

As protectors of historic integrity, beauty and value of this special town, **you are not alone!** To help you fulfill this important job is the Litchfield Historic District Commission (LHDC). The Commission is responsible for working with you to protect and preserve the character and authenticity of the District. The LHDC is made up of five to eight volunteers appointed by the Borough Warden and Burgesses and all live within the Borough of Litchfield.

OK, what does this mean for you? This means that whenever you would like to repair, change, add or delete any exterior features (visible from a public way, even if hidden by trees and other plantings) of your home, outbuildings and other structures/devices, you must apply for and receive a Certificate of Appropriateness (CoA) or a Waiver Certificate issued by the LHDC.

It's important to follow this process since CT State law prohibits the erection, alteration or demolition of any such feature within the District until the LHDC has issued a CoA. Also, the Litchfield Building Inspector will not issue a permit for a project within the District until a CoA has been issued. Furthermore, State laws empower Historic District Commissions to enforce regulations through fines or court proceedings. For more information about these regulations, please refer to the CT General Statutes, Section 7-147a *et seq.* & The Code of the

Borough of Litchfield, Chapter 12, located at the Oliver Wolcott Library and the Litchfield Historical Society.

Let me tell you more about the exterior features this involves. Examples of exterior features include, but are not limited to, windows, doors, siding, shutters, roofing, signs, fences, walls, light fixtures, utility structures, satellite dishes, driveways and parking areas.

“What is the definition of appropriateness?”, you might be thinking. Well, the definition of appropriateness must be made based on the style of the existing structure and its neighbors. The process to determine it is site specific. Virtually every structure in the Historic District is described and pictured in *The Historic & Architectural Survey of the Borough of Litchfield*. This and other resource materials are available at the Oliver Wolcott Library and the Litchfield Historical Society, if you would like to become more familiar with the architectural features and style of your building or other buildings.

Small changes are subject to the same process as larger ones, and the regulations do not make exception for alterations considered by an applicant to be temporary in nature. Repairs, maintenance and replacements *may* not require a CoA if the end results duplicates the original in all

aspects, including design and material. In such instances, a Waiver Certificate, available from the Commission during any meeting, is required.



Before the first swing of a hammer, here are the steps that property owners need to follow to submit an application:

1. You may get an application from the website noted below or from the Litchfield Town Clerk or Building Inspector. The website is <http://boroughoflitchfield.org/historic-district-commission/>
2. Complete the application and include plans, sketches, photographs, plot plan, material details, size and placement specifications, etc., to fully describe the changes for which you are seeking approval. Completed applications may be mailed to or brought to a LHDC meeting.
3. The LHDC meets on the first and third Thursday of each month, at 7:00pm, at the Borough Office, Pilgrim House, 21 Torrington Road. A yearly schedule is posted at this location. Notice of meetings, including

cancellations, are posted at the Town Clerk's office at least 24 hours before each meeting.

4. Optionally, applicants may appear at any meeting for a *Pre-Hearing* to discuss: the need for an application; an initial presentation of work proposed; additional information required to complete the application; the scheduling of a public hearing; or any other pertinent items. Many property owners find that this *Pre-Hearing* is very helpful.
5. A *Public Hearing* must be held on every application before the Commission votes on the application. These hearings are duly noted by a legal publication in The Republican-American or other local paper.
6. Following the *Public Hearing*, the LHDC votes on the application. A majority vote is required to approve the application. If approved, the CoA is granted. The *Public Hearing* and LHDC vote are most often held on the same evening.

The Commissioners are happy to assist applicants during the planning stages. Feel free to attend a regularly scheduled meeting to ask questions and/or seek guidance. In addition, you may leave a message on the office phone with your questions at 860-567-8866.

Correspondence may be sent to the Borough of Litchfield, Historic District Commission, P.O. Box 913, Litchfield, CT. 06759, or by email:

hdc@boroughoflitchfield.com

This pamphlet is not intended to be an all-inclusive summary of the LHDC Regulations.



The Borough map shown above is for general informational purposes only. Please visit the Litchfield Town Hall, located at 74 West Street, for a more detailed map.



Hello Litchfield Borough Residents!

Did you know that the New York Times reported that Litchfield is considered by experts to be the finest unrestored, unspoiled Colonial town in the country? And that the entire Borough, which includes more than 475 buildings, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is designated as a Historic District?

This special Historic District designation mandates a review process designed to prevent changes which are incongruous with the District's historic and architectural character. Even slight changes over time can dramatically alter the appearance of a building and the streetscape. So, **you are the protectors of the historic integrity, beauty and value of this special town.**

Please read on to learn more about your responsibilities as a property owner in the Borough of Litchfield.