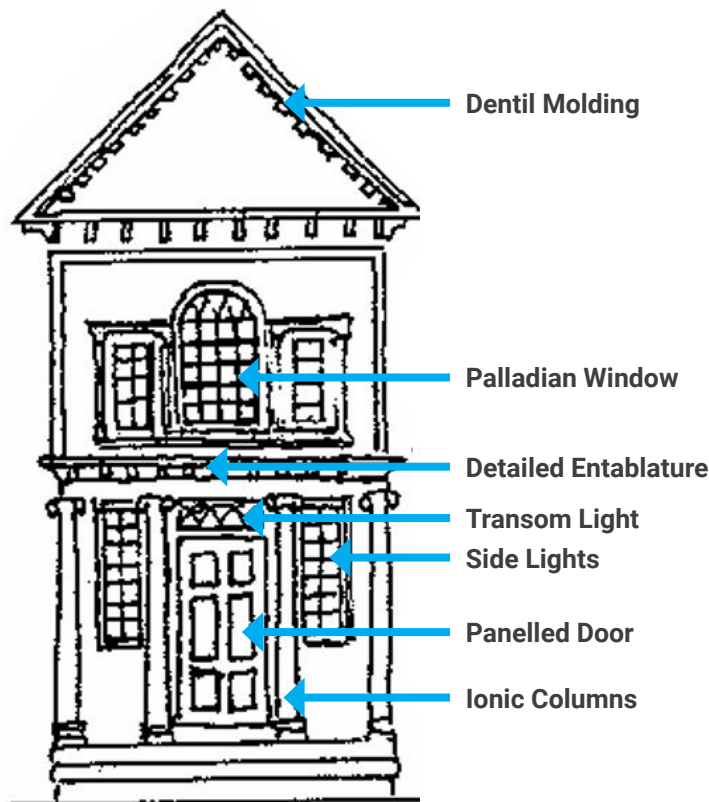
## Addition

The addition of new entrances or decks should be confined to the sides or back of a building, not visible from the public way.

Some houses have enclosed porches or porticos in order to provide more interior space, greater privacy, or better thermal efficiency. Often these goals can be achieved in more appropriate and less visually disturbing ways, by using larger sheets of glass behind the porch supports, rails and details, installing removable screens for seasonal use, and/or using weather stripping in existing windows and doors.

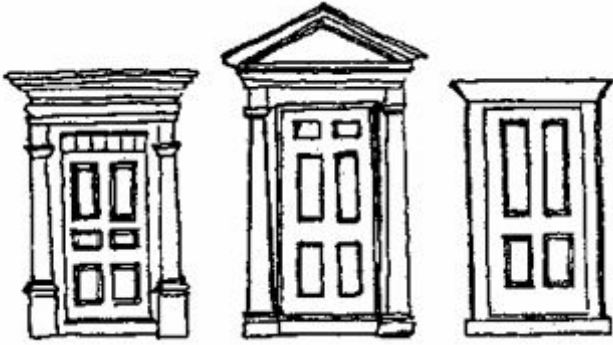
Storm doors are often very prominent features which can distract from the original door. Avoid inappropriate detail, and try to choose a storm door which resembles the main door in proportion, color and material.

## Basic Entrance Features





## Original Entrances

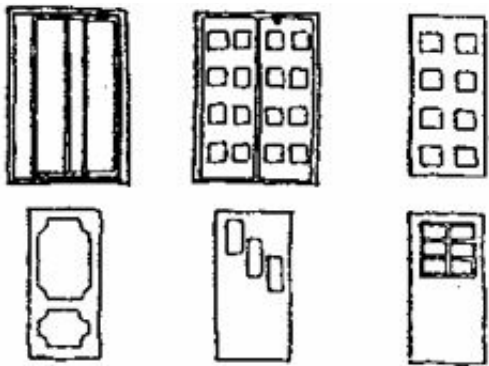


## Entrances in the East Weatogue District



4.0

## Inappropriate Entrance Doors for Older Homes



## Original Porch



Example of a wrap around porch in the district. Source: Google Streetview.

# Roofs and Roofing

## Maintenance

The roof's shape, particular features, material and color can be important in defining the building's external appearance and overall character. Along with this design role, the roof is essential for the preservation of the entire structure and should be maintained to provide a weathertight cover.

4.0

In this area, wood shingle has been the predominant roofing material since Colonial times. Slate tiles, forming colorful and decorative patterns, and metal were also used in the 19th century, while in the 20th century asphalt has become popular for both roofing and reroofing, and is now the most prevalent roofing material in the district.

