

Historic District

Fitzwilliam, NH



Design Guidelines

Published by the Historic District Commission, Fitzwilliam, NH

Fitzwilliam Historic District Design Guidelines

Table of Contents

Introduction	p. 2
About the Historic District Commission	p. 4
Design Guidelines	
A. Principles Guiding Preservation	p. 6
B. Building Exterior	p. 8
Clapboards	
Decorative Wood Detail	
Paint	
Porches and Decks	
Roof	
Roof Features	
Windows and Doors	
C. Site and Setting	p. 13
Garages, Accessory Buildings	
Fences	
Recreational Facilities	
Retaining Walls	
Signs	
Stone Walls	
Walkways, Driveways and Off Street Parking Areas	
D. New Construction	p. 17
New Building Façade	
Garages, Accessory Buildings	
Additions	
Appendix A - Relationships to Other Town Boards	p. 22
Appendix B - List of Properties in the Historic District	p. 23
Appendix C - Resource List and Bibliography	p. 24
Appendix D - Map of Historic District	p. 25

Fitzwilliam Historic District Design Guidelines



This classic Georgian is the earliest home in the Historic District. Photo shows details of cornerstone work and trim of period.

Introduction

The town of Fitzwilliam is considered by many visitors and journalists to be one of the prettiest places in New England. Our "heritage tourism" has been a fact of life for years, and the town continues to attract new residents drawn by Fitzwilliam's charms.

Much of the town's beauty derives from the large stock of antique and historic buildings, which span the 1760's through the early 1900's. This "built environment" represents a resource that is managed and conserved through the cooperation of property owners and town government.

The Fitzwilliam Historic District Commission oversees some 165 properties. The purpose of the guidelines is to give homeowners a

Fitzwilliam Historic District Design Guidelines

set of standards to use in judging the appropriateness of proposed exterior modifications or new construction in the Historic District. These guidelines have been established to set some standards of consistency and provide a degree of predictability.

The following sections are guidelines for appropriate design. Preservation is not about freezing the past, nor bringing everything back to a particular time period. It is about managing change and growth. Because of the individual and unique aspects of any given proposal, the Historic District Commission will work with the property owner in determining appropriateness.

We recognize the architectural importance of structures from the 1762 settlement through the present day. We believe that even contemporary structures, such as those built within the last 50 years, play an integral part in the architectural landscape of the District and are as worthy of preservation as those structures built during the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries.

The Fitzwilliam Historic District Commission wishes to thank the many small towns who shared their historic district guidelines as models. We thank Eileen McHugh, a member of the Commission, for taking the photographs in this publication, including the Fitzwilliam Inn below.



Fitzwilliam Historic District Design Guidelines

About the Historic District Commission

Current boundaries of the Historic District were set at the annual town meeting in March 1992. The boundary lines confine the District primarily to the village center. The boundary extends about five miles West of NH Route 12, and three miles North and South of NH Route 119 West.

The Historic District Commission was created under RSA 673:1 and 673:4. Their purpose is to: preserve structures and places of historic and architectural value; preserve a district that reflects elements of the town's cultural, social, economic, political and architectural history; conserve property values; foster civic beauty; and maintain the existing architecture of the district.

The five member Commission is appointed by the Board of Selectmen and meets on the second Thursday of the month at 4 PM when a case is scheduled. If you want to do any exterior construction or alteration work on your property and you live in the Historic District, you must apply to the Historic District Commission. You can get an application at the Land Use Office and schedule a time to meet with the Commission. Your notarized application and any supplementary material must be received in the Land Use Office at least five days before you plan to meet with the Commission to allow time for public notice.

Following the design guidelines, the Commission will want to know the location, design and materials for your proposed construction, modification, renovation, restoration or addition. The plan should show all boundaries, setbacks, rights-of-way and type of exterior materials to be used.

Fitzwilliam Historic District Design Guidelines

A list of Commission members, meeting minutes and Historic District Regulations can be found at www.Fitzwilliam-nh.gov/.

Public meetings are posted in the Town Hall and Post Office for the state required number of days prior to the meeting. Historic District Commission meetings are posted two days ahead of the meeting.

For more information or an application, please call the Land Use Office, Town Hall, 603-585-9119 or email at fitzlanduse@ptcnh.net.



This classic Federal home with hip roof and double chimneys built in the late 1700's, became a combination home and business in 1858. Today it is a private home housing Clocks on the Common.

