

# Suffield Historic District Handbook



Published by the Suffield Historic District  
Town of Suffield, CT 06078



# Suffield Historic District Commission

Town of Suffield  
Suffield, Connecticut 06078

For the most recent list of committee members, please contact the Suffield Historic District Commission

Dear Neighbor:

The Suffield Historic District Commission has prepared this publication, "Suffield Historic District Handbook," to share with property owners some of the factors to be taken into account when proposing new construction, modification, or demolition of structures within the town's two Historic Districts. Factors relating to signage in the Districts are also covered.

As a town we can take pride that the Hastings Hill District and the Main Street section of the Suffield Street/Main Street/Mapleton Avenue Districts and that the houses therein are listed on the National Register of Historic Places under the U. S. Department of the Interior.

The Commission recognizes the need of property owners to expand, reduce, or otherwise modify their properties to meet their changing requirements. These guidelines are intended to provide a standard against which to judge the appropriateness of proposed projects and to provide a basis for consistency in the decisions made. Our underlying principle is that when an old building is to be improved to modern functional standards or when a new facility is constructed, the architectural character of the structure and the neighborhood is properly maintained.

The guidelines are intended to be illustrative, not all inclusive or inflexible, and to offer a basis for a reasonable approach to property improvement.

The Commission wishes to acknowledge the assistance of the Connecticut Historical Commission and the Historic District Commissions of East Hartford, Glastonbury, and Simsbury for materials helpful in preparing this handbook. We also give special thanks to Lester Smith, Suffield Town Historian, for his contribution; Margery Warren for her extra effort in compiling the document; Linemakers, Alice Williams, proprietor, for the sketches of historic buildings; and Maggie Philippon for her artistic talent on the cover and assistance in the Handbook publication.

Home ownership in an historic district carries with it the responsibility to maintain the characteristics that illustrate the best of the past. Through this stewardship come the rewards of increased appreciation of the artistry and craftsmanship of our forbearers and a heightened sense of community to be passed on to future generations.

# Table of Contents

- 1.) A History of Suffield, Briefly Told
- 2.) Suffield Historic Districts and the National Register of Historic Places
- 3.) Map of Historic Districts
- 4.) Overview
- 5.) Guidelines
- 6.) New Construction and Additions
- 7.) Outbuildings
- 8.) Site
- 9.) Landscaping
- 10.) Fences and Walls
- 11.) Walkways and Driveways
- 12.) Utility Lines
- 13.) Mailboxes and Newspaper Tubes
- 14.) Vehicles for Sale
- 15.) Signs
- 16.) Signage Guidelines
- 17.) Suffield Code
- 18.) Application for Certificate of Appropriateness
- 19.) Certificate of Appropriateness
- 20.) 1999 Commission Members

# **A HISTORY OF SUFFIELD, BRIEFLY TOLD**

Captain John Pynchon of Springfield, Massachusetts, an enterprising merchant, military leader, and land developer purchased the territory for Suffield from the local Indians in 1669 for 30 pounds. Chief Pampunkshat of the Agawams sold him the region north of Stony Brook; Princess Mishnoasqus of the Poquonocks sold the part to the south.

If the settlement had been organized out of Hartford instead of Springfield, Suffield would be the twenty-second of Connecticut's 169 towns. But a Massachusetts surveying error in 1642 had marked the colony boundary eight miles too far south, and it was the Massachusetts General Court in 1670 that granted Pynchon the right to plan this new town along the Connecticut River.

Called Stony Brook Plantation at first, the town was established as Suffield in 1674. The initial grant was six miles square. The earliest grants of land to individual settlers were on the "Northampton Road," now Remington and Hill Streets. But from the start it was determined that the center of the town, with its meeting house and school and common ground, would be along what is now Main Street. Long narrow lots were assigned there; on one side reaching west to Muddy Brook and on the other side extending east to meet the lots granted along present-day East Street.

King Philip's War - the 1675 Indian uprising that spread west from Cape Cod Bay - reached Suffield in the summer of that year, and residents evacuated the burnt town. Most returned when settlement resumed in earnest two years later. The early proprietors were Englishmen who had settled first in Springfield, in Windsor, or in the Boston vicinity, or were the offspring of the first immigrants. John Pynchon organized a number of towns, and the story is told that when he was advising settlers, he sent the devout to Enfield and the commercially industrious to Suffield. It was 1698 before the First Congregational Church was organized, 28 years after settlement.