## Replacement

When damage and/or wear is too extensive, or when limited repair is not possible, replacement work should consider first the roof's original shapes, features, color and materials. Any substitutions such as new chimneys and downspouts should be compatible with the original style and period of the building. Gutters and downspouts are often highly visible, and replacements should not detract from the building's composition, color or special detail. Avoid removing, without replacing, any character defining feature of a building which indicates the original style and period. Alternative material, such as asphalt shingle, are usually appropriate, except when the roofing material is highly decorative.

## Addition

Additions to roofs are generally discouraged, except when proper documentation reveals missing features. When adding new features such as skylights, dormers, satellite dishes, or solar collectors, consider placing them out of view from the public way, and avoid covering, removing, or distracting from the character-defining features or forms. For example, use skylights of the flat variety, placed at the rear of the house if possible. Also, keep in mind that a T.V. antenna can function just as efficiently when in the attic.

## Traditional Roof Types



Gable



Gambrel



Salt-Box

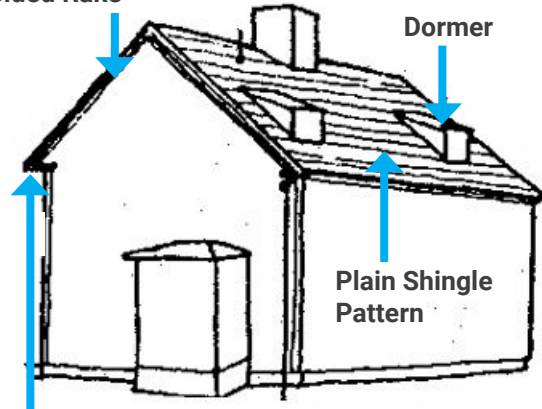


Hip\*

## Basic Roof Features

Molded Rake

Dormer



Side Return  
Cornice Molding

Plain Shingle  
Pattern

\* Hipped roof photo is from a colonial home in Norwich, Vermont, built in 1789. <https://sah-archipedia.org/buildings/VT-01-WS9>

# Architectural Ornamentation

## Maintenance

The earliest Colonial houses had little ornamentation, although simple hand carved cornice moldings were applied. By the end of the 18th century, these moldings had become more prominent and refined.

Later, by the end of the Civil War, and with the perfection of the bandsaw and turning techniques, many architectural styles became known for their prolific ornamentation.

Details and trim, such as cornices, rakes, brackets, columns, beaded joints, corner boards, entablatures, and balustrades, give each building its own special character and charm. The type and variety of ornament and decoration often help emphasize and define the building's form, use and style. Original features, whether simple or elaborate, are integral to and consistent with the building as a whole, and should be maintained and retained as such.

## Repair

Since most details and decorative elements are commonly made from wood, their maintenance and repair is similar to any wood construction. Depending on whether the feature is structural or applied ornamentation, its repair may consist of refastening, reinforcement, piecing-in, patching, or limited replacement. Often, partially rotten wood may be preserved and reconditioned using contemporary materials such as epoxies and other synthetic resins.

## Replacement

When it is necessary to replace a detail or decorative feature, closely examine the original, its parts, and how they are combined or constructed. If duplication of the original design is not possible, approximation or careful simplification, which conveys similar visual appearance, may be appropriate. Any replacement should be compatible in size, scale, rhythm, and material. If the feature is too deteriorated to allow for proper examination, consider looking for similar features of another building. Avoid removing original details or decorative features without replacing them.

## Simple Molded 18th Century Cornice



4.0

## 19th Century Ornamentation



## Addition

In most cases, it is appropriate, and encouraged, to add missing historic details and decorative features. Any additions should be appropriate to the style and period of the building. Try to respect original ornamentation patterns using pictorial and historical evidence, and avoid creating a 'false' historical appearance. Additions should be compatible in size, scale, and material to both the building and its historical prototype.

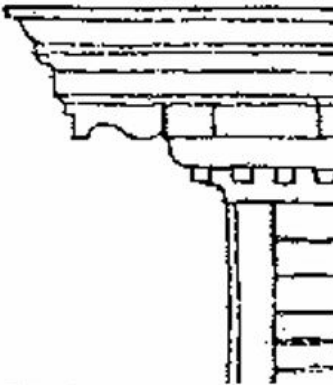
4.0

### New Additions

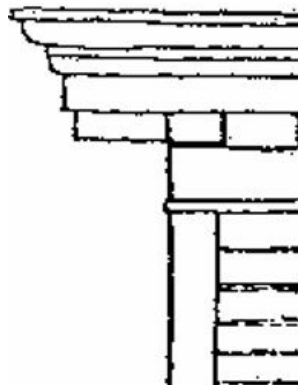
An attached exterior addition to an historic building expands its outer limits to create a new profile. Such expansion has the capability to radically change the historic appearance. If a new use cannot be met by altering non-character-defining interior spaces, then an attached exterior addition exterior addition is usually an acceptable alternative. Additions should be designed and constructed so that the character-defining features of the historic building are not radically changed, obscured, damaged, or destroyed in the process.

