



# City of Medford

## HISTORICAL COMMISSION

City Hall – Room 308  
85 George P. Hassett Drive  
Medford, Massachusetts 02155

## **Demolition Delay Ordinance Fact Sheet** **Applying for a Building or Demolition Permit?**

### **What: Your Building or Demolition Project**

*Owners, Developers, Contractors: Are you considering partial or total demolition of a building or structure that is seventy-five years or older, or of a building or structure listed or with a pending listing on the National or Massachusetts Register of Historic Places? If so, you will need to contact the **Medford Historical Commission** for review of the architectural and historical impacts of such a demolition project. Based on a thorough review of the proposed demolition project and on the historical and architectural significance of the building, the Commission may consider imposing a **eighteen month Demolition Delay** to allow consideration of alternatives to demolition, as set forth in the Revised Ordinances of the City of Medford (see Part II, Chapter 48, Historical Preservation, Article IV Regulations, Sections 48-76 through 48-80, available in the City Clerk's office).*

### **Who: The Medford Historical Commission**

The Medford Historical Commission is an official municipal body of Medford residents who are professionals in architecture, preservation, history, and related fields. The Commission will conduct a thorough review of a structure's architectural, historical, or cultural significance to the heritage of the City. Careful research, a consideration of significance, and a determination to preferably preserve these important and unique structures are made by the Commission in consultation with owners, developers, and contractors.

### **Why: Preserving Medford's Past**

Review of historic or architecturally important structures in Medford is one way to preserve the unique character of the City. The Commission conducts a review of a structure's history and potential significance through the completion of a standardized "Form B" summary report. *The Commission does not consider current condition or safety issues as part of the review of significance.*

### **How and Where: Applications for Review**

Owners, developers, and contractors must complete an **application for review** available at the **Medford Building Department, Room 115A, Medford City Hall**, to initiate the review process. **The application must be filed at a Commission meeting.** Subsequent public meetings will allow the Commission to determine the significance and preferable preservation status of the structure that may result in the issuance of a **eighteen month Demolition Delay** to allow for consideration of alternatives to demolition. The Commission will work with owners and representatives on such alternatives.

### **To Contact the Medford Historical Commission:**

**In Person:** The Commission meets on the second Monday of every month (except noted holidays) at 7PM, Room 201 in Medford City Hall.

**Website:** [www.MedfordHistoricalCommission.com](http://www.MedfordHistoricalCommission.com)

**Email:** [HistoricalCommission@Medford-MA.gov](mailto:HistoricalCommission@Medford-MA.gov)



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## **Demolition Delay in Medford Summary & Timetable**

The following outline explains the Demolition Delay procedure that is set forth in the Revised Ordinances of the City of Medford (see Part II, Chapter 48, Historical Preservation, Article IV Regulations, Sections 48-76 through 48-80, available in the City Clerk's office). It also describes how the Medford Historical Commission, the official municipal body that is responsible for evaluating and preserving Medford's architectural heritage, determines which buildings are subject to the demolition procedure ordinance. The Commission strongly recommends that you speak with a member of the Historical Commission *before* planning or beginning any project. The Commission is available to assist you with any questions regarding this process.

### **Applying for Review of Historically or Architecturally Significant Structures in Medford**

#### **STEP 1: EVALUATE YOUR BUILDING PROJECT**

##### **Are you planning to alter or demolish any part of your building?**

Before spending thousands of dollars on plans and materials, think first about whether the project could possibly involve the demolition of all or part of a structure. If so, please contact the Medford Historical Commission to determine whether the building might be historically or architecturally significant *before* you incur any substantial expenses.

#### **STEP 2: DETERMINE THE AGE OF YOUR STRUCTURE**

##### **How old is the building? Is it listed in the National Register of Historic Places or the Massachusetts Register of Historic Places?**

The Historical Commission must review all requests for demolition of any building that:

- a. is seventy-five years or older; or
- b. is listed on the National Register of Historic Places or Massachusetts Register of Historic Places (or has its listing *pending* on either Register).

If either of these is true for your building, the Historical Commission must complete a detailed review process according to the City's Demolition Delay ordinance before you can proceed with total or partial demolition of your structure. If you have any questions about the building's age or



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status on any Register, *please contact the Medford Historical Commission*. The Commission is available to help you determine the building's age and listing status.

