

Hyannis Main Street Waterfront Historic District Guidelines for Preservation & Rehabilitation of Historically Significant Structures

The Hyannis Historic District was created to help protect and preserve historic buildings and features in downtown Hyannis; however, the area has a diverse built environment and not every building is historically significant. The historic significance of a structure is evaluated based on architectural integrity, significance of use or design, and age. The most historically significant structures in the District are ones representative of the historical architectural movements, events, commerce, and traditions that collectively symbolize Hyannis.

A number of structures within the district are listed on the National Register of Historic Places; additionally, there are two National Register Historic Districts located within the boundaries of the Hyannis Historic District. National Register designation does not alter the local review process, but it provides the owner and the HHDC a clear indication that a building or site is historically significant.

The greater the historic value of a structure, the greater the importance of preserving original architectural and site features. Repairs, alterations, or rehabilitations of historically significant buildings should preserve or restore original architectural elements that give a structure its historic value. Although buildings and structures must be adapted to meet the needs of individual owners, alterations should be made with respect for the structure and its significance to the community and to the Hyannis Historic District.

Preservation of Historically Significant Structures

Historically significant structures with a high to moderate degree of architectural integrity should be preserved in a manner that reflects their original design and construction.

- The primary preservation technique for historically significant structures should be preventative maintenance; routine maintenance using recommended preservation techniques will help retain a structure's historic value.
- Original architectural elements should be restored and reused whenever possible. If building elements are not in a restorable condition, they should be replaced with elements of an identical material and design, when possible.
- Historically significant buildings should not be modified or altered in a way that diminishes the architectural integrity of the structure. Removing or obscuring original materials or decorative elements is not appropriate.
- Whenever possible, historically significant buildings should be adapted and not replaced. At a minimum, preservation of historic façades should be considered as an alternative to building demolition.



The historic Hyannis Theatre was renovated into a mixed-use residential and retail building.

- Building materials including siding, masonry, and stone foundations should not be covered, painted, stuccoed without HHDC review and approval.

Reuse and Rehabilitation

Structures with historic significance, but diminished architectural integrity should be rehabilitated and restored whenever possible.

- Building renovations should be harmonious with the original structure in style, form, and materials.
- Historic photographs or records can be used to research the building’s original appearance and style. The Town may be able to help you locate these resources.

Additions and Alterations

Alterations and additions to historically significant buildings should leave the original building intact, and not significantly alter the original structure’s appearance or character. Note that long-standing additions may be considered historic, and may be treated as such.

- Additions should be viewed as “removable”: if the addition were to be removed, the original structure, and its significant features, would remain as it appeared prior to the alteration.
- Additions should be designed, placed, and sized with respect to the original building. The original historic building should remain prominent, and any additions subsidiary. Where possible, additions should be deemphasized by being placed at the rear of the structure, or set behind the building’s front façade.

- Additions should be scaled in proportion with the original building and should not overwhelm it.



This building at 397 Main Street was originally Town Hall, and is now the John F. Kennedy Hyannis Museum.

- Materials and textures should be compatible, but not necessarily identical with the original building.
- If considering a roofline addition, existing historic dormers should be preserved if possible. New dormers should be narrow, preferably only one window wide. Gable or hipped-roof dormers are recommended over shed dormers.

Additional Resources

For a more detailed discussion on rehabilitating historic buildings, please refer to the following Preservation Briefs from the National Park Service:

- [Use of Substitute Materials on Historic Building Exteriors](#)
- [New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings](#)
- [Maintaining the Exteriors of Small Size Historic Buildings](#)

The National Register of Historic Places is the official Federal list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in the history, architecture, engineering, archeology, and culture of the United States.

The Hyannis Main Street Waterfront Historic District includes two National Register Historic Districts.

The Municipal Group National Register Historic District, roughly bounded by Main, South, and Pearl Streets, has six contributing properties, including Town Hall, the School Administration Building, and the Hyannis Public Library.

The Pleasant Street/School Street National Register Historic District, roughly bounded by Main, School, South, and Pleasant Streets has 51 contributing properties. This district is representative of the mid-19th century maritime heritage of the village.

There are also 12 properties individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places. An additional 14 properties have been determined to be eligible for listing on the Register.