Some houses in the historic district have been added to, and many of these additions are sensitive to, and compatible with, the older structure. These may serve as models for future additions. The new addition should attempt to be compatible with the historic in terms of mass, materials, proportion, location, scale, and relation, of solids to voids. This is not to say that additions must imitate an historic style or period. In fact, a contemporary style addition specifically designed and planned for its context can often be more successful and appropriate.

### Cornices

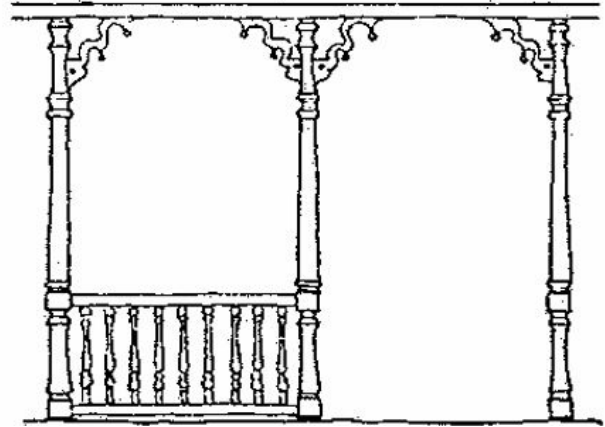


**Original Cornice with Modillions and Dentils.**

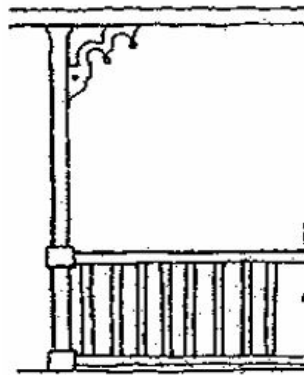


**Simplified Cornice Compatible in Size, Scale, Rhythm and Material**

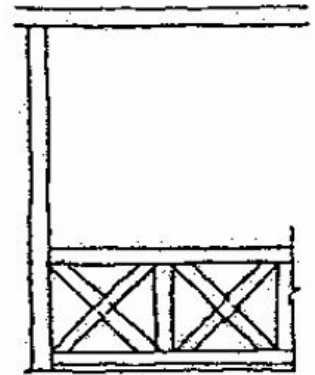
### Porches



**Original Porch with Sawn and Turned Details**

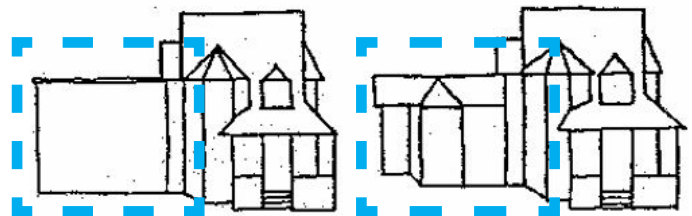


**Replacement-Appropriate Simplification**



**Replacement-Inappropriate Simplification**

### Building Mass



**NO**

**YES**

Avoid single, massive forms that are not compatible with the original building's massing. Try to relate the addition to the type and variety of the original form of the structure.

# New Construction

The statutory mandate of an historic district does not require reproduction or replication of historic styles, or strict adherence to any architectural style, provided a proposed structure is visually compatible with the area. After all, historic districts and properties are not museums, but places where people live and work. Virtually all districts contain a blend of styles from previous decades and centuries, and this process can and should be tastefully continued to include styles from the 1990's and into the next century.

Considerations for totally new structures will include, among other criteria;

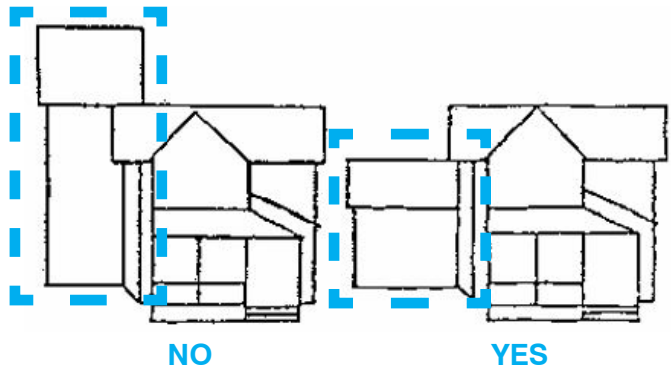
- » Qualities of the building form, including mass, scale and roofing;
- » Qualities of the façade, including doors and windows, architectural style, details of embellishment and roof material;
- » Relationship to immediate neighbors, including architectural compatibility and placement of buildings on the site;
- » Relationship to the district as a whole, including materials, texture, projections (porches, ells, etc.) and color, other than color of paint, and
- » Environmental factors, including paving, fences, lighting fixtures, signs and relationship to open space.