The 1642 surveying error was soon discovered; but despite immediate complaints, it wasn't until 1749 that Connecticut took jurisdiction over Suffield. Settlement of disputes with surrounding towns and a final compromise with Massachusetts in 1803 left the boundaries as we know them today, with Suffield losing its claim against what was then Simsbury and gaining its present "over the mountain" region. Massachusetts retained the well-known "Southwick Jog" at the Congamond Ponds.

Successful crops from the good valley soil assured the success of the new Plantation; but growing prosperity was supported by considerable industry and commerce as well. In addition to the usual saw mills and grist mills, Suffield once boasted three iron works, a cotton factory, several distilleries, and two paper mills. There were also tanneries, a linseed oil mill, two wagon works, a cigar factory, and even some ship building, as well as fur trading and

fishing along the river. Suffield merchants invested in West Indies trade and in frontier land development.

The inland route of the Boston Post Road passed through town on South Street, Main Street, and Mapleton Avenue. When the Suffield Post Office was established in 1796, the first one between Hartford and Springfield, that office became the manager of postal finances for the entire region between New York, Boston, and Canada.

The town's affluence during the 19<sup>th</sup> century allowed Suffield to compete successfully for the establishment of the Connecticut Baptist Literary Institution (now Suffield Academy). Five thousand dollars were pledged, and the school opened in 1833. Local secondary education undoubtedly encouraged continuing enterprise and growth.

The first bridge across the Connecticut River in Connecticut opened here in 1808. Another bridge opened in 1893, giving Suffield residents direct access to work in the giant carpet mill in Thompsonville.

An important feature along the river was the canal completed in 1829 to allow shipping to bypass the Enfield Rapids. A few years later, another canal was dug across the western end of town, making Suffield the only town in Connecticut with two canals. Neither one seems to have affected Suffield very much. There were no major dock facilities in town, and railroads soon made both canals obsolete for transportation.

What did affect the town in the 1800's was tobacco. Growing it became Suffield's major activity. After 1810,

when Simeon Viets built the country's first cigar factory on Ratley Road, cigar making spread through Suffield and the region. Connecticut soon became the cigar-making center of the country, and peddlers from Suffield drove their wagons as far west as Ohio, distributing fine cigars made from Connecticut Valley tobacco. Cigar making in Suffield declined in the late 1800's, but another important development occurred just after 1900. Government experiments had shown that the warm, humid shade under doth netting could duplicate conditions in Indonesia where tobacco leaves well suited for cigar wrappers were grown. The idea caught on throughout the Connecticut Valley, especially in Suffield.

Suffield has raised a great many notable people over the years. A few examples from earlier centuries are: Major General Phineas Lyman, who was the second in command of all Colonial forces in the French and Indian War; Gideon Granger, Jr., who served as Postmaster General for 13 years under Presidents Madison and Jefferson; and Reverend Sylvester Graham, who expounded his reformist ideas about whole wheat flour and wholesome living. Henry A. Sykes designed beautiful churches and other buildings for Suffield and many other New England towns. Olin Warner was honored for his sculpture. In this century, Hugh M. Alcorn served as Connecticut's State's Attorney for 34 years, becoming famous for many successful prosecutions. More recently, his son, Howard W. Alcorn, served on the Supreme Court of Connecticut for nine years, the last of which as Chief Justice.

As noted above, railroads made canal transportation obsolete in this area; but when a rail line from Hartford to Springfield was built in 1844, with its proposed route through Suffield, it was forced to cross the river at Windsor Locks by the town's aversion to the "iron horse." Before long, townspeople realized that they were missing an important commercial asset, and a short branch was completed to the town center in 1870. It still brings freight to town – mostly lumber. In 1902 a railroad line was run from Tariffville to Feeding Hills, passing through West Suffield Center. (Another railroad in 1856 had replaced the Farmington Canal in Suffield, but it had no station stop in town.)

Local progress blossomed at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with public water service and electricity coming to the town center in 1897, and in 1904 an electric trolley was completed from Springfield to Hartford, running right down Main Street. Modern utilities and

convenient public transportation added to major changes affecting the town.

Population had risen to about 2,600 people by the year 1800, but throughout the next century there was little variation, with modest influx and much outward migration to Vermont and westward. After 1900 an increase in immigration – much of it from Poland – raised the population to about 5,000 by mid-century, and after World War II, as Americans began to move out of cities and industry expanded near Suffield, the town's population doubled in about 30 years. Recent growth has been slower.

Today, three-quarters of employed adult residents are employed outside of town. Only about four percent work in agriculture. Tobacco is still an important product, but its acreage is very much less than before. Despite its proximity to metropolitan centers, Suffield manages to maintain its rural character.



