

# INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING AN APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS/DESIGN APPROVAL/EXEMPTION

Please read all instructions carefully before completing an application. Please also refer to the Study Report and Standards and Criteria or Design Guidelines for the specific District or Landmark.

**CONSULTATION WITH COMMISSION STAFF:** The commission staff is available to discuss proposed projects, district standards and criteria or guidelines, and documentation requirements. Consultation is strongly encouraged, especially for first-time applicants. Please contact the commission staff at 617-635-3850 if you have questions or would like to make an appointment.

**ZONING ISSUES:** All outstanding zoning issues must be resolved prior to submitting an application for commission review. Written confirmation of zoning status from either the Inspectional Services Department (ISD) or the Zoning Board of Appeal (ZBA) must be provided with the application if the scope of work involves changes in square footage, height, enclosed space, legal use of occupancy; or rooftop construction. ISD will determine whether zoning variances will be required for your project.

**OTHER REVIEWS:** In addition to architectural or Landmarks commission review, other government agencies may have review authority over your proposed project. These agencies may include: the Inspectional Services Department (617-635-5300), the Boston Redevelopment Authority (617-722-4300), the Public Works Department (617-635-4900), the Parks and Recreation Department (617-635-4505), the Art Commission (617-635-3245), and the Mass Architectural Access Board (617-727-0660), among others. **It is your responsibility to ensure that all required approvals are obtained.**

**FILING DEADLINES AND HEARING DATES:** Each district commission meets once a month in a public hearing to review applications; the Boston Landmarks Commission Design Review Committee also meets once a month to review applications. **To be scheduled for a specific public hearing, your application and all accompanying documentation must be received by the commission by 5:00 p.m. on the filing deadline date. See the annual schedule of deadlines and hearing dates online at [www.cityofboston.gov/landmarks](http://www.cityofboston.gov/landmarks), or available at Boston City Hall, Room 709.** Applications may be filed in person, by messenger, or by mail addressed to the Environment Department, Boston City Hall, Room 709, Boston, MA 02201.

Please note that Commission staff is not available to review applications for completeness immediately upon submittal. Please review all instructions and documentation requirements carefully before submitting your application. It is your responsibility to ensure the application is complete before submittal. **Incomplete applications will not be accepted.** If you have questions or require consultation before submitting your application, please contact the commission staff at 617-635-3850 to make an appointment.

After the filing deadline, all complete applications are logged and reviewed by staff. Staff will determine if your application will be reviewed at a commission hearing, or if the application qualifies for Administrative Review and Approval. All applicants and property abutters will receive a hearing agenda listing your specific appearance time. The hearing agenda will clearly note the Administrative Review/Approval applications. (See details in next item.)

**ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW/APPROVAL:** Applicants listed on the hearing agenda under this heading need not appear at the hearing. Following the hearing, please present a copy of the agenda at the Inspectional Services Department (1010 Massachusetts Avenue) when applying for permits. ISD personnel will send an electronic copy of your building-permit application to the Environment Department. (To avoid potential confusion, the text of your building-permit application should be consistent with the project description given on the agenda.) Commission staff will accordingly authorize the execution of the work, attaching any applicable provisos, reflecting the relevant guidelines and precedents. PLEASE NOTE that no further correspondence will be issued for the applications listed as Administrative Review items; the electronic building-permit application as annotated by commission staff will constitute your Certificate of Appropriateness.

# THE APPLICATION FORM

Please fill out the application form as completely as possible. Incomplete applications will not be accepted. Lack of information will cause delays in the design-review process.

**PLEASE TYPE OR CLEARLY PRINT ALL INFORMATION.**

## **PART I:** ( \* denotes required information)

\***ADDRESS:** Provide the legal property address (street number and street name).

**NAME of BUSINESS/PROPERTY:** If the application involves a commercial property (e.g. a retail store or restaurant), provide the name of the business. If the property itself has a historic or common name (e.g. Allen House), provide that name. *If neither applies, leave this space blank.*

## **PART II:**

The names, telephone numbers, postal and email addresses requested in the application form will be used for all subsequent communications relating to the application, including notices of public hearings and commission decisions. Environment Department personnel cannot be responsible for illegible, incomplete or inaccurate contact information provided by applicants.

\***APPLICANT:** Provide name of contact person, organization (if applicable), daytime telephone number (including area code if outside 617 area), and complete mailing address. Please also provide an email address, if available. Anyone can act as an applicant: a property owner or its representative (such as a property manager or attorney), a tenant, an architect, a contractor, etc.

\***PROPERTY OWNER:** Provide the name of the legal property owner (and contact person if applicable), daytime telephone number (include area code if outside 617 area), and complete mailing address. Please also provide an email address, if available. "Property owner" is the owner of the entire building or site, not the owner of a business or unit inside the building.

**ARCHITECT:** If an architect or other design professional is involved with the project, provide the name, telephone number, complete mailing address and email address. If not, leave this space blank.