New construction applications will require a hardline drawing to scale with a list of building materials. A second review of the finished project will be held prior to issuing a certificate of occupancy.



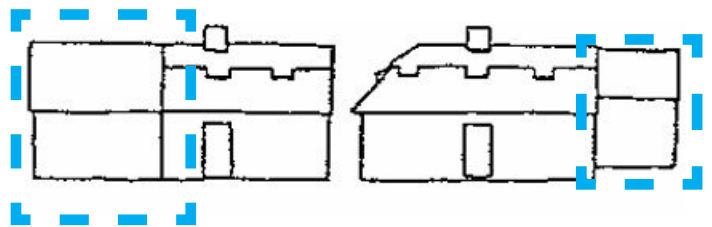
1927 Barn at Roskear Farm, 84 East Weatogue Street.

## Scale



**Out-of-scale additions can detract from the original building. Try to be sensitive to the original building size and proportion.**

## Location



**Avoid additions which obscure and or damage the original building's features. Try to locate additions on non-character defining sides, set back or out of view. Avoid change in rhythm between addition and original building.**

## Outbuildings

Outbuildings found in the Historic District include garages, toolsheds, greenhouses and barns. Some of these are historically significant in their own right. For example, a number of barns reflect the history of Simsbury as a farming community. Every effort should be made to maintain and repair these historic outbuildings in keeping with previous sections of these guidelines. The complete deterioration which can result in loss of these structures causes an even greater loss to the character of the historic district. Consider rehabilitation or adaptive re-use options before demolishing a deteriorated historic building.

New construction, such as garages and toolsheds, should be compatible with the major building in material, scale, design, and location. If possible try to locate these structures near the rear of the property and/or screened from public sight.

# Solar Panels and Site Utilities

## Solar Panels

When solar panels are to be mounted on the roof, they should be installed on rear slopes or other locations not easily visible from the public way. Panels should be installed flat and not alter the slope of the roof. If possible, solar panels should be positioned behind existing architectural features such as dormers and chimneys. The color of the panels and mounting equipment should be compatible in color to the roof. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features is highly discouraged when installing solar panels.

Freestanding solar panels should be installed in locations that minimize visibility from the public way. If panels may be visible from the public way, they should be screened with materials found elsewhere in the District such as fencing or vegetation of suitable scale for the District and setting.

## Utility Lines

In new buildings, utility lines from the street to the house should be buried underground. It is a long-term goal of the commission to bury all utility lines within the district in order to restore the historic character of the district, and allow mature trees to assume their natural shape.

## Mechanical Units

Permanently installed equipment, such as air conditioning units, generators, etc. should be placed out of public view wherever possible. If the equipment may be visible from the public way, it should be screened with materials found elsewhere in the District such as fencing or vegetation of suitable scale for the District and setting.

## Other Utilities

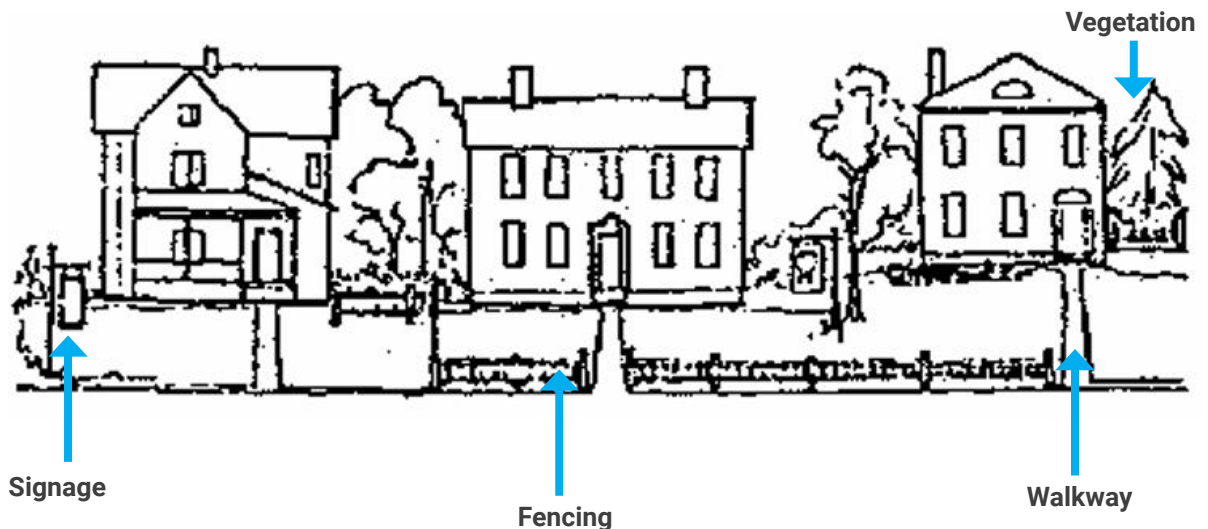
All other utilities, structures, attachments, and service connections (telephone, TV signal, well heads, etc.) should be placed out of public view wherever possible. If visible from the public way, they should be screened with materials found elsewhere in the District such as fencing or vegetation of suitable scale for the District and setting.

