

THE GREENFIELD HISTORICAL COMMISSION: WHAT IT DOES & HOW TO LEARN MORE

The Greenfield Historical Commission, a town commission is sometimes confused with the Historical Society of Greenfield, a private non-profit charitable entity. We encourage citizens to contact us, attend our meetings on the 1st Wednesday of each month as posted at Town Hall and visit our website: http://www.greenfield-ma.gov/Pages/GreenfieldMA_BComm/Historical/index.

A TOWN COMMISSION identifying, evaluating and protecting Greenfield's historic places

The Historical Commission was created by the town's 1972 acceptance of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40 Section 8d "for the preservation, protection, and development of the historical or archaeological assets of such city or town." These assets include areas, landscapes, buildings, parks, objects, and archaeological sites, the historic places that make Greenfield what it is today. As appointed members, we work to preserve the best of Greenfield's past.

Historical societies and museums, such as the Historical Society of Greenfield, preserve and interpret historical collections and are supported by members, gifts and fundraising.

WHAT IS HISTORIC PRESERVATION? keeping the places that make it home

It is the idea of preserving historical resources as "the real thing": buildings, areas, structures that permit us to experience, learn and feel connected to people, ideas and events. Greenfield's wealth of historic resources allow us to touch what they touched, look at what they saw, and to connect with farmers, teachers, housekeepers, builders, industrialists, machinists and students.

INVENTORIES OF HISTORIC RESOURCES: finding out what we have

Inventory forms recording these places are sent to the Massachusetts Historical Commission where they are entered into the Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth. MACRIS is an online searchable database <http://mhc-macris.net> or at MHC's website at www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc. The MHC site also includes Town Reports: look for the Reconnaissance Survey for Greenfield, a 20-page report by an MHC professional team, describing many of our major historic places by historic period. Inventory forms provide information to the public and help us decide what is important to preserve as town history and a sustainable future. Copies of most Inventory Forms are in the public library's Greenfield Room.

PROJECT REVIEW advising Greenfield's review boards

As required by town statute, the Commission provides advisory comments on project reviews to the Planning and Zoning Boards. Town policies and plans support the preservation of Greenfield's historic resources and character. Project proponents are encouraged to contact the Commission if there are questions. Greenfield has no local landmarks or local historic districts that would require our review.

DEMOLITION PERMIT REVIEW encouraging historic building reuse

Chapter 58 of the Town Code requires that the Commission advise the Inspector of Buildings prior to issuance of a Demolition Permit for National Register listed and eligible buildings or structures. This Chapter can be found on the town website under Inspections Department Forms. National Register District parcel maps are available in the Office of Planning and Community Development at 114 Main Street. When the Commission receives a demolition permit application from the Inspector of Buildings, the Commission makes two determinations: 1. is the building or structure listed in the National Register or eligible for listing? If so, it is determined to be

significant and the Commission holds a public hearing to receive public comments. 2. After receiving public comment and reviewing the application, it then determines if the building or structure is "preferably preserved". If Preferably Preserved, issuance of the demolition permit is delayed up to six months in order to allow the owner to find a way to preserve the building or structure. The Town Council may extend the delay to twelve months and the Commission may shorten the delay if the owner makes a good faith effort to preserve the building.

IS MY BUILDING or LANDSCAPE HISTORIC ? Officially: if it is over 50 years old

The majority of neighborhoods, homes and other buildings in Greenfield were built prior to 1910. Does that make them historic? According to the U.S. Secretary of the Interior any building over 50 years of age may be considered for **official** historic status. Association with important local, state or national events, original location and authenticity are all important to being designated "historic". Greenfield has recently identified many of its important heritage landscapes as well. Most things change over time but to be "historic" they must convey their historic importance. New uses are often compatible with historic resources as sustainable assets.

FEDERAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION LAWS history of national preservation laws

Beginning in 1906, Congress enacted three historic preservation laws. The current statute that we follow is the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act as amended (16 USC 470).

<http://www.achp.gov/overview.html>

THE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION www.achp.gov is the national governmental agency that oversees and administers national historic preservation laws. These may affect local actions when federal permits or funds are used on historic resources.

THE MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION (MHC)

MHC is both a state agency and the federal State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for Massachusetts. It administers programs such as the federal and state historic tax credits, and conducts reviews of publicly funded or permitted projects, submits nominations of historic places to the National Park Service for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, assists municipalities and historical commissions through training and grants for their compilation of a local inventory as the basis for preservation planning. When funds are available, MHC also offers competitive grant programs for planning and preservation of municipal or non-profits' buildings.

www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/

NATIONAL & STATE-WIDE HISTORIC PRESERVATION organizations

Preservation Massachusetts www.preservationmass.org is the Massachusetts state-wide organization. It cooperates with the MHC and the National Trust for Historic Preservation www.preservationnation.org through a Circuit Rider program which connects preservation professionals with communities and individuals.

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