PHELPS-HATHEWAY HOUSE MUSEUM  
PROPERTY OF THE ANTIQUARIAN & LANDMARKS SOCIETY

# **SUFFIELD HISTORIC DISTRICTS**

**And**

## **THE NATIONAL REGISTER**

**Of**

## **HISTORIC PLACES**

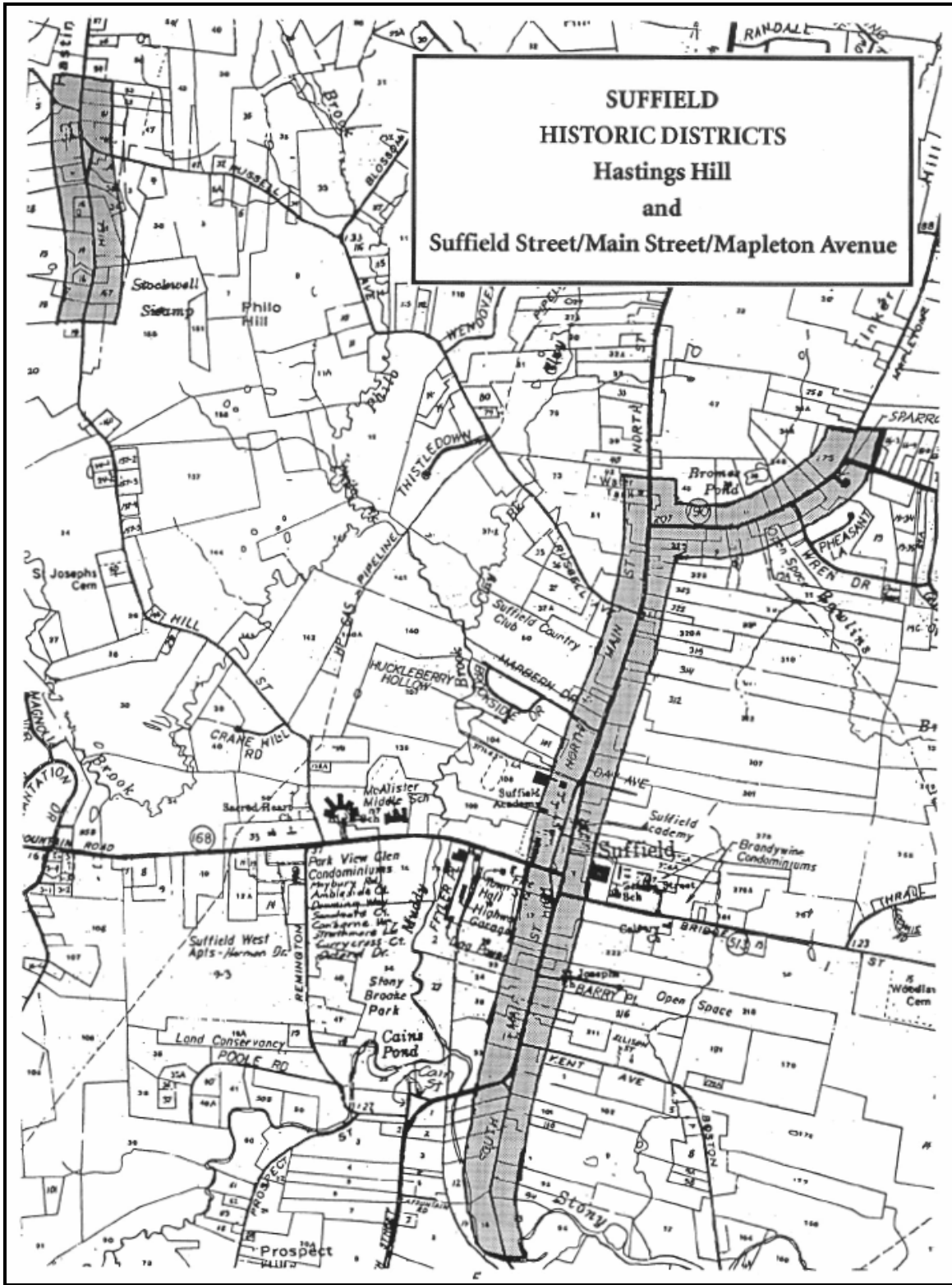
Suffield is blessed with two distinct historic districts: one encompassing South and North Main Street and the portion of Mapleton Avenue to Thompsonville Road; the other, the Hastings Hill section of Hill Street.