# Site Considerations

## Site

The relationship between an historic building or buildings and the site helps to define and often enhance the character of an historic property. The site's features, such as outbuildings, fences, signs exterior lighting fixtures, walkways, driveways, and vegetation can all contribute to, or detract from the historic, as well as the contemporary, building. Site features are an integral part of the streetscape.

## Basic Site Features



## Fences and Walls

New fences and walls should be compatible with the building's style and character. Fences compatible with rural lifestyle, such as livestock fencing are also considered appropriate. Fences and walls within the district include simple wooden fences, picket fences, stone walls, and stone posts with wooden fence rails. Concrete walls and chain link fences are not recommended.

## Signs

New signs are subject to zoning regulations and review by the Historic District Commission. As a rule, signs simple in shape and color are most effective, easiest to read and usually appropriate for any building. The sign should relate to and not obscure its surroundings. Furthermore, it should be compatible in design, material and details to the building and its style. More specific guidelines are provided in the Section 5: Signage Guidelines.

## Walkways and Driveways

Large expanses of paved surfaces can visually detract from the historic house. When repaving consider either material originally used or something compatible in color and texture to the building site. Avoid large areas of blacktop. Alternatives such as crushed stone, rolled into a sticky base, or gravel should be considered.

## Mailboxes

Mailboxes should conform to U.S.P.S. Regulations. They should be mounted on a wood post.

*Fence Example Photos:*

*Chain Link - Menards Landscaping. <https://www.menards.com/main/home.html>*

*Concrete - Turf Doctor. <https://turfdoctor.ca/backyard-fence-styles/painted-concrete-fence/>*

*Tall Fence - HGTV, <https://photos.hgtv.com/photo/tall-wood-fence-in-front-of-house>*

## Inappropriate Fencing



Chain Link Fence



Concrete



Too High, Obscures the View of the House

# Landscaping Recommendations

## Landscaping

4.0

Under Connecticut State Statute landscaping is not regulated in a historic district. For this reason, portions of a structure which are screened from the public way by vegetation will be considered as though vegetation did not exist when an application is being considered.

Although landscaping other than screening does not come under the jurisdiction of the Commission, plantings have considerable impact upon the appearance of an historic structure and the streetscape. Material appropriate to the period of the building can enhance its appearance, while inappropriate material detracts. The following provides a highlight of landscaping recommendations for homes in the East Weatogue Historic District<sup>1</sup>:

### The Pre-Victorian House

The earliest settlers planted gardens of necessity. Everything, including some flowers, served a purpose. The health and survival of the household depended upon the availability of vegetables, herbs, medicinal plants and dyestuffs. Thyme, rosemary, garlic, mints and onions were among the many plants used to make a constant diet of roots and beans more palatable. Roses and lavender were grown not for their beauty, but to scent linen. Very little time or energy was expended on the appearance of the garden. Everything was jumbled together according to the most suitable drainage, soil and exposure for each plant.

### The Colonial House

Colonial houses sat low to the ground, and foundation planting as we practice it today was unknown. In the winter, it was the custom in the north to bank the foundation of a house with branches of fir to keep the wind and drifting snow from blowing through the cracks of the stone foundation. At the most, there would have been planted only a treasured lilac by a corner of the house. Deciduous trees were planted to the south and west to provide summer shade. Favored garden plants such as mulberry and boxwood were brought from England. While English gardening styles underwent a radical change in the 18th Century, the earlier, Tudor style of formal gardens persisted in homes of the gentry.

<sup>1</sup>. *Historic Districts and Properties Handbook, Town of Fairfield, Connecticut. Fairfield Historic District Commission, 2020.*

As the Colonies became better established and more prosperous, many of the necessary plants became commercially available, leaving more garden space and energy to non-essential plants. By the early 19th Century, the vegetable garden was usually segregated from the early ornamental and pleasure gardens. Niceties such as shrubs, flowers and arbors began to appear.



