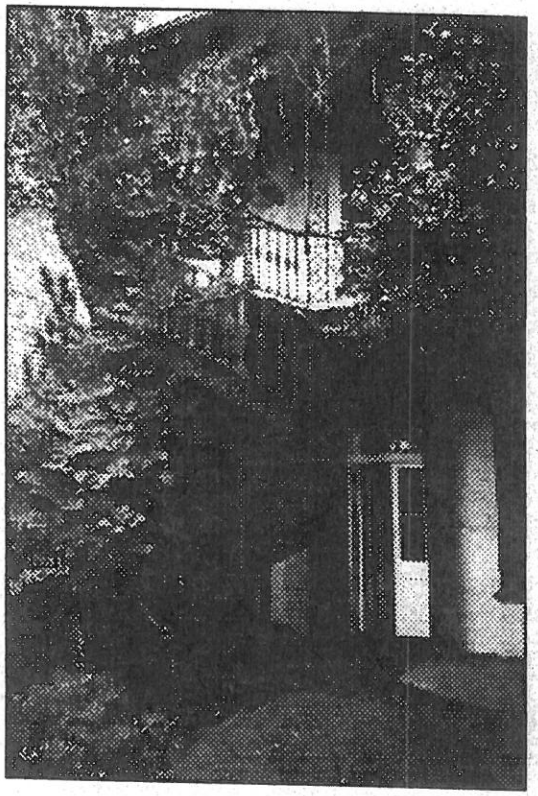
DESIGN GUIDELINES
FOR THE
NATCHITOCHES HISTORIC DISTRICT

A Handbook for Historic Resources
within the Natchitoches Historic District

Prepared by:
Christopher Chadbourne and Associates
1997



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INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The objectives of this handbook are threefold: (1) to help people understand the most appropriate maintenance and rehabilitation practices to preserve historic buildings; (2) to recommend general design guidelines for additions and new freestanding construction that will help preserve the historic qualities of the historic district; and (3) to serve the Natchitoches Historic District Commission as a reference manual in applying consistent criteria to its judgments regarding building permit applications within the Historic District.

The Commission and its staff will consistently reference this handbook, both to help make their own decisions as well as to advise property owners on appropriate courses of action. Applicants who study the handbook closely and consult with the Commission staff prior to submitting their project plans, will be more assured that their proposals will comply with the objectives of the city's preservation ordinance.

The public purpose of the city's historic district ordinance is to ensure the preservation of Natchitoches' special character and the retention of property values by encouraging property owners to repair and maintain their properties in ways sensitive to the building's original style and methods of construction. The purpose is NOT, however, to force owners to restore their property to its original appearance. In addition, this handbook presents guidelines for the construction of additions to existing buildings and for new freestanding construction within the Historic District.

The City of Natchitoches has recognized its historic district as an important conveyor of the city's rich architectural heritage. As such, it has been judged as a special place, part of the city's public legacy worth conserving. That heritage is conveyed not only by the richly stylized houses on Jefferson Street built for the city's affluent, but by the commercial downtown on Front and Second Streets, and even by the streetscapes of modest vernacular houses built for its working families.

It should be understood that the handbook's rules are based conceptually upon the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings. These 10 general principles (see Appendix A) should be thought of as guideposts for determining the appropriateness of various repair, renovation, and maintenance approaches. This handbook amplifies the intent of the Secretary's Standards with guidelines that address particular local conditions. In no case, however, is it the intent of this handbook to contradict the Secretary's Standards.

Defining "Historic Preservation"