Fitzwilliam Historic District Design Guidelines

Design Guidelines

A. Principles for Historic Preservation

1. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. Removal of historic materials or alteration of features that characterize a property shall be avoided.
2. Most properties change over time. Those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.



The Robinson Perkins house built in 1800. Pillars and a third floor were added to this farmhouse in 1830 during the Greek Revival period. Photo illustrates how structures change over time.

Fitzwilliam Historic District Design Guidelines

3. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.



Distinctive features are preserved and characterize this classic Greek Revival.

4. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials.
5. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

Fitzwilliam Historic District Design Guidelines

6. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Taken from the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

B. Building Exterior

Introducing new features such as window or door openings, bays, vents, balconies, or chimneys to character-defining exterior walls is only appropriate if they will not compromise the architectural integrity of the building. It is not appropriate to remove or cover any material detail associated with exterior walls, including decorative shingles, panels, brackets and corner boards, unless an accurate restoration requires it.

1. **Clapboards.** Repair or replace with wood siding with the same profile and style. Synthetic siding, such as vinyl or aluminum is not an acceptable substitute for wood clapboards.

Resurfacing a wooden building with synthetic siding materials, such as aluminum or vinyl, is usually a short sighted solution to a maintenance problem. In fact, these newer materials may actually hide signs of damage or deterioration, allowing rot to go undetected, thereby preventing timely repair. Synthetic sidings conceal the historic fabric of the building and may remove or destroy the materials and craftsmanship that reflect America's cultural heritage.

Repair historic wooden features using recognized preservation methods for patching, consolidating, splicing and reinforcing.

Fitzwilliam Historic District Design Guidelines

2. Decorative wood detail. Preferably maintain and repair or replace with items that duplicate the original in material, style, size and configuration.

3. Paint. Painting can make a dramatic improvement to an historic building. Repaint wooden surfaces in colors that are appropriate to the historic district structure. Although an exterior paint job is not an irreversible change to a building it is a highly visible and relatively expensive one, so a careful study of the style of the building, the surrounding streetscape and the region's climatic conditions is needed. Color changes require Historic District Commission approval. Please supply color samples with your application to the Historic District Commission. Paint colors can be found in an 'historic color' palette to complement the age and style of the structure. Look to the village and surrounding buildings for ideas.

4. Porches and Decks. Follow historic porch design. For new construction use a design compatible with historic character of the house. Locate new decks off secondary elevations and paint to match porch and house trim. Enclosing an existing porch is generally inappropriate. Screening in a traditionally open porch requires the prior approval of the Historic District Commission.

Materials used to build porch or deck walls starting at the level of the main building floor should be compatible with those of the main building. Use of cedar or redwood lumber is recommended, but whatever wood is used should be finished or painted. Replacement features such as columns and railings should duplicate historic features. Porch steps should have solid risers.

5. Roof. Changing existing roofing material and/or color requires Commission approval. Where possible, we encourage

Fitzwilliam Historic District

Design Guidelines

the repair and maintenance of existing roofing materials, such as slate. When replacement is necessary, the material should complement the structure's age and style. Please submit examples of the roofing material with your application.

6. Roof features. It is not appropriate to introduce new roof features such as skylights, dormers or vents if they will compromise the historic roof design, or damage character-defining roof materials or the character of the historic district. It is not appropriate to install air conditioners, solar collectors, antennas, skylights or mechanical equipment in locations that alter character-defining roofs or on roof slopes prominently visible from the street. Any satellite dish, antenna or mast no longer in use must be removed.

- a. **Satellite dishes** of one meter or less in diameter are permitted in the historic district subject to the following:
 - Satellite dish placement will not require approval by the Historic District Commission if the location is out of public view. Specifically, the dishes should be located at the rear of the primary building or attached to the rear walls of the primary building or rear slopes of the roof.
 - Satellite dish placement on the front façade of the house itself, any secondary building or in the front yard is generally prohibited.
 - Satellite dish placement in any other location on the property will require Commission review and approval.
- b. **Antennas** designed to receive broadcast television or radio signals are permitted in the historic district subject to the following:
 - Antenna is located as unobtrusively as possible on the roof of the home.