**CONTRACTOR:** If a contractor has been chosen, provide the name, telephone number, complete mailing address, and email address. If not, leave this space blank.

## **PART III:**

\***WRITTEN DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED WORK:** Provide a concise, complete summary describing the entire scope of work: (e.g.: "Replace all window sash with true divided lights, painted black."). An itemized list of work items is strongly recommended. This description provides the basis for the official notice and subsequent decision, and it must clearly represent the entirety of the project. Additional pages may be attached, if necessary, to provide more detailed information. **You must provide a summary description of the scope of work on the form provided.**

FORMS WITH ONLY "SEE ATTACHED" WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

\***REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION:** All applications must be accompanied by information which clearly illustrates the scope of the work and its impact on the building: photographs, drawings, specifications, samples, etc. You are not required to hire an architect, but professional design advice is strongly recommended, especially for projects involving construction or design changes.

**Documentation should answer the following questions clearly and completely:**

*What specifically is being proposed?*

*How, specifically, will the work be performed?*

*Where on the building specifically will the work be performed?*

*What will the building look like when the proposed work is finished?*

*INSTRUCTIONS continued on following page*

*(REVISED 2014)*

Incomplete applications will cause delays in the design review process and may be returned for additional information. The architectural district commissions review a wide variety of projects, from changes in paint color to new construction, and therefore, the amount of documentation varies with the scope of work. Please review carefully the required documentation instructions below or consult the commission staff regarding your specific project, if necessary.

#### **GENERAL INFORMATION REGARDING DOCUMENTATION FOR ALL APPLICATIONS:**

**Documentation will be retained by the commission as part of the public record; only one set of documentation needs to be submitted with the application.** All required documentation must be submitted as a hard copy. Electronic copies of application materials may be helpful (consult with staff), but materials submitted only in electronic format will not be considered part of the application. Additional hard copies of application materials may be required for the public hearing (consult with staff).

**All documentation (photos and drawings) must be labeled with the property address and dated.** Drawings should be in a format which will fit or can be folded into an 8½ by 11-inch file. The commission cannot store large rolled drawings, or drawings or photographs mounted on presentation boards. If you wish to use presentation boards for the public hearing, an **unmounted and unbound** set of drawings and photos must be provided for the file. **Due to limited storage space, applications containing very large, mounted and/or bound materials will not be accepted.**

**Interior floor plans** are generally not required except in cases of an interior landmark designation. Be aware that some interior changes may affect the exterior of a building (e.g. elevators, changes in floor levels, fireplaces, mechanical systems, fire egress window signs, exhaust/air vents, etc.) and those exterior impacts may be subject to commission review; consult the staff.

**Revisions** to projects between the filing deadline and the hearing date are not uncommon. If further design details have developed, please bring a set of revised drawings with you to the hearing for the commission's files. Additions to the scope of work, however, may not be discussed by the commission unless they have been included in the notice of public hearing.

#### **SPECIFIC DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS:**

**APPLICATIONS WITHOUT PHOTOGRAPHS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. Current color photographs are required for all applications,** including ordinary maintenance and repair projects, as a record of existing conditions. At a minimum, a photo of the building facade in its entirety must be submitted; photos of rear or side elevations, roofs, individual details, and neighboring buildings may also be required if they will affect these areas. If the subject property is a site or landscape, context and close-up photos will be required. 35mm or black & white prints (3x5–inches or larger) are preferred. High-quality printouts of digital photographs may also be used. Color photocopies of slides and printouts of digital photos may be acceptable, provided the image is clearly reproduced. **Polaroids & xeroxed photographs are not acceptable.**

**REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE:** Photographs to document existing conditions; written scope of work, specifications (methods, materials, colors, etc.) are all required. For cleaning, the proposed methods and materials are also required. For masonry repair: the same documentation as noted above is required, plus methods, materials, and paint samples. Test patches on site may be required for all maintenance items.

**REPLACEMENT:** Photographs to document existing conditions; drawings or specifications for both existing and replacement elements comparing existing to proposed conditions to ensure consistency; material or color samples. For replacement windows, drawings should indicate head, jamb, sill, rail, stile, and muntin dimensions (in section and elevation).

**MINOR MODIFICATIONS:** Photographs to document existing conditions; sketches or shop drawings (drawn to scale and including all dimensions, materials, colors, method of attachment, etc.), manufacturer's literature or specifications sketches or elevation drawings showing the proposal in context with the building or site.

## **DESIGN CHANGES AND MAJOR ALTERATIONS TO FACADES, REAR OR SIDE ELEVATIONS:**

Photographs to document existing conditions; full elevations drawings showing both existing and proposed conditions (drawings to be annotated, labeled, dated and drawn to scale); detail drawings of specific elements; manufacturers literature; material and color samples. For basement excavations, fences, gated, parking courts, paving, new stoops/stairs and other site alterations: same documentation as stated above plus full section drawings. For new fire egress required by building department (Inspectional Services Dept.): same documentation as stated above plus certification from ISD that work is required. For any increase in height, square footage, enclosed space, legal use or occupancy: same documentation stated above plus written certification of zoning status.