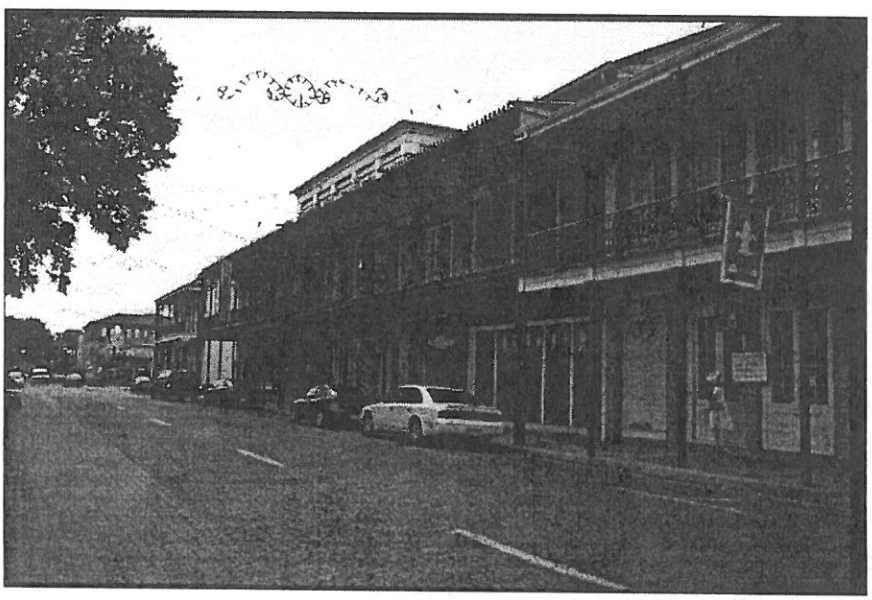
Historic preservation has mistakenly earned a reputation as the painstaking (and expensive) restoration of a building to its original condition. This, in fact, is rarely the reality. Rather, historic preservation, as a philosophy and professional field, embraces a whole range of acceptable approaches, the appropriateness of each depending upon the

condition, usage, age, and significance of the property in question. For more detail, see Appendix A for a definition of these various approaches. The "pure restoration" approach, for example, is but one option taken by some individuals or institutions who chose voluntarily to restore their property as authentically as possible to a certain period of time. Even then, the restoration is rarely "pure" in the sense of disallowing the introduction of modern systems and utilities.

In reality, the most common preservation approach is called "rehabilitation," the process of upgrading the inner workings of a building to meet contemporary needs while preserving its essential historic character. Unlike pure restoration, the rehabilitation approach is flexible enough to accommodate additions and alterations to historic properties. It is this approach, adopted by the City of Natchitoches and elaborated upon by the guidelines of this handbook, that forms the basis for regulatory oversight in the historic districts of Natchitoches.

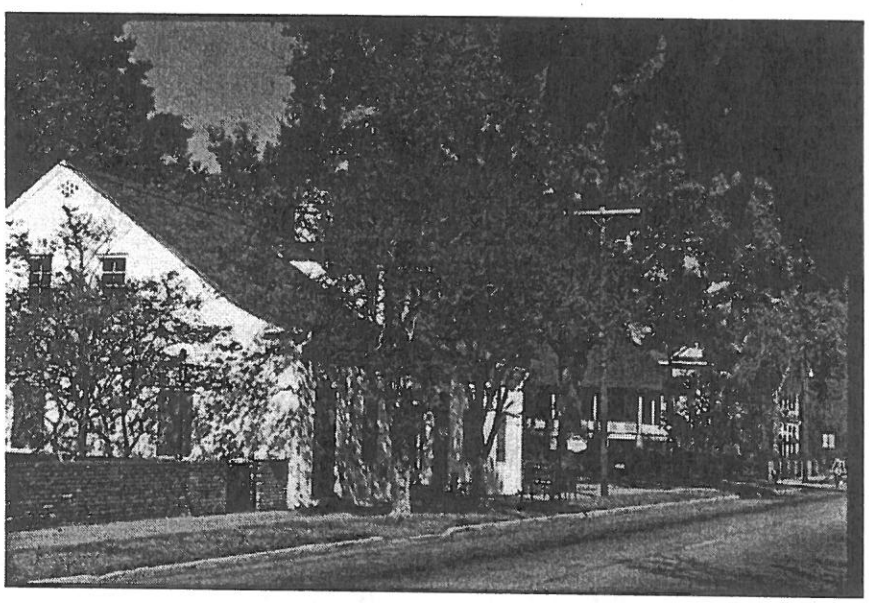
Social and Economic Benefits of Preservation

In a city where the vast majority of its building stock dates from the 19th and early 20th centuries, the presence of heritage is as tangible as the building next door. While that building, by itself, may not be considered a historic landmark, to the work of a master craftsman, or the setting of a famous historic event, it does likely contribute to the overall character of the block, to a sense of place within the city. In that respect, many of the anonymous "buildings next door" form something greater than the sum of their parts. They contribute to the city's overall sense of itself, which is part of Natchitoches' cultural inheritance from its rich past.



These commercial structures are part of the heritage of Natchitoches.