The boundaries of the Districts are set forth on a map entitled "Proposed Historic District, Suffield, Connecticut," dated January 1963, on file in the Town Hall. In general, the Districts comprise 400 feet on both sides of each road. The Main Street / Mapleton Avenue District extends from the bridge over Stony Brook on Suffield Street up Main Street through the center of town to the property line between 669 and 681 North Street and out Mapleton Avenue to include properties at 670 and 677, just beyond Thompsonville Road. Properties at 287 and 288 Thompsonville Road are included in the District. The Hastings Hill District extends approximately three-fourths of a mile to include the section from 938 and 967 to 1305 and 1308 Hill Street. See map on page 5.

On September 25, 1979, the Suffield National Register District, an area comprising two and one-half miles of North and South Main Streets was entered into the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). This registration followed by just over a week the listing of the Hastings Hill National Register District on September 14, 1979.

In his Statement of Significance on the NRHP Nomination Form, David Ransom, Consultant to the Connecticut Historical Commission writes, "Main Street in Suffield provides a remarkable display of American building styles from early 18th century to mid- 20th century. Fine examples of architectural styles along the two and one-half mile length of the district include Colonial, Georgian, Federal, Greek Revival, Italianate, Romanesque Revival, Second Empire, Beaux Arts, Colonial Revival, and Modern. These outstanding buildings by their continued existence, largely free from damaging alterations and intrusions, constitute an architectural and historic resource of substantial significance."

Similarly, in his Hastings Hill NRHP nomination, Mr. Ransom states, "The duster of buildings along Hill Street that forms the Hasting Hill District includes good examples of Greek Revival and early 18th century architecture. The establishment of the earliest Baptist Church in Hartford County, and one of the earliest in the state, gives significance to the site. The continuing rural circumambience and complete lack of intrusions give a sense of authenticity to this stretch of country road."





## Overview

The Suffield Historic District Commission and its two Historic Districts were established by town ordinance on May 27, 1963, a copy of which begins on page 15. The importance of these two Districts was reaffirmed by their election to the National Register of Historic Places in September of 1979.

The responsibility for the oversight and enforcement of this ordinance rests with the Suffield Historic District Commission, which meets monthly to review any changes or alterations proposed by individual homeowners. The Commission's approval is required before a Building Permit can be issued. This approval is granted by the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness. **The purpose of this ordinance is to promote the educational, cultural, economic, and general welfare of the town through the preservation and protection of**

### **the buildings and places of historic interest within these Districts.**

Many people recognize that a large part of the town's charm derives from the image that these two Districts convey to the public. Real estate agents have long acknowledged that home values in Suffield are higher because of the character of the Districts.

Therefore, homeowners within the Districts carry an additional responsibility to the ones borne by any homeowner. The owners of property within the Districts are custodians of the past. By living within an Historic District, each homeowner should acknowledge that responsibility by adhering to the spirit of the District and the guidelines the Commission has established, whenever he / she considers the renovation or adaptation of these older homes to modern times.



ALEXANDER KING HOUSE MUSEUM  
PROPERTY OF THE SUFFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Whenever a homeowner within a Historic District is contemplating a change to the exterior of his or her home, there are a number of steps that must be followed.

**FIRST:**

Determine whether or not the changes contemplated require the need for a Certificate of Appropriateness. Many improvements do not require said certificate.

1. If you plan routine maintenance that ***does not require any changes in material, design, or texture***, you do NOT NEED a certificate.
2. If the proposed changes are ***not open to view from a public street, way, or place***, you do NOT NEED a certificate.
3. If the proposed changes ***fall beyond the 400 foot boundary of a Historic District***, you do NOT NEED a certificate.
4. If you are ***painting your house a different color***, you do NOT NEED a certificate.
5. If the alterations you propose do involve a change of materials, design, or texture, if they are visible from a public way, if they are **within** 400 feet of a Historic District, then you DO NEED a certificate.
6. If you propose construction or demolition within the Districts, you DO NEED a certificate.

**SECOND:**

Prepare an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness, which can be obtained from the Building Inspector's office. The application should be submitted to the Building Inspector's office along with the filing fee. All applications are considered at a Historic District Commission public hearing, normally held on the second Monday of each month. They must be submitted no later than nine days prior to that meeting. Applicants are encouraged to attend the meetings at which their applications are to be reviewed.



# Guidelines

In order to help you, the homeowner, with your planning, the Suffield Historic District Commission has identified some aspects of restoration that frequently come up in applications for a Certificate of Appropriateness.