Fitzwilliam Historic District

Design Guidelines

- Any mast holding such antenna should not exceed twelve feet above the roof line.
 - Antenna placement on secondary buildings, in yards, or other than on the roof of the house, or masts exceeding twelve feet above the roof line will require Commission review and approval.
- c. **Chimneys** are an important feature of historic buildings to be retained and maintained. Rebuilding is preferable to removing chimneys in poor condition. If a missing chimney is to be rebuilt, insure the reconstructed feature is appropriately sized, positioned and constructed to appear historically functional.
7. **Windows and Doors.** Any design change requires Historic District Commission approval. Where possible, retain original windows. Do not block out or tint windows. Weather stripping, renovation and caulking increase energy efficiency.
- a. **Replacement windows.** Retain the same material, operation, frame, size, sidelights and muntin design as the original where possible. Wood is the preferred material. If a window has been altered from the original by a past replacement, the owner has the option of retaining the window or door as it currently exists; however, the Historic District Commission prefers a return to the original design. Window muntins must be true dividers; “between the glass” type are not permitted. (Muntin – the slender vertical and horizontal material that separates individual panes of glass in a window or door.)

Fitzwilliam Historic District Design Guidelines



This historic cape has replacement windows throughout. Front windows are wood and side and rear windows are vinyl.

- b. **Storm doors.** Where storm doors are needed use full-view glass design, with color to match the existing door or surround. We encourage the use of traditional hardware.
- c. **Storm windows.** Storm windows should be designed with the same configuration as the original window. If desired, narrow-profile exterior or interior storm windows can be used so that they do not obscure or damage the existing sash and frame. Select exterior storm windows with a painted or baked-enamel finish color that is compatible with the sash color. For double-hung windows, operable storm window dividers should align with the existing meeting rail.

Fitzwilliam Historic District Design Guidelines



New storm windows do not obscure the original 9/6 windows.

- d. **Shutters.** Maintain these if they have remained with the house. Exterior blinds of metal or synthetic materials are not recommended as substitutes.

C. Site and Setting

The overall character of the Fitzwilliam Historic District is defined not only by historic homes, but also by accessory buildings and other features on site and features connecting sites within the district.

1. Garages and Accessory Structures. Accessory buildings such as garages, barns, sheds, carriage houses, and even greenhouses are all considered important elements of the historic district. They are afforded the same protection under our guidelines as the homes themselves, and include types of garage doors, windows and trim.

Retain and preserve garages and accessory structures that contribute to the historic character of the individual building site or the district. Garage and barn doors should reflect the architectural style of the main structure. If existing original doors

Fitzwilliam Historic District Design Guidelines

cannot be repaired or adapted, replacement doors should duplicate the appearance and materials of the original doors.

2. Fences. Retain and preserve exterior fence and wall materials that contribute to the overall historic character of a site.



Wooden fence encloses an old fashioned garden on the grounds of the Library.

The introduction of fencing on a property that currently has no fencing or no historic record of fencing will be reviewed carefully, particularly where the proposed fencing will be visible from the street. Introduce compatible new fences and walls constructed of traditional materials only in locations and configurations that are characteristic of the historic district. Keep height of new fences and walls consistent with height of traditional fences and walls in the district.

Fitzwilliam Historic District Design Guidelines



New wooden fence is a reproduction of a Williamsburg fence.

It is not appropriate to introduce vinyl or metal chain link fencing. Stockade or board fences are generally not allowed.

The Historic District Commission will review each fence proposal based on the project's individual merits. The existence of other historically inconsistent fences in the area is not a basis for approval of another inconsistent fence. Wooden fences should be retained, and maintained and painted on a regular basis; white or trim color of the house is the traditional color for fences. New or stripped fences may be repainted or stained.

New fencing proposals should be consistent with historic fencing in design, materials and scale. Wood, iron or other historic materials are recommended instead of plastic, vinyl, aluminum or other contemporary materials.

3. Recreational Facilities. Tennis courts, swimming pools, etc. will be considered upon application. Primary consideration will be given to the degree of public visibility. See Fences section.

Fitzwilliam Historic District Design Guidelines

4. Retaining Walls. Retaining walls should be consistent with historic features in design, materials, and scale. Simple scored concrete, stone or brick or other historic materials are recommended over concrete block, asphalt or other modern concrete treatments.

5. Signs. Signs must comply with town ordinance. Design, layout, placement, material and color must be approved by the Historic District Commission. Color and design will complement the structure and design of the building.