Besides being something of a common legacy, older buildings and neighborhoods offer practical applications. They are established resources with existing infrastructure, often of workmanship and materials superior to modern construction. As such, the cost of rehabilitation often compares very favorably with new construction in undeveloped areas. Experience in numerous communities across the country has shown time and again in recent decades that revitalized historic neighborhoods improve the municipal tax base, help stabilize or improve social conditions, act as a magnet to businesses looking for a healthy community climate in which to establish or relocate, and, particularly in the case of Natchitoches, enhance tourism. Moreover, recent studies have found that heritage tourism leaves more money in local economies than other forms of tourism.



Older neighborhoods are a valuable resource to the community.

The Role of the Historic District Commission

The Historic District Commission reviews applications for work within the city's Historic District. Approvals will be granted for those projects that have been determined by the Commission as meeting the intent of the rules contained within this handbook. The Commission also serves to provide technical guidance to property owners with questions regarding design and maintenance issues, as well as direction in seeking financial incentives for rehabilitation projects.

The Commission meets on a monthly schedule in sessions open to all members of the public. Persons wishing to have their project reviewed must apply ahead of time to the Commission staff in order to be scheduled in advance for the agenda.

Assessing the Design Integrity of Your Building

When planning your project, avoid getting immediately into the details. First, ask yourself what the general style or character of your property is. Try locating any historic photographs that show its older appearance, especially if the original design has been altered. Determine from these views which building features, such as setback, roof and cornice shape, building height, wall openings, and stylistic details, help define its overall style or character. Consult the Historic District Commission staff for advice if no historic views can be found. Next, try to assess the amount of "historic fabric" (i.e., original or older features) that remains intact. In general, the more that survives for repair and maintenance the better.

Historic Design Survives: If the original design remains largely intact, then preservation of that appearance is the best recommended approach – and the one most likely to win approval from the Historic District Commission.

Historic Design Partially Altered: If the building has been only partially altered, some of its original features will remain in place. This is especially true of commercial properties whose upper floors are often untouched while the ground floors may have undergone several renovations. The building's overall character is still discernible, although somewhat degraded. In this case, several options are available. If your budget allows, the best case is restoration if sufficient documentation (usually historic photographs) exists. A second option could be restoration of some original elements with, perhaps, the introduction of new features that are compatible with the historic design. The introduction of new features, like a storefront, can be tricky, especially without the aid of an experienced architect, and so the Commission staff should be consulted as early in the process as possible.

Historic Design Lost or Radically Altered: If your building has been radically altered, and all of its original design has been lost, you have three options: (1) maintain the building "as is;" (2) consider reconstruction of the original facade (if sufficient documentation exists); (3) or create a new design that is compatible with the historic buildings in your immediate vicinity.

Suggestion: The Historic District Commission will not require you to restore or reconstruct your building to its historic appearance if it has been changed over time. While voluntary restoration of the original appearance, or even of certain features, would not be discouraged by the Commission, it is not the intent of the Natchitoches Historic District ordinance to require this approach. What the ordinance does intend is to ensure that existing historic features are preserved and maintained for the future.

Determining the Best Preservation Approach

After having assessed the design integrity and physical condition of your building, you may have begun to develop a preservation strategy. Check this initial thinking with the four-step process recommended below. Note that, like the guidelines throughout this

handbook, the four steps are based on the assumption that regular maintenance and repair is the best conservator of any building – old or new.

#1. Identify, Retain and Preserve: As noted above, first identify and understand those features of your building that are original and integral to its historic character. Plan to retain and preserve those features.

#2. Protect and Maintain: The most effective way of preserving a building, old or new, is through appropriate ongoing maintenance. With regular maintenance, the need for more drastic measures, such as replacement, is often reduced.

#3. Repair: Character-defining building elements and architectural features should be preserved through repair and rehabilitation rather than replacement or removal.

#4. Replacement: Only when a feature is too deteriorated to repair should it be replaced "in kind." Use the same materials, scale, and detailing.

Procedures and Submissions

The purpose of this handbook is to establish specific criteria by which the Natchitoches code enforcement officer and the Historic District Commission and staff can administer the provisions of the city's historic district ordinance. The guidelines contained in this handbook place the burden of response on the applicant rather than on the City of Natchitoches or its Historic District Commission. The intent of these guidelines is not to inhibit individual initiative, but to define the arena in which individuals can operate without diminishing the collective architectural integrity of the historic district.