Cottage Garden at Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia. Source: Colonial Williamsburg.org, <https://www.colonialwilliamsburg.org/explore/arboretum-gardens/?from=navexplore>

### The Victorian Era

In the 1840s, popular taste shifted towards informal, naturalistic gardens to complement Gothic and Italianate villas. As leisure and wealth increased, so did interest in elaborate landscapes. The 'picturesque' ideal emulated nature with the use of irregularly-shaped trees, flower beds, and ornamental shrubs. Vines and exotic plant material became popular. Honeysuckle, introduced from the Orient, was a favorite.

By the 1880s, a fine lawn and large trees such as elms, beeches and silver maples were considered suitable complements to the oversized Queen Anne houses of the period. Most suburban houses concentrated their plantings on the front yard, as side yards tended to be narrow, and rear yards taken up by vegetable gardens, privies and carriage houses.

Shrubs were used to delineate areas of lawn and to screen off undesirable views. Flowerbeds reflected the general ostentatiousness of the period. Instead of irregular shapes, they were now composed of complex geometric forms such as stars and trefoils and filled with brightly colored plants including roses, geraniums, zinnias, lobelias and nasturtiums. The Orient provided new plant materials such as Japanese yews. Other new varieties included barberry, hydrangea, flowering quince and viburnum. Garden ornamentation proliferated at this time: fountains, sentimental statuary, complex arbors, garden structures and fantastic topiary.



## The Early 20th Century

By the turn-of-the-century, garden styles began to shift back towards naturalism rather than formality. Foundation plantings finally became universal, anchoring the high foundation of the house to the ground. The lawn, with occasional groupings of trees remained popular, this time as a continuous carpet of green without the geometric cut-out flowerbeds of the Victorian era.

Curvilinear borders of flowers now delineated spaces, and were planted with clumps of pastel-hued perennials. Despite the number of hardy plant varieties imported from the Orient, there was increasing respect for native plants such as rhododendron, mountain laurel, willows, elms and junipers. Tall hedges became a popular form of fencing, providing privacy rather than ornament. Summer houses, fountains, and other lawn decoration remained popular, although simpler in design than in the previous era. The foundation planting concept, when transferred to the suburban models of the 1930-1940s, soon overwhelmed the modest houses almost hiding the buildings from view.



4.0



**Agricultural Fields at Rosdale Farms**



**Examples of Foundation Plantings in the East Weatogue Historic District Today**

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Image Credit: F.H. Studio

# 5.0 Signage Guidelines

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# Signage Guidelines

The Historic District Commission shall require that the appearance, size, position, method of attachment, texture of materials, and design of signs is in keeping with the collective characteristics of the structures located within the Historic District. A Certificate of Appropriateness will be required for all signs except real estate “For Sale” signs (g) and temporary (h). Signs that may be allowed within the Historic District shall be further limited as follows:

- » Off-site signs shall not be permitted.
- » Business signs shall be regulated on an individual basis.
- » Maximum area of any permanent sign located in an Historic District shall be two (2) square feet, except for the signs which identify the District.
- » No sign may extend above the top of the nearest façade, eaves, or firewall of a building or structure.
- » No sign that flashes, blinks, revolves, or is not in motion by the atmosphere shall be permitted. No visible bulbs, neon tubing, luminous paints, or plastics will be permitted as part of any sign.
- » Buildings and signs within the Historic District may be illuminated by remote light sources, provided that these light sources are shielded to protect adjacent properties.
- » One real estate sign shall be permitted per property, not to exceed one (1) square foot in size. Real estate shall be removed within two (2) days after the closing of the sale of a house or lot.
- » Temporary outdoor signs for political, charitable, and civic purposes shall be permitted under the following conditions:
  - No temporary signs shall exceed (6) square feet.
  - Political signs must be removed the day after Election Day.
  - Tag sale signs will be allowed two days prior to and the day of the sale.
  - All other temporary signs must be removed within 24 hours of completion of purpose.