## Considering changes in **INTERIOR SIDING**?

Changing the style of the siding – for instance from clapboard to brick or shingle to clapboard – is considered inappropriate. Neither vinyl nor aluminum siding will be approved on structures built before 1900.

## Considering changes in **PAINT**?

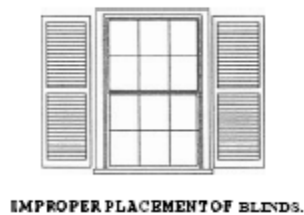
Although the Historic District Commission has no authority over paint color, in most instances total paint removal is not recommended or necessary. If paint is removed, a new coating should be applied to the exposed surface. There are several paint removal methods, some of which are not satisfactory 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 Districts, and alternative methods should be employed.

## Considering changing your **WINDOWS**?

Window material, type, arrangement, details or ornamentation, and construction are an important part of the character and style of a building. When replacing an entire window, the original features should be duplicated. Since most windows in the Historic Districts tend to be of wood construction, it is recommended that replacement windows be of the same material. If this is not possible, a substitute material should match the color of other windows or elements. When replacing a non-original window, attempt to obtain window types appropriate to the building's style and period. 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 place new windows on non-character-defining sides of the building, and try to conform to the building's overall style, proportion, scale and material.

### Considering changing or adding **SHUTTERS?**

Window shutters were not used until the end of the 18th century – at which time many were also added to older buildings. Their first function was to provide insulation and privacy. In more recent times they have been used (and abused) merely as decorative features. Adding non-original shutters to historic homes is not recommended. If shutters are desired, they should be the traditional wooden-slat-type capable of closing and covering the window completely and should be mounted adjacent to the window opening and not outside the frame (see illustration below). The Suffield Historic District Commission will not approve non-wooden shutters on structures built before 1900.



### Considering changing your **ENTRANCE** or adding a **PORCH** or a **DECK?**

Entrances and porches can be the focal point of a building's facade. 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. Replacement of doors and their features - such as transom-, fan-, and sidelights, pilasters, caps, panels, and hardware - should try to conform to the original building style, facade proportion, and material. It is sometimes possible to find used doors of the same period, and this may be a good solution if size and/or design are a problem. Certain woodworkers also specialize in period reproductions. Avoid removing the original features on an entrance without replacing them with visually compatible elements.

Generally, the addition of new entrances, porches, or decks should be confined to the sides or the back of a building, not visible from the public way. Some houses have enclosed porches or porticoes 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 for existing windows and doors.

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

Need a new **ROOF**? Adding to or changing your **ROOF LINE**.

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 weather-tight cover.

In this area, wood shingle has been the predominant roofing material since Colonial times. Slate, tile and metal were also used in the 19th century, while in the 20th century asphalt has become popular for both roofing and re-roofing.

When damage and/or wear is too extensive or when limited repair is not possible, replacement work should take into account first the roof's original shape, features, color, and materials. Any substitutions such as new chimneys and dormers 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 that indicates the original style and period. Alternative material such as asphalt shingle is usually appropriate except when the roofing material is highly decorative.

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. For example, use flat skylights and place them at the rear of the house if possible. Also keep in mind that a TV antenna can function just as efficiently when installed in the attic.

## NEW CONSTRUCTION AND ADDITIONS

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 20th century and beyond.

Some houses in the Historic Districts have been added to. Many of these earlier additions are sensitive to the older structure and might serve as models for future additions. The new addition should attempt to be compatible with the historic building. This is not to say that additions must imitate an historic style or period. In fact, a contemporary-style addition specifically designed and planned around its context can often be successful and appropriate.

Important considerations for totally new structures or additions will include, among other criteria:

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

New construction applications will require a hard line drawing to scale with building materials identified.

## **OUTBUILDINGS**

Outbuildings found in the Historic Districts include garages, tool sheds, greenhouses, and barns. Some of these are historically significant in their own right. For example, a number of barns reflect the history of Suffield as a farming community. Every effort should be made to maintain and repair these historic buildings in keeping with your responsibilities as a homeowner within a Historic District. Complete deterioration that eventually results in the loss of these structures causes an even greater loss to the character of an historic district.

New construction, such as garages and tool sheds, 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, screened from public sight.

## **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.

## **LANDSCAPING**

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

## **FENCES AND WALLS**

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

## **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.

## **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 Historic District Commission to bury all utility lines within the Historic Districts in order to restore the historic character to the Districts and to allow mature trees to assume their natural shapes.