The Historic District Commission is charged with considering the effect that a proposed project would have upon the exterior architectural features of a property, especially as seen from a public street or right-of-way, as well as upon the general historic and architectural character of the district. Design review does not extend to the interior spaces of a building.

The Commission seeks to balance the city's public objective of community preservation against the financial ability of a property owner or applicant. An applicant who claims economic hardship must be prepared, however, to adequately demonstrate that claim and assume the burden of proof in such cases.

Reviewable activities include new construction, reconstruction, alteration, restoration, rehabilitation, additions, and demolition of a building or structure.

CHAPTER 1: GENERAL PRESERVATION PRINCIPLES

The following general rules, which cover all historic properties whether residential, commercial, institutional, or governmental, should be applied to buildings designated as "pivotal", "contributing" or "marginally contributing" within the Historic District and to buildings designated individually on the National Register that stand outside of the District.

1. Don't remove or alter historic architectural features or materials.

- These features include qualities indigenous to the historic style of the building (e.g., porches, roof shape), examples of skilled craftsmanship (e.g., turned columns, brackets), or original materials.

- It is recommended that the restoration of historic building materials should be completed under the direction of craftsmen or design professionals with specialized skills in building restoration.

2. Use approved technical procedures for cleaning, refinishing, and repairing historic materials.

Some cleaning methods and repair techniques can do damage to the original materials of the building, thus hastening their need for replacement and resulting in increased costs to the owner.

- Consult the Technical Bulletins available through the City's Community Affairs Department, the National Center for Preservation Technology & Training at NSU, or the Technical Assistance Division of the National Park Service.

- Always use the gentlest method available to clean a building's surfaces.

3. Repair rather than replace historic features where possible. If replacement is required, replace as little as possible and match the original.

- Patch, piece-in, splice, or otherwise upgrade the existing material using recognized preservation methods wherever possible.

- Save the original material, where possible, and replace only those portions beyond repair.

- Where replacement is required, try to match it to similar pieces on the building, or use historic photographic documentation to replicate it.

- Use original materials where possible. Substitute materials, such as fiberglass models of wood cornices, are acceptable if they match the form and perceived texture and color of the original.

4. Where no evidence exists of the exact shape of missing details, a simplified design is preferred to conjectural period applications.

- The design should be consistent in massing, scale, material, and color with the original.

5. Original Materials and details should be restored when feasible.

- Inappropriate coverings, such as asphalt shingles over wood siding, should be removed and replaced with siding appropriate to the style and period of the building.

- Non-historic alterations, such as the replacement of wood and lattice porch supports with concrete block or other forms of masonry, should be restored to their historic appearances or, lacking adequate documentation of historic appearance, to a simplified alternative (see Rule 4).

6. If you have a business in a former residential building, maintain its residential character.

- The standards for residential buildings apply also to residential structures now zoned (or approved by variance) for commercial usage.

CHAPTER 2: HOW DO I REHABILITATE MY HISTORIC BUILDING?

This chapter, which applies to all historic property types, is organized according to the standard parts of a building, such as walls, roofs, foundations, wall openings (windows and doors), porches, bays, decorative trim, etc.

WALLS: Repairing or Replacing Your Exterior Siding and Trim

1. If you replace any wood siding, apply the new wood siding in a way that matches the original.

- Changing the width of the exposed boards or the corner details will change the appearance and perceived scale of the building, and will not accurately reflect building customs of the period.

2. Do not use cedar shingles, unpainted siding, or board and batten siding (unless it can be demonstrated through documentation that unpainted siding was applied historically to your building).

3. Synthetic siding is discouraged, but may be permitted under the following conditions:

1. The building is not designated as "pivotal," "contributing" or marginally contributing.
2. Original decorative details, such as roof cornices or window hood molding, cannot be removed or covered.
3. Roof eave soffits cannot be covered.
4. Wood corner boards must be retained or applied.
5. Windows and door frames cannot be covered.
6. Imitation brick is not permitted.
7. Synthetic siding is not permitted over masonry walls.

Vinyl, aluminum, and imitation brick do not accurately imitate the materials that they cover or replace. Some brands, however, are better than others. Recognizing the replacement and maintenance costs of wood, the Historic District Commission permits, but does not recommend, synthetic siding subject to the rules above.

Vinyl siding alters the character of an historic structure. Note the inappropriate use of horizontal siding on the columns.

Suggestion: The Historic District Commission recommends the removal of synthetic siding that has been applied over an original building material.