5.0



**Real Estate “For Sale” signs are allowed without a Certificate of Appropriateness**

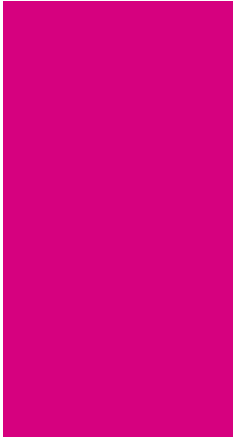
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Image Credit: FHI Studio

6.0

# 6.0 Sample Application & Forms



APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

APPLICATION NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION - TOWN OF SIMSBURY
933 HOPMEADOW STREETSIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070 - Telephone 860-658-3252 or 860-658-3245

Application is hereby made for the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness under the Historic District Ordinance of Simsbury, Connecticut, enacted pursuant to the enabling authority contained in Chapter 97, Section 7-147d, as amended, of the General Statutes of Connecticut, for proposed work as described below (and, where applicable, as shown on plans, drawings, or other supplementary material accompanying this application):

HOME OWNER INFORMATION (required) PLEASE PRINT:

Owner of Record: \_\_\_\_\_

Address of Proposed Work: \_\_\_\_\_

Owner's Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Owner's Mailing Address (if different from proposed work location): \_\_\_\_\_

Architect's Name (when applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

APPLICANT INFORMATION (if not owner) PLEASE PRINT:

Applicant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Applicant's Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE CHECK LINE WHERE PROPOSED WORK IS IN CONNECTION WITH:

Dwelling \_\_\_\_\_ Accessory Building \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

If other, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

Please briefly describe (print or type) the proposed work (you can also attach a summary). Be as specific as possible, including all pertinent design elements. Include all design data to scale. Site plans and elevations are required. Photographs will be helpful and may be required. Use attachments.

Estimated start date: \_\_\_\_\_ Estimated completion date: \_\_\_\_\_

Site Plan Elevations Photographs (check off if attached)

THE SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE SUBMITTED TO TOWN STAFF NO LATER THAN TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO THE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MEETING.

SIGNATURE OF OWNER (signature required)

Date

FOR COMMISSION USE ONLY:

Date of Hearing: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Determination by Commission: \_\_\_\_\_

(VALID FOR ONE YEAR)

Application as Above Made: GRANTED: \_\_\_\_\_ DENIED: \_\_\_\_\_

OR GRANTED WITH STIPULATIONS AS NOTED: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Commission Officer

Date



# Historic District Commission

Re (Address):

Dear:

6.0

## Notice of Historic District Violation Connecticut General Statutes Chapter 97, Section 7-147d, as amended

You are hereby notified that an inspection of the above premises on

\_\_\_\_\_ (date) disclosed the following violation(s) of the provisions of the Town of Simsbury Historic District Ordinance:

The regulations require that you take the following action. Failure to correct the listed violation(s) may subject you to legal action and/or other penalties provided by law.

1. Prompt discontinuance or correction of the listed violation(s). \_\_\_\_\_ (date)
2. Violation(s) shall be removed or corrected by \_\_\_\_\_ (date)
3. Reinspection to determine compliance will be conducted on \_\_\_\_\_

If you have any questions concerning this notice, please call the undersigned at 651-3751.

Very truly yours,

Richard G. Lacus  
Historic District Enforcement

Official By

\_\_\_\_\_  
Historic District Field Inspector

cc: Richard G.

# Historic District Commission

Date

6.0

\_\_\_\_\_  
Personally Handed

To: Re (address):

## Stop-Work Order

In accordance with the provisions of Connecticut Statue Chapter 97, Section 7-147d, as amended, you are advised that the work is proceeding in violation of the Simsbury Historic District Ordinance:

- (    ) Work proceeding without a Certificate of Appropriateness.
- (    ) Work proceeding contrary to the detail statement or plan approved by the Commission.

You are therefore notified that all work is to be stopped immediately and work shall not be resumed until the following conditions have been met:

The unlawful continuance of this work shall result in the violations being referred for prosecution and civil suit.

If you have any questions concerning this Stop-Work Order, please call the Building Department in the Simsbury Town Hall at 651-3751 for assistance.

Sincerely,

Richard G. Lacus  
Historic District Enforcement Officer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Personally Handed By:

cc: Historic District Commission

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witnessed By:



7.0

# 7.0 Appendix



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# References and Resources

This bibliography is intended to show homeowners a small sample of the variety of materials available to assist those who are interested in various aspects of historic preservation. These and other materials are available at the Simsbury Town Hall in the planning department, through Historic District Commission members, at the Simsbury Public Library, and at the Connecticut Historical Commission in Hartford.