**SIGNAGE:** Photograph of entire building facade and close-up photo of subject storefront; drawing of sign indicating where it will be positioned on building (to scale detail drawing of sign dimensions, materials, methods of attachment; lighting, colors, and lettering sizes.

**ALTERATIONS TO ROOFS:** (including decks, additions, mechanical equipment, etc.): Required documentation as stated above under "Design Changes" plus photos of existing rooftop conditions; existing and proposed roof plan; full sightlines section drawings; full elevation drawings showing context of subject and neighboring buildings; block plan. For mechanical equipment: documentation as above plus manufacturer's literature. For volumetric additions: block plans should indicate existing additions on the block. For decks, headhouses, or additions, a mock-up of the proposed height and volume on site will likely be required by the commission to determine visibility before approval. To save time, the mock-up can be done before the hearing (photographed on the roof and from the ground, front and rear) and inspected and verified by staff.

**MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:** Complete photographic documentation of the site; full construction drawings as detailed as possible, including context of abutting buildings, site and block plans. Advisory (informal) review of preliminary drawings may be advisable before filing an application or proceeding with design development. Early consultation with staff is also strongly encouraged.

**DEMOLITION:** Complete photographic documentation of the structure (interior and exterior), report on historic and architectural significance of the building; engineer's report documenting condition of the building; economic impacts of demolition vs. rehabilitation; site and block plans; certification from building department that demolition is required for public safety; proposal for new construction on site.

**ESTIMATED COST OF CONSTRUCTION:** Please estimate the total cost of the work proposed.

### **PART IV:**

\* **DULY AUTHORIZED SIGNATURES (BOTH REQUIRED):** Both the applicant and the legal property owner must sign the application form.

#### **UNSIGNED OR PARTIALLY SIGNED FORMS WILL BE REJECTED.**

In cases of multiple ownership, the chair of the condominium or cooperative association or authorized representative (such as a property manager) shall sign as owner; in cases of institutional ownership, an authorized representative of the organization shall sign as owner. The signature of the property owner represents consent to the work being proposed. Misrepresentation of owner consent shall invalidate any Certificate of Appropriateness or Design Approval.

**Environment Department personnel cannot be responsible for verifying the authority of the individuals to sign the application. Misrepresentation of signatory authority may result in the invalidation of the application.**

Find more information, forms and guidelines at: [www.cityofboston.gov/landmarks](http://www.cityofboston.gov/landmarks)

Questions? Contact the Environment Department at 617-635-3850 or  
at Boston City Hall, Room 709, Boston, MA 02201

*(REVISED 2014)*

## FEES FOR APPLICATIONS TO ARCHITECTURAL COMMISSIONS

(As authorized under City of Boston Code, Title 14, Section 450) Effective 1 March 2004

**NOTE:**

**All fees must be paid by check or money order to the “City of Boston” and presented at the time the application is made.**

**\$25.00**

*Minor modifications* to the exterior architectural features of a building, including painting, cleaning of masonry, interior window signs, masonry repointing, new window shutters, planting boxes and parterres, paving surfaces, intercom and security devices, storm windows, lanterns and lighting, residential window grates, screens, benches and plaques.

**\$50.00**

*Design changes* to the façade of a building, including changes to or installation of doors, windows, fire balconies, exterior signs, roof decks and handrails, fences and masonry walls, lowered window sills, changes to siding or roofing materials, skylights, solar panels, large antennae, ramps, new chimneys and flues, residential vents, heat pumps and non-portable air-conditioning units, major masonry repair (including resurfacing of stoops and brownstone façades).

**\$100.00**

*Major alterations* to the exterior design or form of the building, including replacement front stoops, roof headhouses and new penthouses, new storefronts, yard excavations, commercial exhaust vents, new or raised dormers, new windows and door openings, new terraces, demolition and increases to floor area.

**\$250.00**

*Major construction* including new buildings, infill structures, or major development projects.

In cases where the cost of new construction or major exterior changes exceed five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000), the fee shall be one-half (1/2) of one percent (1%) of the fair cost of the work, provided, however, that in no case shall the fee be more than five thousand dollars (\$5,000).

In cases of Certificates of Design Approval for work on a designated interior space not requiring a building permit from the Inspectional Services Department, the fee shall be ten dollars (\$10.00), and in all other cases the fee shall be twenty five dollars (\$25.00).

In cases of economic hardship, or of demolition or removal of unsafe or unsightly architectural features, the commission or their designees may waive or reduce the fee.

For more information, contact the Environment Department at 617-635-3850 or  
at Boston City Hall, Room 709, Boston, MA 02201