4. Changes in material at exposed corners should occur only at interior corners, not exterior corners.

WALLS: Repairing Masonry Walls

5. Do not remove or radically change the masonry features that are important in defining the overall historical character of the building.

- Features such as brackets, cornices, window architraves (molding), door pediments, and smaller details, like tooling and bonding patterns, help to create the overall look of a historic building.

6. Do not replace or rebuild major portions of exterior masonry walls that could otherwise be repaired and whose replacement would result in a substantial section of unnecessary new construction.

7. Clean masonry only when necessary to halt deterioration or remove heavy soiling.

- Use the gentlest means necessary to clean brick surfaces, such as low pressure water and detergents using natural bristles. High pressure water can damage masonry and mortar joints.
- Avoid chemical products that will damage masonry, such as using acid on limestone or marble, leaving chemicals on masonry surfaces.
- Avoid methods using water or liquid chemical solutions when there is any possibility of freezing temperatures.
- Clean a small unobtrusive test patch to determine which cleaning method is most appropriate.

8. Do not sandblast brick (or stone surfaces) using wet or dry grit or other abrasives.

- Sandblasting will permanently erode the material surface and accelerate deterioration.

9. Do not remove non-deteriorated mortar from sound joints, then repoint the entire surface to achieve a uniform appearance.

- Repoint only where there is evidence of deterioration, such as disintegrating mortar, cracks in joints, loose bricks, damp walls, or damaged plasterwork.
- Remove deteriorated mortar by carefully handraking the joints, avoid using electric saws and hammers.

10. Duplicate old mortar in strength, composition, color and texture.

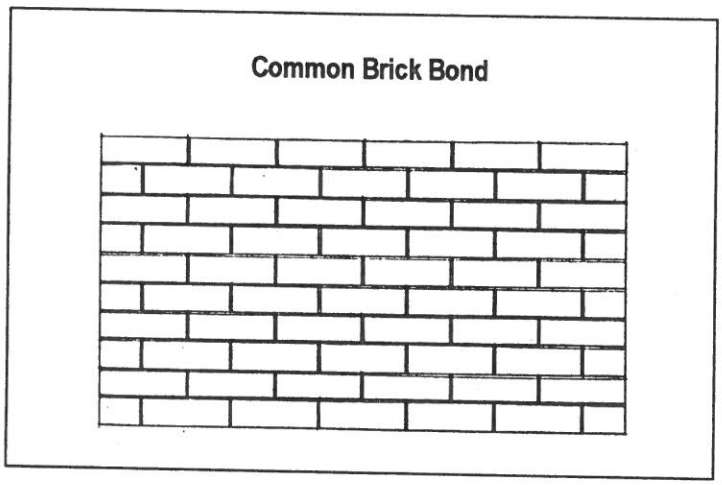
- Avoid mortars of high content Portland cement (unless the historic mortar contained a high content). This condition can create a bond stronger than that afforded by the historic mortar, and can result in the spalling or cracking of the softer historic brick during freeze-thaw cycles.
- Avoid repointing with synthetic caulking materials.

- Avoid "scrub" coating methods to repoint rather than traditional repointing techniques.

11. Duplicate old mortar joints in width and joint profile.

12. If it is necessary to replace bricks, use bricks of similar size, color, texture, and mortar joint width.

- Do not use oversized bricks.
- Install bricks in the original bond pattern.



The Common Bond is widely used throughout the Historic District.

13. Painted brick surfaces should generally remain painted. Unpainted brick walls should remain unpainted, unless it can be documented that the surface had been painted historically.

- Remove damaged or deteriorated paint only to the next sound layer using the gentlest means possible (e.g., handscraping) prior to repainting.
- If the building is currently painted, the paint surface is firm and not peeling, and the bricks below show no evidence of spalling, the building can be safely repainted.
- If spalling is occurring, a solution may be to remove the paint chemically, repair the wall, and apply a better coating, or leave the brick exposed.

