

COTTAGE CITY HISTORIC DISTRICT, OAK BLUFFS, MASS.

Architectural Guidelines

The Cottage City Historic District (CCHD) guidelines have been established in accordance with Section 7, Chapter 40C of the Massachusetts General Law, in order to help preserve the architectural as well as visual character of one of the most historically significant and eclectic residential composition in the United States.

The Victorian Architecture of the Historic District is characterized by examples of the Queen Anne, Italianate, Stick, Shingle, Gothic Revival and Carpenter Gothic styles. Most of these “cottages” were constructed based on the principles laid out in Robert Morris Copeland’s Community Master Plan designed in 1886. Copeland’s plan was developed as an extension to the adjacent Campgrounds and promoted simple wood cottages with open porches fronted on meandering paths, which in turn defined common park areas. This concept was intended to promote friendly social interaction. The architectural intent included intentional charm that was to be personalized through the choice of architectural style, building coloration and level of detailed woodwork on the cottage facades.

Each of the architectural styles have imposed a certain precedent for very different detailing on, sometimes adjacent buildings. However, the underlying architectural theme remains consistent throughout the Historic District in terms of scale (perceived size and shape in relative terms), mass (three dimensional composition), proportions (design ratios between building elements), materiality (textural detailing of the building’s façade and intent (purposeful design).

It is the responsibility of the Historic District Commission, as a representative body of the community as a whole, to promote sympathetic and appropriate design in terms of exterior alterations, additions, new construction, rehabilitation and/or renovations within the limits of the Historic District. It is also the intent of the CCHD to promote the repair and restoration of original building elements, when possible, rather than the replacement of such elements. Purposefully, the District and its history shall be respected rather than ignored. It is this purpose along with a sense of stewardship that will help assure future generations the benefit of community history.

CHAPTER 40C STATES THE FOLLOWING:

In passing upon matters before it, the Commission shall consider among other things the historic and architectural value and significance of the site, building or structure, the general design arrangement, texture, material and color of the features involved and the

relationship of such features to similar features of buildings and structures in the surrounding area. In the case of new construction of additions to existing buildings or structures, the Commission shall consider the appropriateness of the size and shape of the building or structure both in relation to the land area upon which the building or structure is situated and to buildings or structures within the vicinity and the Commission may in appropriate cases recommend or support dimensional and set back requirements.

The Commission shall not impose requirements except for the purpose of preventing development incongruous to the historic aspects of the architectural characteristics of the Historic District.

1. The Commissions purview shall include, but not limited to the following construction types:

A. Alterations shall include the repair and/or replacement of fatigued or inappropriate building elements. It is also important to recognize the potential significance of certain building details or elements which, may not be original to the structure or its time of origin, however have since become historically prevalent.

B. Additions shall be secondary in scale and mass to the original building while incorporating compatible proportions, materiality and intent with its design.

C. New construction shall be architecturally compatible with the character of the Historic District through the means of scale, mass, proportions, materiality and intent while avoiding artificial imitation.

D. Renovation/rehabilitation shall include an attempt to return the building or structure to its original detailing and/or use by authentically recreating or uncovering building elements, which may have been removed or obscured over time. This may also include the restoration or replacement of deteriorated building elements through historically correct means. It is imperative to retain and restore original components and detailing when possible.

E. Demolition of entire buildings within the Historic District shall be prohibited unless the Commission deems the building architecturally insignificant to the District or has fallen into gross disrepair through extended negligence or catastrophic mishap. Financial hardship shall be considered and if demolition is permitted, it may be required by the commission, that certain salvageable building elements be retained and incorporated as part of the new construction.

F. Ordinary maintenance inclusive of exterior paint maintenance and minor carpentry repairs shall be expected of all property owners within the Historic District. General upkeep shall not require commission review.

2. The Commissions purview shall include, but not be limited to the following building elements:

A. Siding and trim shall be painted wood with contrasting textures and decorative detailing including, but not limited to shingles, lap siding, butt siding, board and batten siding, shouldered casework, tracery, three dimensional friezes, cornices and brackets that are consistent with the original buildings architectural style. Aluminum, synthetic and vinyl siding and trim material, along with artificial veneers shall be discouraged.

B. Doors and windows shall be painted wood with authentic type glass panels and true or simulated divisions. Adjacent details shall include, but not be limited to double doors, pointed arch doors and windows, screen panels, bay and oriel windows, stained or decorative glass, double hung and casement windows, operational hardware, working shutters, lintels, architraves and ornamented encasings consistent with the original buildings architectural style. No vinyl or aluminum sash or doors, removable muntin grills, false shutters or tinted glass shall be discouraged.

C. Roofs shall be limited to certain color and texture patterns achieved with either asphalt shingles, wood shingles, slate tiles or copper installations. Roofs shall maintain historic shapes, pitches and details including by not limited to cupolas, towers, turrets, chimneys, projecting eaves, decorative barge boards and soffits, dormers, gutters and downspouts consistent with the original buildings architectural style. Historically incorrect roof pitches, and types, certain asphalt and synthetic roofing, aluminum gutters, aluminum or plastic awnings and visible skylights shall be discouraged.

D. Porches inclusive of frontal porches, wrap around porches and covered balconies shall be of painted wood while maintaining historic shapes and details including but not limited to decking, ornate railings, balustrades and columns, scrollwork, decorative skirts, exposed ceilings and steps consistent with the original buildings architectural style. Pressure treated or synthetic decking, lattice or scrollwork shall be discouraged.

E. Appurtenances such as mechanical equipment and exhaust devices, antennae and electrical power sources shall be concealed or located out of public view so as not to detract from the buildings historic character. Exterior lighting fixtures, house identification numbers and name plates shall be harmonious and complimentary to the historic nature of the building and its materials. Imitation brass hardware, artificial stone and brick veneers and metal flue pipes shall be discouraged.

NOTE: If a buildings original style is unknown, the homeowner shall seek a determination by the Historic District Commission prior to proposing new work on the existing building.

CCHD Commissioners have amended the Guidelines to include the use of vinyl clad wood windows. The Anderson 400 Woodrite series has been accepted by the commission. Upon review, the Commission will consider other brands of the same type window.

In addition, solar panels on roofs visible from a public way shall be discouraged.