- » A Field Guide to American Houses, Virginia and Lee McAlester, New York, A. A. Knopf, 1984.
- » Design Guidelines, A Plan of Appropriateness and Protection, Historic District Commission, East Hartford, 1988.
- » Design Review in Historic Districts, Alice Meriwether Bowsher. Washington D.C., The Preservation Press, 1978.
- » Identifying American Architecture, Old House Journal Staff, Brooklyn, N.Y., Old House Journal Corporation, 1988.
- » Preservation Briefs, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Preservation Assistance Division, Technical Preservation Services, Washington, D.C.
- » Report of the Historic District Study Committee—East Weatogue Historic District Simsbury, Connecticut, 1987.
- » Handbook of the Historic District Commission, Historic District Commission, Simsbury, 1991.
- » Historic Districts and Properties Handbook, Fairfield Historic District Commission, Fairfield, CT, 2020.
- » Madison Historic District Regulations and Guidelines, Madison, CT, 2010.
- » Sample Guidelines for Solar Systems in Historic Districts, National Alliance of Preservation Commissions, Athens, GA, 2011.
- » National Register of Historic Places Fact Sheet, State of Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development, 2016.
- » The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, 36 CFR 67. <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation.htm>.
- » Handbook for Historic District Commissions and Historic Property Commissions in Connecticut, 2010.

For additional information, you may also contact:

State Historic Preservation Office  
One Constitution Plaza, 2nd Floor  
Hartford, CT 06103  
860 256 2800

Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation  
940 Whitney Avenue  
Hamden, CT 06517  
203 562 6312 | Ctrust.org

*Please note: All photographs shown are of properties located within the East Weatogue Historic District unless noted otherwise. District photographs were taken by FHI Studio in July 2020.*



# Ordinance Establishing an Historic District and Historic District Commission

## BE IT ORDAINED:

1. **PURPOSE.** In order to perpetuate and preserve the historic features of Simsbury and to promote the educational, cultural, economic, and general welfare of the public through the preservation and protection of the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places associated with the history of or indicative of a period or style of architecture of Simsbury, of Connecticut, or of the nation, there is hereby established an historic district to be known as the *East Weatogue Historic District* and an Historic District Commission.
2. **BOUNDARIES.** The boundaries of the East Weatogue District shall be those described on Schedule A attached hereto and made a part hereof and are shown on a map entitled *East Weatogue Historic District*, which map is incorporated herein by reference.
3. **HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION.**
  - (a) The Historic District Commission (the *Commission*) shall consist of five (5) regular members and three (3) alternate members, all of whom shall be electors of Simsbury and none of whom shall hold a salaried public municipal office in Simsbury. At least three (3) regular members and two (2) alternate members of the Commission shall be owners of record or residents within the East Weatogue Historic District.
  - (b) Within fifteen (15) days of the effective date of this ordinance, the Board of Selectman shall appoint five (5) regular members to the Commission, whose terms shall expire five (5) years, four (4) years, three (3) years, two (2) years and one (1) year from the effective date of this ordinance; and the Board of Selectman shall appoint three (3) alternate members to the Commission, whose terms shall expire three (3) years, two (2) years, and one (1) year from the effective date of this ordinance. Thereafter, the Board of Selectmen shall appoint successors to regular and alternate members to terms of five (5) years, except that an appointed to fill a vacancy shall be for the duration of the unexpired term of a regular or alternate member. Any member or alternate may be appointed for another term or terms. All regular and alternate members shall serve without compensation.
  - (c) Within thirty (30) days after appointment of the members of the first commission, and annually thereafter on a date that the Commission shall establish, the members shall meet, organize, and elect a chairman, vice chairman, and a clerk from its own number. Alternate members shall not participate in any election of officers of the Commission.
  - (d) The presence of four (4) regular or alternate members shall constitute a quorum. No resolution or vote, except a vote to adjourn or to fix the time and place of the Commission's next meeting, shall be adopted by less than three affirmative votes.

**4. POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE COMMISSION.** The Commission shall have such powers, shall perform such functions, shall have such duties, and shall be subject to such limitations as shall from time to time be prescribed by the enabling legislation, Title 7, Chapter 97, Section 7-147 (a) through 147 (k) of the Connecticut General Statutes, as amended from time to time. Without limiting the powers and duties of the Commission as set forth in the enabling legislation, as it may be amended from time to time, the Commission’s powers and duties shall include the following:

- (a) To hear and determine applications for certificates of appropriateness regarding the erection, alteration, or demolition or removal of a building or structure or the use of premises for parking within the East Weatogue Historic District;
- (b) To adopt rules of practice and regulations to provide guidance to property owners as to factors to be considered in preparing an application for a certificate of appropriateness;
- (c) To employ and technical assistants or consultants;
- (d) To accept grants and gifts;
- (e) To incur expenses appropriate to the carrying on of its work, subject to appropriateness by the municipality or receipt of grants or gifts; and
- (f) To take action to prevent illegal acts and to enforce its regulations and the enabling legislation.

**5. EFFECTIVE DATE.** This ordinance shall be in full force and effective from and after its passage.

**December 16, 1987**