Carved wooden signs and signs painted on marine or signboard will be considered where appropriate. Use of historic font, design and color palette is encouraged, as is preservation of existing historic painted wall signs. Lighting signs by backlighting, neon or flashing lights is not permitted, but the use of exterior lights or spotlights is appropriate. Look to the village and surrounding buildings for appropriateness.

6. Stone Walls. Retain stone walls in place and inspect to insure that loose or missing stones are replaced. Construct new stone

Fitzwilliam Historic District Design Guidelines

walls of granite rock and dry lay them to match other historic stone walls in the area.



*New Hampshire
protects stone
walls as historic
natural resources*

7. Walkways, Driveways, and Off Street Parking. Design walkways, driveways and off street parking areas to be compatible in location, patterns, spacing, configurations, dimensions, materials and color with existing walkways, driveways, and off street parking areas that contribute to the overall historic character of the district.

We encourage you to protect large trees and other significant site features from immediate damage during construction and from delayed damage due to construction activities, such as loss of root area or compaction of the soil by equipment. It is especially critical to avoid soil compaction within the drip line of trees.

D. New Construction.

New construction in an historic district can enhance the existing character if the proposed design and its siting reflect an understanding of and a compatibility with the distinctive character of the district setting and buildings. In fact, the introduction of a compatible but contemporary new construction project can add depth and contribute interest to the district.

Fitzwilliam Historic District

Design Guidelines

1. New Homes. The exterior of new buildings should be designed to look appropriate to, and compatible with, adjacent buildings. If there are no immediately adjacent structures, look to the neighborhood and consider the following:

- Building height - similar to nearby buildings, in proportion to the predominant heights of existing houses or commercial structures.
- Façade proportions (ratio of width to height) - similar to those of surrounding buildings to create or complement streetscapes and views within the area.
- Building setback - follows established setbacks on the street.
- Roof forms - follow predominant styles of adjacent buildings.
- Utility connections - placed to minimize visibility from the street.
- Materials - compatible with those used in adjacent structures or, when there are no immediately adjacent structures, buildings within the surrounding area. Exterior surfaces should be painted or otherwise finished in a similar manner.
- Materials of foundation wall - compatible with those of nearby buildings. If use of matching materials is impractical, substitutions which are not obtrusive should be used, such as grey finished stucco near granite block foundations rather than concrete blocks.
- Door and window height-to-width ratios - similar to those in neighboring structures. The pattern established by the relationship of window or door openings and the surrounding area should respect the neighboring structures. The percentage of glass to wall should approximate those of neighboring structures.

Fitzwilliam Historic District Design Guidelines

- Façade elements which can help give a new structure a historically compatible appearance include:
 - Window hoods and lintels
 - Entrances with porches and balustrades
 - Cornice lines with architectural detailing
 - Gables
 - Columns and pilasters
 - Chimneys.

Any such detail elements must be consistent with the design of the structure. Adding details typical of one historic period may be inconsistent with a structure typical of the style of another period.

2. Garages and Accessory Buildings. Designs for new accessory buildings should reflect the style and especially the roofline of the principal building or the vernacular of the district. Alternatively, accessory buildings may be designed as a visual counterpoint to the principal structure.



This saltbox garage is excellent example of new construction on an historic site.

Fitzwilliam Historic District Design Guidelines

Locate and orient new garages and accessory buildings to be compatible with the traditional relationship of garages and accessory buildings to the main structure and the site in the district. It is not appropriate to introduce a new garage or accessory building if doing so will detract from the overall historic character of the principal building and the site, or if it will require removal of a significant building element or site feature, such as a mature tree.

3. Additions to Historic Buildings. Over the life of a building, its form may evolve as additional space is needed or new functionality added.

Buildings in the Fitzwilliam historic district reflect their history through the series of previous alterations and additions that they exhibit. Consequently, such changes are significant to the history of the building and the district.

New additions within the historic district are appropriate as long as they do not destroy historic features, historic materials and spatial relationships that are significant to the original building and site. New additions should be differentiated from the original building and constructed so they can be removed in the future without damage to the building.

Locate a new addition on an inconspicuous elevation of the historic building, usually the rear one. Design an addition to be compatible with the historic building in mass, materials, color and relationship of walls to windows in the exterior walls, yet make the addition discernible from the original.

Fitzwilliam Historic District Design Guidelines



This classic Federal built in 1804 was dedicated as the Fitzwilliam Town Library in 1912. Photo shows a lovely addition completed in 2001.



