



Forrester Street



Summit Avenue



High Street

## What is a Neighborhood Preservation District (NPD)?

A NPD is an area, typically residential, in which protection of neighborhood character is desired by its residents. While buildings in a NPD may or may not be considered “historic” in the commonly understood sense, the district generally has common physical characteristics that create the neighborhood’s character. Residents and property owners determine which defining elements are to be protected in order to develop a set of regulations. The regulations and accompanying guidelines are usually design based and focus on the physical elements which residents and property owners choose to protect.

## Where are NPDs Already Established?

Neighborhood preservation districts are found throughout the country, including Dallas, TX, New Orleans, LA, Indianapolis, IN, Boise, ID, and Memphis and Knoxville, TN. Other Massachusetts communities with neighborhood preservation districts in place include Cambridge, Boston, Lowell, Amesbury, and North Andover. Wellesley and Lincoln are currently studying specific districts.

The following websites describe some of these programs in more detail:

- 🔗 Boston Landmarks Commission, City of Boston  
[www.cityofboston.gov/environment/downloads.asp](http://www.cityofboston.gov/environment/downloads.asp)
- 🔗 Cambridge Historical Commission, City of Cambridge  
[www.cambridgema.gov/Historic/districts.html](http://www.cambridgema.gov/Historic/districts.html)
- 🔗 Lowell Historic Board, City of Lowell  
[www.historiclowell.net/review-districts-permitting/downtown-historic-district/review-districts-permitting/review-districts-permitting](http://www.historiclowell.net/review-districts-permitting/downtown-historic-district/review-districts-permitting/review-districts-permitting) (link to neighborhood district standards and procedures)

## Where Can I Get More Information?

[www.salem.com](http://www.salem.com)

Please call or email **Kirsten Kinzer**, Salem Department of Planning and Community Development, with any questions at:

(978) 619-5685 | [kkinzer@salem.com](mailto:kkinzer@salem.com)



The City of Salem Neighborhood Preservation District Study has been financed in part with federal funds from the National Park Service, US Department of the Interior, through the Massachusetts Historical Commission, Secretary of the Commonwealth William Francis Galvin, chairman. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior, or the Massachusetts Historical Commission.



PRESERVATION DISTRICTS  
IN SALEM

Neighborhood character is an essential element of quality of life for Salem residents. Due to diverse styles of architecture, house and lot sizes and landscaping, Salem’s neighborhoods are each unique. How do we preserve this character while allowing for new development and owners’ personal taste? This is the subject of a 2008 study by the City of Salem, which focuses on Neighborhood Preservation Districts as a tool to protect neighborhood character.

The City of Salem is seeking input, ideas and comments from residents and owners about Neighborhood Preservation Districts. A series of meetings will be held early in 2008 to explain the concept and gather public input. Following these meetings, two neighborhoods will be studied as examples of such districts and sample design guidelines created.





Linden Street



**Before  
(Compatible)**  
Similar houses  
in a row are a  
neighborhood  
characteristic



Franklin Street



Sutton Avenue



Endicott Street



**After  
(Non-compatible)**  
New construction  
that meets zoning  
regulations, but  
may not respect  
neighborhood  
character



Barton Street



Arbella Street

## Differences Between a NPD and a Local Historic District (LHD)

Both district types protect aspects of an area's historic physical character. The major differences are:

- ⌘ **A NPD is flexible about which building elements are protected and allows the neighborhood to determine these elements.** A LHD protects all exterior elements through a required review of alterations to any structure on each individual property.
- ⌘ **A NPD focuses on various elements that make up a neighborhood's character.** A LHD focuses on each individual building's historic character.
- ⌘ **A NPD has its own set of design guidelines.** All four of Salem's LHDs utilize the same design guidelines.
- ⌘ **A NPD is administered by a commission that includes neighborhood members.** All four of Salem's LHDs are administered by the Salem Historical Commission.

## What can be Protected in a NPD?

The neighborhood chooses what they want protected. These elements may include:

- ⌘ Compatible new construction and additions
- ⌘ Control over demolition
- ⌘ Certain elements of landscaping
- ⌘ Major alterations that residents and property owners choose, which could include, for example, changes to porches, siding, and roof dormers

## How is a NPD Established?

Neighborhood preservation districts are established as a result of a multi-step study and approval process that begins with a petition, usually from the neighborhood's property owners. The proposed district must initially meet certain criteria to be eligible for study and subsequent approval. Design or planning guidelines are developed based on analysis of the

defining elements of a neighborhood's character. Elements to be protected are chosen by the neighborhood. The district is only established if a majority of the neighborhood, Planning Board, Historical Commission and City Council approve. This study, currently underway, will establish recommendations for how NPDs could be created in Salem.

## Who Would Oversee the NPD?

This type of district is usually overseen by a commission, often separate from the community's Historical Commission. The composition of such a commission has not been finalized, but could be composed of neighborhood residents and property owners, a member of the Salem Historical Commission, and people with expertise in reviewing such guidelines, such as architects, contractors, and realtors.

