

Chapter 2

Site Design and Elements

- A. Introduction
- B. Plantings
- C. Walls & Fences
- D. Parking Areas
& Lots
- E. Garages, Sheds,
& Other
Structures
- F. Utilities &
Other Site
Appurtenances

A. INTRODUCTION

The relationship between a historic building and its site, landscape features, outbuildings, and other elements within the property boundary all contribute to a historic district's overall character. Site features are considered an important part of any project to be reviewed by the HDRC.

When making changes to a property in the historic district, the entire site should be studied to better understand its historic design and context. When planning changes to a site in the historic district, create a new plan that reflects the traditional landscape of the site. Consider using different types and sizes of plantings that will create scale, define edges, and enclose outdoor spaces of the site.

B. PLANTINGS



Plantings are a critical part of the historic appearance of both the residential and commercial sections of Falmouth's historic district. Several properties have plantings in the form of trees, foundation plantings, and flowerbeds. Plantings in commercial areas should be carefully considered in order maximize shade for and not obstruct pedestrian walkways.

1. Encourage the maintenance and planting of large trees on private property along streetfronts.
2. Generally, use trees and plants that are compatible with the existing plantings in the historic district.
3. Use trees and plants that are indigenous to the area.
4. Retain existing trees and plants that help define the character of the district.
5. Replace diseased or dead plants with like or similar species when possible.
6. When constructing new buildings, identify and take care to protect significant existing trees and other plantings.
7. Choose ground cover plantings that are compatible with adjacent sites, existing conditions, and the character of the building.
8. Select edging materials carefully and do not use plastic edgings or other historically unsuitable materials.

C. WALLS AND FENCES

There are a variety of fences and walls in Falmouth’s historic district, and where appropriate original fences and walls should be repaired and maintained in their original location. Materials should relate to the historic structure on the site and may include brick, stone, wood pickets, or parged and scored concrete block.

1. Maintain existing materials such as stone walls and wooden picket fences.
2. When a portion of a fence needs replacing, salvage original parts for a prominent location.
3. Match historic fencing in material, height, and detail.
4. If it is not possible to match old fencing, use a simplified design of similar materials and height.
5. For new fences, use materials that relate to materials in the historic district.
6. Take design clues from nearby historic fences and walls.
7. Chainlink fencing and exposed concrete block walls in general should not be used.
8. If street front fences are desirable, keep them below 1.2 meters (four (4) feet) in height and use traditional materials and design.
9. Residential privacy fences may be appropriate in side or rear yards.
10. Avoid fences over 1.8 meters (six (6) feet) high.
11. Fence structures, such as posts, should face the inside of the fenced property.
12. The construction of fences of appropriate materials defining the site of a house are encouraged in the residential areas of Falmouth’s historic district.
13. Concrete block or cast concrete walls should be parged with mortar so as to effect and neat appearance.



D. PARKING AREAS & LOTS

Parking lots in the commercial and market areas of Falmouth’s historic district should be carefully planned to minimize their impact on the viewshed from pedestrian walkways.

1. Locate parking areas behind buildings.
2. Screen parking lots from streets, sidewalks, and neighboring sites through the use of walls, trees, and plantings of a height and type appropriate to reduce visual impact year-round and provide shade.
3. Avoid creating parking areas in the front yards of historic building sites.
4. Avoid excessive kerb cuts to gain entry into parking areas.
5. Avoid large expanses of impermeable surfaces.
6. On large lots, provide interior plantings and pedestrian walkways.
7. Provide screening from adjacent land uses as needed.
8. Install adequate lighting in parking areas to provide security in evening hours.
9. Select lighting fixtures that are appropriate to the historic setting. Consider using solar powered lighting fixtures.

E. GARAGES, SHEDS & OTHER STRUCTURES

A number of houses in Falmouth's historic district have outbuildings and distinctive site features, particularly properties that contain a small house on a large lot. Historic site features should be maintained and new constructions should be sensitive to the historic property and natural landscape.

1. Retain existing historic outbuildings and site features.
2. Choose designs for new outbuildings that are compatible with the major buildings on the site.
3. Take clues and scale from older outbuildings in the historic district.
4. Use traditional roof designs, slopes, and traditional materials.
5. Place new outbuildings behind the dwelling.
6. If the design compliments the main building however, it can be visible from the primary elevations or streets.
7. Place utility sheds in areas that are not visible from primary elevations or streets.
8. The design and location of any new site features should relate to the existing character of the property.



F. UTILITIES & OTHER SITE APPURTENANCES

Site appurtenances such as overhead utilities, utility poles and meters, antennae, exterior mechanical units, and trash containers are a necessary part of contemporary life. However, their placement may detract from the character of the site and building.

1. Place overhead wires, utility poles and meters, antennae, trash containers, and exterior mechanical systems in locations where they are least likely to detract from the character of the site.
2. Encourage the installation of utility services underground.
3. Screen utilities and other site elements with fences, walls, or plantings.
4. Antennae and communication dishes should be placed in inconspicuous rooftop locations.
5. Screen all rooftop mechanical equipment with a wall of material harmonious with the building or structure.
6. Window air conditioning units should be located in windows not visible from the street.



The overhead utilities along Market Street detract from the overall appearance of the street and its historic integrity.