### **STEP 3: PLANNING FOR DEMOLITION DELAY REVIEW**

**Do you anticipate proceeding with partial or total demolition of your building that is seventy-five years or older or is on the National or statewide Register?**

If you wish to demolish the building, building owners or their representatives must file a "**Notice of Intent to Demolish a Building**" with the City of Medford Historical Commission. Filing this form officially begins the Medford Historical Commission review process and its determination of *significance* for your structure.

The Historical Commission meets the second Monday of every month, except holidays, in room 201 at 7 PM at Medford City Hall. The building is located at 85 George P. Hassett Drive. Applications must be submitted in person at the meeting. In the event of holidays, the meeting is moved to the third Monday.

Once submitting the "Notice of Intent to Demolish" to the Historical Commission, the board must make its determination whether the building is "significant" within 30 days.

The building is automatically significant if it is currently listed or is being considered for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or Massachusetts Register of Historic Places.

To determine whether a non-listed building built seventy-five years from the present is significant, the Commission will research the building's history and formally complete a Massachusetts Historical Commission "Form B" summary report that contains the Commission's research and findings. Applicants are encouraged to provide the Historical Commission with any information that they may have regarding the history of the building with their application. It will aid in the review process and allow for better understanding from the overall structure from the eyes of prior occupants. Scheduling a meeting or a visit to the property with members of the Commission may also be helpful to the review process.

### **STEP 4: DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE BY THE MEDFORD HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

**How is a building's significance determined by the Medford Historical Commission?**



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At a scheduled public meeting, the Commission will review the architectural and historical research (Form B) and discuss whether the building is significant. For a building constructed more than seventy-five years ago to be considered significant, it must possess the following qualities:

- a. It is importantly associated with one or more historic persons or events, or with the broad architectural, cultural, political, economic, or social history of the city or the commonwealth; or
- b. It is historically or architecturally important in terms of period, style, method of building construction, or association with an important architect or builder, either by itself or in the context of a group of buildings.

If the Historical Commission determines that the building is significant, the Commission must promptly notify the City Clerk's office of their decision and proceed to Step 5.

If the Commission determines that the building is *not* significant, then the Commission's involvement in the process ends. The Commission notifies the City Clerk and Building Department that the building is not significant, and the Building Department may issue a demolition permit.

### **STEP 5: DETERMINATION OF PREFERENTIAL PRESERVATION BY THE MEDFORD HISTORICAL COMMISSION.**

#### **What happens if the building is determined to be significant?**

If the Historical Commission determines that the building is "significant," it must hold another public meeting within 30 days to determine if the building is "**preferably preserved.**" The designation preferably preserved means that demolition of the building under review would be detrimental to the architectural or historical heritage of the City of Medford.

At least 14 days before that meeting, the Commission must publish a meeting notice in a local newspaper. At least 7 days before that meeting, the Commission must notify the applicant by mail of the meeting date. The Commission may also require the applicant to post a notice of the meeting on the building itself.

At the public meeting, all members of the public are welcome to speak on the building's historical, cultural, and architectural importance. Example considerations include: the building's



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age, rarity, association with community, or style, as well as the value of the building to the historical or architectural heritage or resources of the City.

Importantly, the Medford Historical Commission *may not consider the building's condition or any safety issues*. The Building Commissioner properly addresses those concerns. See Revised Ordinances of the City of Medford, Sections 48-76 through 48-80 for more information.

After receiving and considering public comments, the Historical Commission must vote to determine if demolition of the building would be detrimental to the historical, cultural, or architectural heritage of the City. If the Commission determines a status of preferential preservation for the structure, then the Commission must file a Demolition Delay within 21 days stating that no demolition permit may be issued for eighteen months from the date of the vote. This notice is issued to City Clerk's Office, with a copy to the Building Department. Applicants may proceed to Step 6.

If the Commission does not determine a status of preferential preservation for the structure, then the Commission's involvement ends. The Historical Commission must notify the City Clerk and Building Department that it has concluded its review, and the Building Department may issue a demolition permit.

### **STEP 6: ALTERNATIVES TO DEMOLITION.**

#### **What are the options if the building is to be preferably preserved?**

If the Commission determines a status of preferential preservation for the structure and a Demolition Delay is imposed, the Commission will begin to work with the applicant toward alternatives for demolition.

