



Somerset Historical Commission

Historic Building Marker Program

To encourage an appreciation of Somerset's historical, architectural and cultural heritage, the Somerset Historical Commission (the "Commission") has created a Historic Building Marker Program. An owner of a historic building located in Somerset may file an application asking the Commission to determine that the building is historically significant according to the criteria described below. If the Commission, after review, approves the application, the owner will be permitted to order the marker and place it on the building in conformity with the terms of the program described herein. Except for complying with the terms of the program, a determination does not limit a building owner's handling of the property.

Two Types of Markers

There will be two types of markers available. One type of marker will indicate the year the building or structure was originally constructed. The second type of marker will indicate the year of construction and will also provide the name of the person who owned the building when it was originally constructed or a person of local, state or national importance associated with the property.

Criteria for Historical Significance

To be found historically significant, the building must have been constructed more than seventy-five (75) years ago and must retain the integrity of the original design and construction.

A building which no longer consists of the original materials may still be considered for a marker if, in other respects, it retains the said integrity of the original design. For example, if aluminum or vinyl siding has been installed as a replacement for wooden clapboards, the Commission may issue a marker. Part I of the application requests information regarding the building.

If an applicant requests the second type of marker described above, the Commission will require the applicant to provide specific evidence demonstrating that the person claimed to be the original owner is the original owner, or, alternatively, the person claimed by the applicant is of local, state or national importance and is associated with the property. Part II of the application requests information regarding the person whose name the applicant wants to add to the marker.

Application.

The owner of the builder must submit the application to the Commission. The explanation and documentation portion of the application is very important. The Commission has limited resources and expects the applicant to provide it with the necessary information so that the Commission can make a proper determination as to whether the building meets the criteria of the program.

The Commission will give great weight to information provided by inventories of historic resources provided to the Massachusetts Historical Commission, town assessors' records, land evidence records at the Bristol County Fall River District Registry of Deeds, probate records, and similar documentary evidence. Copies of Inventories of Historic Resources can be found on the web at the "MACRIS" website: "mhc-macris.net." Assessors' records can be found at the Town Assessors' Office. The records indicate the owner and prior owner of the lot the building occupies. It also indicates the selling price when the property was sold. (The selling price is very important – there is a big difference in price between a vacant lot and a lot improved with a building.) Valuable information can be found at the Registry of Deeds where the "chain of title" can be researched. If a prior owner has died and title passes through probate, there may well be a file with a case number at the Registry of Probate. (Please attach to the application photocopies of any documents you intend to rely upon to

support your claim.) Other types of evidence will be evaluated for reliability by the Commission on a case by case basis.

A copy of the application is attached hereto and a copy may be downloaded and completed. Copies will also be available at the Town Clerk's office at the Town Office Building.

Mail or hand deliver the application and all supporting documents to the Commission. Our mail box is in the Tax Collector's Office on the first floor of the Town Office Building. The mailing address is:

Somerset Historical Commission
Town Office Building
140 Wood Street
Somerset, MA 02726

Review Process

The Commission will review the applications and supporting documents, investigate and attempt to confirm the assertions made therein and will vote on whether to approve the application. Because the Commission meets only once or twice a month, it may take several weeks for a decision to be rendered. The Commission will notify the applicant of its decision by email or, if the applicant does not have an email address, by regular, first class mail. The Commission will allow an application to be reconsidered only if the applicant submits newly discovered evidence in support of the application.

If the application is approved, the Commission will sign the application where indicated, and send it back to the applicant together with a completed order form (the "Approval Form") to order the marker. The applicant must mail a copy of the signed application and Approval Form to the sign maker, along with payment. All relevant information for contacting the sign maker is included on the Approval Form.

The Marker

The marker will be approximately 9 inches high and 11 inches wide and will be made of PVC board. All markers will have the name of the

Commission and the town seal affixed and will be uniform to the extent possible.

Placement of Marker

The marker must be placed on the front, street-facing side of the building, on the right or left side of the door, with the closest edge being within 3 feet of the door. It should not interfere with the placement of house numbers. The applicant is responsible for the installation of the markers on their building.

Historic Building Marker Program Application

Owner/Applicant

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

_____ Zip _____

Telephone: (C) _____ (H) _____

Email address: _____

Part I

Building Address: _____

Date of Construction: _____

Owner(s) as of date of construction: _____

Assessors' Map and Lot No.: Map _____ Lot _____

Attach photograph of building showing current condition. _____

Sources of Information regarding date of construction and retention of integrity of the original design and construction: (Please list the documents the applicant is relying on to substantiate its claims, i.e. deeds, old photographs, assessors' records, building plans, etc., and submit photocopies of the documents with the application.)

If you are aware of significant modifications made to the exterior of the building since it was originally constructed, please briefly describe the modifications and the approximate date the modifications were made.

(Attach additional pages if necessary)

Part II

(To be completed if the applicant wants to add a person's name to the Marker)

Name of the person the Applicant wants to have placed on the Marker:

Was this person the owner of the building when it was originally constructed? Yes _____ No _____

If the answer is no, please briefly describe why the designated person was “a person of local, state, or national importance” and how the person became associated with the property and submit documentation with the application to support your claim.

Applicant(s) Signature(s)

Approval of the Historical Commission

On _____ at a meeting of the Somerset Historical Commission, the Commission voted to approve the within application of _____

Language on Marker: _____

Dated: _____ (Signed) _____
(Printed) _____