## **MAILBOXES AND NEWSPAPER TUBES**

Freestanding mailboxes and newspaper tubes are not permitted in front of houses in the Main Street Historic District where the U.S. Postal Service provides mail delivery on foot. Elsewhere in the Historic Districts, mailboxes should conform to USPS regulations.

## **VEHICLES FOR SALE**

Parking motor vehicles, boats, or trailers for sale in front of houses in the Historic Districts is not permitted.

## **SIGNS**

New signs within the Historic Districts 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 detail to the building and its style. More specific guidelines are provided in the Signage Guidelines, which follow.





## **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 Districts. A Certificate of Appropriateness is required for all signs except real estate/service contractor (5) and temporary (6) signs:

1. New signs are subject to zoning regulations and review by the Historic District Commission.
2. As a rule, signs that are simple in shape and color are the most effective, easiest to read, and usually appropriate to any building.
3. A sign should relate to and not obscure its surroundings. Furthermore, it should be compatible in design, material, and detail to the building and its style.
4. Signs within the Historic Districts may not be illuminated.
5. Real estate and service contractor's signs shall be installed no more than three feet from the street side of the sidewalk. Real estate signs shall be removed promptly after the closing of the sale of the property.
6. Temporary outdoor signs for political, charitable, and civic purposes shall be permitted under the following conditions:
  - a. Political signs must be removed the day after Election Day.
  - b. Tag sale signs will be permitted two days prior to and during the day of the sale.
  - c. All other temporary signs must be removed within 24 hours of completion their purpose.
  - d. Signs on the Town Green for charitable and civic purposes shall be located on the southeast corner and be no larger than 20 square feet. Such signs shall be erected no longer than two weeks prior to the event and must be removed within 24 hours after the event.

# SUFFIELD CODE

## ARTICLE V. HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Charter reference - Historic District Commission, 706(H)

Cross reference - Boards and Commission, § 2-16 et seq.

### Sec 14-76. Historic district - Established.

In order to promote the educational, cultural, economic and general welfare of the town through the preservation and protection of buildings and places of historic interest by the maintenance of such as landmarks in the history of the town, of the state and of the nation, and through the development of appropriate settings for such buildings and places, an historic district within the town as more particularly described in section 14-77 is hereby established pursuant to the provisions of sections 7-147a to 7-14k inclusive of the general statutes.

(Ord. of 5-27-63, § 1)

### Sec 14-77. Same - Boundaries.

The boundaries of the historic district as set forth on a map entitled "Proposed Historic District, Suffield, Connecticut" prepared by Close, Jensen & Miller, Civil Engineers, and dated January, 1963, are hereby established and approved as the boundaries of such historic district. The map is made a part of this article by reference.

(Ord. of 5-27-63, § 2)

### Sec 14-78. Commission established; composition; compensation of members.

The historic district commission, hereinafter referred to as the "commission," is hereby established. The commission shall consist of five (5) regular members who shall be appointed as provided in section 14-79 and two (2) alternate members who shall be appointed as provided in section 14-80. Each regular and alternate member of the commission shall be a resident elector of the town holding no salaried municipal office. Not less than three (3) of the five (5) regular members of the historic district commission shall be residents within the historic district and not less than one (1) of the two (2) alternative members shall be a resident of the historic district. The historic district commission shall possess the powers and perform the duties and functions of an historic district commission as provided in the general statutes and as more particularly set forth in this article. No regular or alternative members of the historic district commission shall receive any compensation for his service.

(Ord. of 5-27-63, § 3)

### Sec 14-79, 1480. Reserved

Editor's note - The provisions of §§ 14-79 and 14-80 have been deleted as being superseded by the provisions of charter sections 705 and 706H. Former §§ 14-79

and 14-80 pertained to appointment of regular and alternative members of the historic district commission and derived from an ordinance of May 27, 1963, §§ 4,5.

Sec 14-81. Organization.

Within thirty (30) days after the appointment of the members of the historic district commission they shall meet, organize and, from among the regular members of the historic district commission, elect a chairman, a vice-chairman and a clerk. Thereafter annually during the month of September the historic district commission shall elect from among its regular members a chairman, a vice chairman and a clerk. Alternate members of the historic district commission shall not participate in any election of officers of the historic district commission. In all other matters, when a regular member of the historic district commission is unable to act because of absence, illness or disqualification, he shall notify the chairman who shall forthwith designate one (1) of the alternate members to serve in the place of such regular member and such alternate member shall thereupon exercise all the powers and duties of such regular member until the absence, illness or disqualification of the regular member shall have been terminated.

(Ord. of 5-27-63, § 6)

Sec 14-82. Powers; quorum.