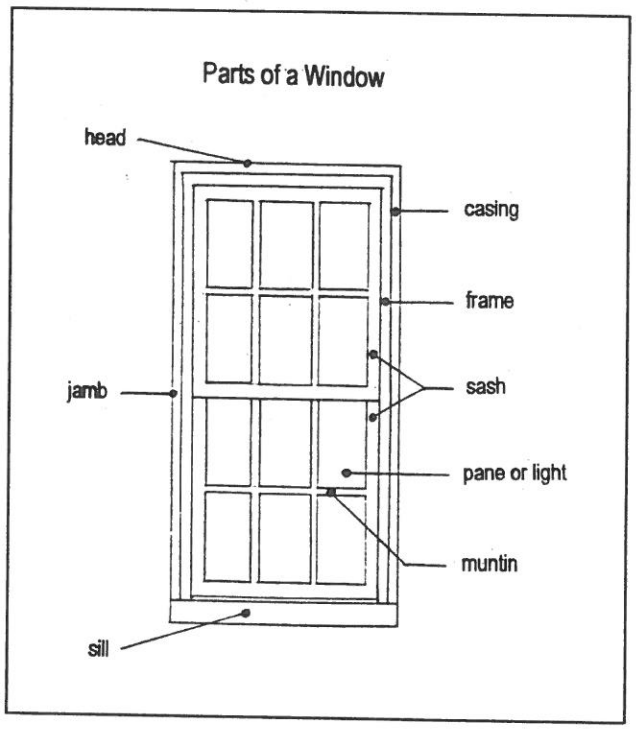
14. Stucco walls should be limited to a sand finish and should be used only where there is historic precedent.

- Stucco should not be used to cover brick unless evidence of its historic use in that capacity on the building face in question can be demonstrated.
- Glass fiber reinforced concrete is prohibited in the Historic District.

WINDOWS & DOORS

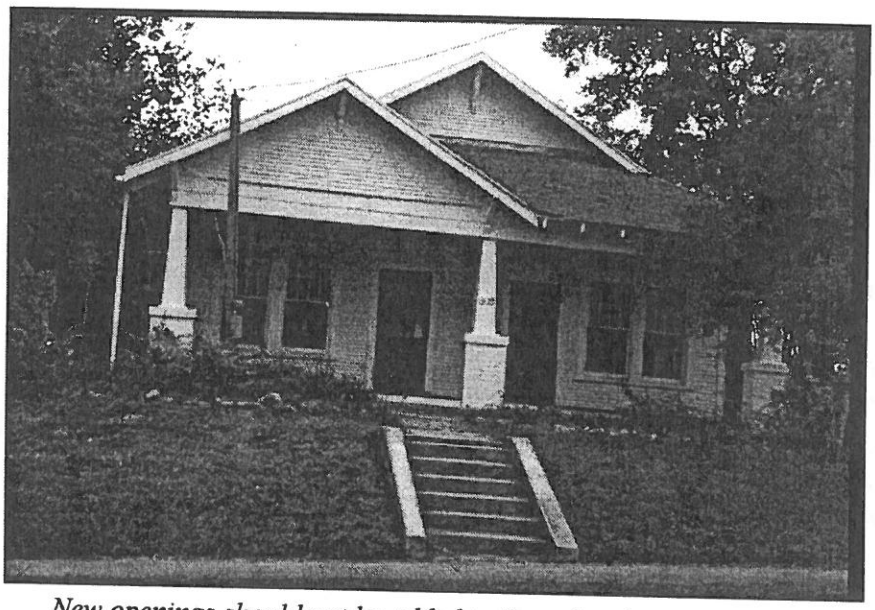
The appropriate treatment of historic windows and doors is one of the most important issues involved in maintaining the architectural character of a building. The guidelines below and throughout this manual recommend the preservation and maintenance of historic windows and doors. When that is no longer feasible, the guidelines recommend replacement in kind.

The placement and size of window and door openings are determinant in the scale, rhythms, and formality of a building. New openings in a wall alter those qualities. Historic windows and doors should be preserved in their place.



1. Do not change the location of historic windows or doors.

2. Do not add new windows or doors to facades that face streets.



New openings should not be added to front facades of buildings.

3. In residential buildings that are subdivided into a larger number of units, new doors should not be visible from any street.

- New openings in historic walls are not recommended in general, and are prohibited on facades visible from any street.
- Where recent changes have altered original window or door openings, restoration of the original placement is encouraged.
- Oriel windows cannot be used to replace a historic window sash in facades that face streets.
- Picture windows and sliding glass doors are prohibited on facades that face streets.

4. Maintain the original window and door size and surrounding trim.

- Do not decrease the original opening to accommodate smaller windows or doors.
- Do not enlarge the original opening to accommodate larger windows, oriel windows, or sliding glass doors.