*An 1850's farmhouse
with appropriate
additions in progress.*

Fitzwilliam Historic District Design Guidelines

Relationship to Other Town Boards

Board of Selectmen

Historic District Commission members are appointed to three year terms of office by the Board of Selectmen. All exterior work done in the Historic District must be approved by the Historic District Commission prior to receiving a building permit.

Planning Board

The Planning Board in conjunction with the Selectmen have jurisdiction for ensuring that Fitzwilliam Zoning Ordinances and Subdivision Regulations are followed in the Historic District.

Zoning Board of Adjustment

The Zoning Board of Adjustment has the authority to review and void decisions made by the Historic District Commission if proper due process was not followed.

Historical Society

The Historical Society is a civic organization with interest in local historic issues. It has no public governance authority or official connection with the Historic District Commission.

Fitzwilliam Historic District Design Guidelines

List of Historic District Properties

Map	Lot	Map	Lot	Map	Lot	Map	Lot	Map	Lot
11	18	30	3	32	12	32	47	33	23
11	20	30	5	32	13	32	53	33	24
11	23	30	7	32	14	32	54	33	25
11	25	30	8	32	15	32	55	33	26
11	26	30	9	32	16	32	56	33	27
11	41	31	1	32	17	32	57	33	28
11	42	31	3	32	18	32	58	33	29
11	43	31	4	32	19	32	59	33	30
11	44	31	5	32	20	32	60	34	5
11	46	31	6	32	21	33	1	34	1
15	5.1	31	8	32	22	33	2	34	2
15	6	31	9	32	23	33	3.1	34	3
15	7	31	12	32	24	33	3.2	34	4
15	7.1	31	13	32	25	33	4		
15	7.2	31	13.1	32	28	33	6		
15	8	31	14	32	29	33	7		
15	9.1	31	15	32	30	33	8		
15	9.2	31	16	32	32	33	9		
15	9.3	31	19	32	33	33	10		
15	9.4	31	20	32	35	33	11		
15	10.1	32	2	32	36	33	11.1		
15	10.2	32	3	32	37	33	12		
15	11	32	4	32	38	33	13		
15	11.1	32	5	32	39	33	15		
15	30	32	6	32	40	33	16		
15	31	32	7	32	41	33	17		
15	32	32	8	32	43	33	18		
15	33	32	9	32	44	33	19		
15	60	32	10	32	45	33	20		
15	60.1	32	11	32	46	33	22		

Fitzwilliam Historic District Design Guidelines

Resource List and Bibliography

Organizations

- National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1785 Massachusetts Ave., Washington, DC, www.nationaltrust.org
- The National Register of Historic Places, www.cr.nps.gov/nr/
- New Hampshire Historical Society, 30 Park St., Concord, NH.
- New Hampshire Preservation Alliance, 87 North State St., Concord, NH, www.nhpreservation.org
- New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources, 19 Pillsbury St., Concord, NH, www.nh.gov/nhdhr.org

Books

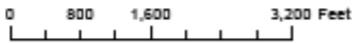
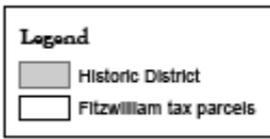
- Fisher, Charles E. and Hugh C. Miller, ed., Caring for Your Historic House. NY: Harry N. Abrams, 1998.
- Light, Sally, House Histories: A Guide to Tracing the Genealogy of Your Home. Spencertown, NY: Golden Hill Press, Inc. 1997.
- Porter, John C. and Francis E. Gilman, Preserving Old Barns. Preventing the Loss of a Valuable Resource. University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension, 2001.

Available in the Fitzwilliam Land Use Office

- The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings, Washington, DC. US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/TPS/tax/rhb/>
- Kitchen, Judith L., Caring for Your Old House: A Guide for Owners and Residents. National Trust for Historic Preservation "Respectful Rehabilitations" series, Preservation Press, NY1991.
- McAlester, Virginia and Lee, A Field Guide to American Houses, Alfred A. Knopf, NY, 2006.
- The Preservation of Historic Architecture, Department of the Interior, Alfred A. Knopf, NY 2006, Guilford, CT, 2004.
- Historic District Commission Procedures and Regulations, <http://www.fitzwilliam-nh.gov/>

Fitzwilliam Historic District Design Guidelines

Fitzwilliam Historic District



Fitzwilliam Historic District



Legend

-  Historic District
-  Fitzwilliam tax parcels