The historic district commission shall exercise powers and responsibilities imposed upon an historic district commission by the provisions of the general statutes. It shall fix the time and place of its regular meetings and may hold such special meetings as may from time to time be required. This historic district commission shall keep a record of its proceedings, deliberations and actions and shall annually report to the town respecting its work. This historic district commission shall adopt rules of procedure not inconsistent with the provisions of the general statutes and may, within the limit of appropriations made for the purpose by the town, employ clerical and technical assistance or consultants. The presence of four (4) regular members or, in the case of proper designation of an alternate or alternates as provided by the terms of this article, the presence of four (4) regular and alternate members shall constitute a quorum. No resolution or vote except a vote to adjourn or to fix the time and place of its next meeting shall be adopted by less than three (3) affirmative votes.

(Ord. of 5-27-63, § 7)

Sec 14-83. Certificate of appropriateness generally.

No building or structure shall be erected, altered, restored, moved or demolished within the Suffield historic district until after an application for a certificate of appropriateness as to the exterior architectural features has been submitted to the historic district commission and approved by the historic district commission. "Exterior architectural features shall include such portion of the exterior of a structure as is open to view from a public street, way or place. The style, material, size and location of outdoor advertising signs and bill posters within the historic district shall also be under the control of the historic district commission. The

provisions of this section shall not be construed to extend to the color of paint used on the exterior of any building or structure.

(Ord. of 5-27-63, § 8; Ord of 1-7-64, § 1)

Sec 14-84. Application for certificate of appropriateness; hearing, approval.

(a) The historic district commission shall hold a public hearing upon each application for a certificate of appropriateness. Notice of the time and place of such a hearing shall be given by publication in the form of a legal advertisement appearing in a newspaper having substantial circulation in the town at least seven (7) days before such hearing. Within not more than sixty (60) days after the filing of an application as required by section 14-83 the historic district commission shall pass upon such application and shall give written notice of its decision to the applicant. Evidence of approval, as required by section 14-83 shall be by certificate of appropriateness issued by the historic district commission.

(b) Failure of the historic district commission to act within such sixty (60) days shall constitute approval and no other evidence of approval shall be needed. The historic district commission shall keep a record of all applications for certificates of appropriateness and its actions with respect to each. The historic district commission's records and its written decision rendered on each such application shall specify the grounds for approval or denial.

(c) In its deliberations the historic district commission shall not consider interior arrangement or use and shall take no action except for the purpose of preventing the erection, reconstruction, restoration, alteration or razing of buildings in the historic district obviously incongruous with the historic aspects of the district.

(Ord. of 5-27-63, § 9)

Sec 14-85. Considerations in determining appropriateness.

If the historic district commission determines that the proposed erection, construction, restoration, alteration or razing will be appropriate, it shall issue a certificated appropriateness. In passing upon appropriateness the historic district commission shall consider, in addition to any other pertinent factors, the historical and architectural value and significance, architectural style, general design, arrangement, texture and material of architectural features involved and the relationship thereof to the exterior architectural style and pertinent features of other structures in the immediate neighborhood. A certificate of appropriateness may be refused for any building or structure, the erection, reconstruction, restoration, alteration or razing of which, in the opinion of the historic district commission, would be detrimental to the interest of the historic district.

(Ord. of 5-27-63, § 10)

Sec 14-86. When variations permissible.

Where, by reason of topographical conditions, district borderline situations, immediately adjoining existing developments or because of other unusual circumstances, the strict application of the provisions of this article would result in exceptional practical difficulty or undue hardship upon the owner of any specific property, the historic district commission in passing upon applications

shall have the power to vary or modify strict adherence to the provisions of this article or to interpret the meaning of this article so as to relieve such difficulty or hardship; provided such variance, modification, or interpretation shall remain in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the article so that the general character of the district shall be conserved and substantial justice done. In granting variations, the historic district commission may impose such reasonable and additional stipulations and conditions as will, in its judgment, better fulfill the purposes of this article.

(Ord. of 5-27-63, § 11)

Sec 14-87. Action by commission to prevent illegal acts; penalties.