The Commission may also ask the owner or applicant to consider and explore several alternatives to demolition before lifting the Demolition Delay. Each building is different, and therefore the options for preservation vary, but may included:

- a. Keeping the structure on site for an alternative use.
- b. Offering the structure for sale (on preservation-based mailing lists) for removal, either by dismantling or transportation as a whole.
- c. Documenting the structure architecturally through drawings (including plans, sections, and elevations) and/or photographs.
- d. Request design review of any new construction on the site.

The demolition delay may be lifted at any time if:



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- a. The Historical Commission is satisfied that there is no reasonable likelihood that either the owner or some other person is willing to purchase, preserve, rehabilitate, or restore the building;  
or
- b. The Historical Commission is satisfied that for at least six months the owner has made continuing, bona fide, and reasonable efforts to locate a purchaser to preserve, rehabilitate, or restore the building, and that such efforts have been unsuccessful.

### **Further Information**

For more information on the terms, concepts, and ordinances described in this Summary, please contact the Medford Historical Commission at:

Medford Historical Commission  
c/o Office of Community Development  
85 George P. Hassett Drive  
Medford, MA 02155

In Person: The Commission meets on the second Monday of every month (except noted holidays) at 7PM, Room 201 in Medford City Hall.

Website: [www.MedfordHistoricalCommission.org](http://www.MedfordHistoricalCommission.org)

Email: [HistoricalCommission@Medford-MA.gov](mailto:HistoricalCommission@Medford-MA.gov).

See also the information available from the statewide Massachusetts Historical Commission at the commission's website [www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc).



# City of Medford

## HISTORICAL COMMISSION HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

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### **Notice of Intent to Demolish a Building** **Application for Demolition Delay Review by the Historical Commission**

#### **Property Information:**

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

Assessors map parcel \_\_\_\_\_ Approx. Age (*verified by commission*) \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose of structure (*residence, business, etc.*) \_\_\_\_\_

Type of construction (*wood, masonry, etc.*) \_\_\_\_\_ Aprox. Footprint \_\_\_\_\_ Stories \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Demolition Plan:**

Level of demolition (please circle one): Partial                  Total

Approximate time frame for completion after Demolition Permit has been issued \_\_\_\_\_

Briefly describe proposed work. If demolition is part of a building, provide a brief description of portion to be demolished, including nature and size of proposed demolition:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Reason for demolition: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe replacement or proposed reuse: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Contact Information:**

Name of Owner: \_\_\_\_\_

Address of Owner: \_\_\_\_\_

Owner

Telephone Number: Days: \_\_\_\_\_ Evenings: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Applicant if not owner of record: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship with owner: (contractor, architect, etc:) \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Applicant Telephone Number: Days: \_\_\_\_\_ Evenings: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Applicants note: It is in the applicant's interest to attend the review meeting to answer any questions or discuss any commentary that may arise out of your application.**

### Documentation Attached

Please check off documents attached. Failure to provide adequate information could delay action on your application.

- Site Plan** showing existing building. Clearly identified assessor's parcel maps are acceptable.
- Photographs** including: All four sides of existing structure and any accessory structure(s). 5X7 minimum size with one color set. Additional copies may be in black and white.
- Plans/Scaled Drawings:** (optional) of proposed buildings (post-demo) including site plan, floor plans and all major elevations and new construction. Although this is not a requirement, providing information supporting the plan narrative above will allow the commission to better assist you through the review process.
- Other** please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

### Signature

By signing this application, I hereby certifies that they have read the demolition delay summary and timetable, along with the bylaw applicable to the City of Medford Historical Commission Demolition Delay. Furthermore, I understand that the Historical Commission is empowered by the Revised Ordinances of the City of Medford, Part II, Chapter 48, Historical Preservation, Article IV Regulations, Sections 48-76 through 48-80 to govern this work. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this application is accurate and complete.

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Owner's / Applicant's Signature (s)

Date

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### For Commission Use Only

**Date Received:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Receiver:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Application Review Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Vote:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Letter Filed with Clerk:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Emergency Demolition? Yes [ ] No [ ] If yes, date approved** \_\_\_\_\_

**Note: Demolition may not commence until successful commission signoff or expiration of delay.**