

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

PERMITTING PROCESS FAQs

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PERMITTING PROCESS FAQs

- 1. If my house is classified as Individually Significant, would I be able to make changes or additions to it?**

Under this proposal, homeowners would be able to make changes to Individually Significant or Contributing properties, as long as they do not substantially compromise the historic character of the property, just as is currently the case for properties listed on the existing Survey. Applications for minor changes would be eligible for Expedited Determinations, whereas projects that are more significant in scope would continue to require a full review by the HBPC, including a site visit by the full Commission (scheduled on a monthly basis) and in most cases a Public Hearing. The HBPC strives to work with homeowners to help them accomplish their goals while preserving the historic character of their properties.

- 2. How do I obtain approval to make changes to a property that is included on the Survey?**

All owners of property in the Town of Bedford are advised to contact the Building Department as a first priority when contemplating any type of construction, demolition, repair, or renovation, including sheds and other accessory structures. For properties on the Survey of Historic Buildings, the Building Inspector refers the application to the HBPC, and the HBPC Office informs the property owners of their application options. Owners of Individually Significant and Contributing properties would be required to file an application with the HBPC; however, under the proposed new procedures they would have the option of requesting an Expedited Determination for minor work. Current procedures would continue to apply for significant alterations to Individually Significant or Contributing properties, that is, they would require a full review, including a site walk with the full Commission and

in most cases a Public Hearing. Property owners filing Building Permit applications for alterations to Other Historic Resources would not be required to file an application with the HBPC, but will be notified that they are eligible for a free advisory consultation if they so desire.

3. What is an Expedited Determination?

Under this proposed new procedure, an Expedited Determination would be a fast-track application process for property owners wanting to make minor changes to Individually Significant or Contributing properties. For eligible projects, a site walk would be scheduled shortly after receipt of the application for an Expedited Determination, and a decision would be made within seven days of the site walk, eliminating the need for the property owner to wait for the next regularly scheduled monthly HBPC meeting.

4. What fees are associated with applications for work on Historic Properties?

The Town of Bedford requires a \$75 fee for all Building Permit applications. There is an additional \$50 fee for the HBPC application, plus a \$300 escrow fee for expenses incurred by the Town for retaining an outside Consultant as needed. The \$300 escrow fee will be returned if a Consultant is not needed. Under these proposed new procedures, the \$300 escrow fee would be waived for Expedited Determination applications.

5. What guidelines does the HBPC use when considering an application for work on a Historic Building?

The HBPC uses the United States Secretary of the Interior's Standards to evaluate applications for alterations and additions to Historic Buildings, including the repair and replacement of historic materials. These standards, published by the National Park Service, are used by local preservation commissions and State Historic Preservation Offices across the country.

6. Is it possible to consult with the HBPC in the early stages of a project, without filing a formal application?

Yes, property owners and architects are encouraged to request a Conference with the HBPC for an early-stage conceptual review.

7. Will I be required to submit an application to the HBPC if I am only making changes to the interior of a Historic Property?

No. The HBPC only reviews alterations to the exteriors of Historic Properties; however, you will still need to obtain any necessary Building Permits from the Building Department.

8. Do I need approval for landscape changes to a Historic Property?

No, however, the HBPC urges property owners to preserve historic dry-laid stone walls whenever possible. Dry-laid stone walls are a defining feature of the Town's historic landscape. Links to further information on the history and preservation of stone walls can be found on the Planning Department [webpage](#). Otherwise,

property owners should bear in mind that landscape changes may be subject to review by other Town agencies, if wetlands, steep slopes, or setbacks are involved.