If any action or ruling taken by the historic district commission pursuant to the provisions of sections 7-147a to 7-147k, inclusive, of the general statutes or of this article has been violated, the commission may, in addition to other remedies, institute an action or proceeding to prevent such unlawful erection, construction, alteration, razing, maintenance or use or to restrain, correct or abate such violation or to prevent the occupancy of such building, structure or land, or to prevent any illegal act, conduct, business or use in or about such premises. Regulations and orders of the historic district commission issued pursuant to such sections of the general statutes or of this article, shall be enforced by the building inspector of the town, who is hereby authorized to inspect and examine any building, structure, place or premises and to require in writing the remedying of any condition found to exist therein or thereon in violation of any provision of the regulations or orders made under the authority of such sections of the general statutes or of this article. The owner or agent of any building or premises where such a violation has been committed or exists, or the owner, agent, lessee or tenant of an entire building or entire premises where such violation has been committed or exists, or the owner, agent, lessee or tenant of any part of the building or premises in which such violation has been committed or exists, or the agent, architect, builder, contractor, or any other person who commits, takes part in or assists in any such violation or who maintains any building or premises in which any such violation exists, shall be fined not less than ten dollars (\$10.00) nor more than one hundred dollars (\$100.00) for each day that such violation continues; but, if the offense is willful, the person convicted thereof shall be fined not less than one hundred dollars (\$100.00) nor more than two hundred fifty dollars (\$250.00) for each day that such violation continues, and the circuit court wherein such violation continues or exists shall have jurisdiction of all such offenses, subject to appeal as in other cases. Each day that a violation continues to exist shall constitute a separate offense.

(Ord. of 5-27-63, § 12)

Sec 14-88. Appeals

Any person or persons severally or jointly aggrieved by any decision of the historic district commission or of any officer thereof may, within fifteen (15) days from the date when such decision was rendered, take an appeal to the Court of Common Pleas for Hartford County, which appeal shall be returnable to such

court in the same manner as that prescribed for civil actions brought to such court. 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 historic district commission within twelve (12) days before the return day to which such appeal has been taken. Procedure upon such appeal shall be the same as that defined in section 8-8 of the general statutes.

(Ord. 5-27-63, § 13)

Sec 14-89. Exempted acts.

Nothing in this article shall be construed to prevent the ordinary maintenance or repair of any exterior feature in the historic district which does not involve a change of design thereof; nor to prevent the construction, reconstruction, alteration or demolition of any such feature which the building inspector certifies is required by the public safety because of an unsafe or dangerous condition; nor prevent the construction, reconstruction, alteration or demolition of any such feature under a permit issued by the building inspector prior to the effective date of establishment of the district.

(Ord. of 5-27-63, § 14; Ord. of 1-7-64, § 2)



# Application For Certificate of Appropriateness

The Suffield Historic District Commission  
Suffield, CT 06078

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Application is hereby made for issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness under "An Ordinance Creating a Historic District, et al." Adopted May 27, 1963, and authorized pursuant to Public Act #430 of the Connecticut General Statutes as Amended by Public Act #600 of the 1963 Connecticut General Statutes.

Details of the work are provided below:

Owner's Name \_\_\_\_\_

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

Owner's Address \_\_\_\_\_

Agent or Contractor \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed work is in connection with:     Private Dwelling     Accessory Building     Commercial Building

Sign     Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the nature of the proposed work. Please be as specific as possible, including all pertinent design elements, site plans, scale drawings and/or photographs.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant

Does the proposed work meet zoning requirements?     Yes     No

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Zoning Officer

---

### For Historic District Commission Use Only

(Not to be filled in by applicant)

Application No. # \_\_\_\_\_ Date Received \_\_\_\_\_

Payment Received \_\_\_\_\_ Form of Payment (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Notice of Public Hearing Published \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Hearing \_\_\_\_\_

Action Taken:    Approved as Submitted     Approved as Modified     Application Rejected

REASON FOR ACTION:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Historic District Commission



# Certificate of Appropriateness

The Suffield Historic District Commission  
Suffield, CT 06078

Certificate No. \_\_\_\_\_

Date Issued: \_\_\_\_\_ (valid 1 year)

This **Certificate of Appropriateness** is hereby issued for work described in Application no. \_\_\_\_\_ dated \_\_\_\_\_ on property described below:

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Owner: \_\_\_\_\_

Person doing the work: \_\_\_\_\_

This Certificate is issued under the conditions indicated below. Work not completed within one (1) year of approval will require a new Certificate of Appropriateness.

\_\_\_\_\_ Application is approved as submitted.

\_\_\_\_\_ Application is approved with modifications stipulated below:

COMMENTS:

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Historic District Commission

---

**This Section is for Building Inspection Division Use Only!**  
(Not to be filled in by applicant)

THIS CERTIFIES THAT THE WORK HEREIN DESCRIBED HAS BEEN COMPLETED IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE TERMS SPECIFIED.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Inspection

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Building Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