5. Retain original doors wherever possible.

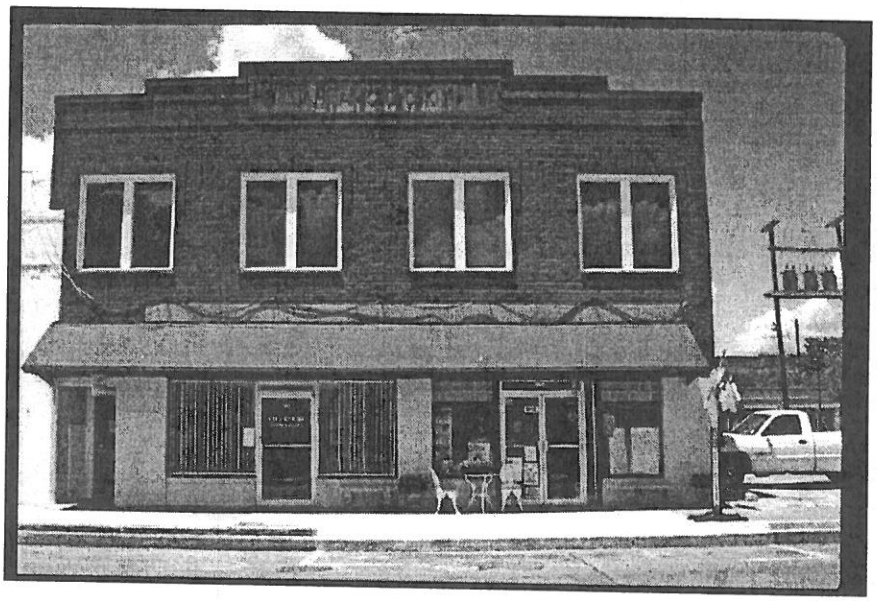
- When replacing doors, use designs similar to those found historically on

comparable buildings in the Historic District.

Most windows in the Historic District are double hung, which means that they have two balanced sashes, one sliding over the other vertically. If these windows are changed to casement or sliding windows, the appearance of the building will be significantly altered.

6. Retain the window type indigenous to the historic style of the building.

In a window, each sash is divided into panes. The number of panes in each sash determines if a window is called six over six or two over two, etc. Thermal windows were not invented when the historic architecture of Natchitoches was built. Wood double-glazed windows, when containing multiple panes of glass, have trouble matching the muntin and mullion sizes and sections of historic windows.



These second story windows are inappropriate for an historic commercial structure.

7. Maintain the historic sash subdivisions and frame divisions of windows.

- Replacement windows should replicate historic windows in the number of panes, approximate muntin and mullion profile, and color.
- Wood windows are preferred.
- Vinyl-clad wood windows and steel windows are acceptable if approved by the Historic District Commission.

- Metal windows must use baked-on colors that match the window trim. White is usually preferred.

- If metal or vinyl-clad wood windows are installed, maintain or replace the wood window trim in kind.

8. Wooden window frames, if original to the building, must be maintained on any building facade visible from a street.

Metal and vinyl-clad wood windows are only permitted for building facades not visible from a street. If approved for these locations, metal windows must match the size and the shape of the original openings and the arrangement of the original panes. Metal sashes should have a baked-on color, like white, or be painted a color that matches the window trim. If metal windows are installed, maintain the wood window trim.

9. Removable or snap-in muntins are unacceptable in any facade visible from a street.

10. Tinted glass is not permitted in windows and doors in restorations, additions, or new construction.

- Stained or leaded glass is permitted if it has historic precedent in the building, or if it is inserted into walls that do not face streets.

11. Use wooden storm and screen doors and windows.

- Baked enamel metal doors are permitted (as long as the raw aluminum is not exposed) if colored to match the primary door or trim color.

- Shiny or anodized doors and windows or metal louvered doors on entrances visible from the street are prohibited.

- Storm or screen doors with excess ornamentation that would not have been typical of the period of the building are prohibited.

Because the historic division of window panes lends scale to a facade, and because applied storm windows (as opposed to thermal windows) generally do not have subdivisions:

12. Install storm windows on the interior where possible.

- This technique is most feasible on upper-story windows in the Central Business District.

Most measures that provide security will not affect the appearance of your building. These may include adequate exterior lighting (in conformance to lighting restrictions of the ordinance), strong locks for windows and doors, and framed trees and shrubs.

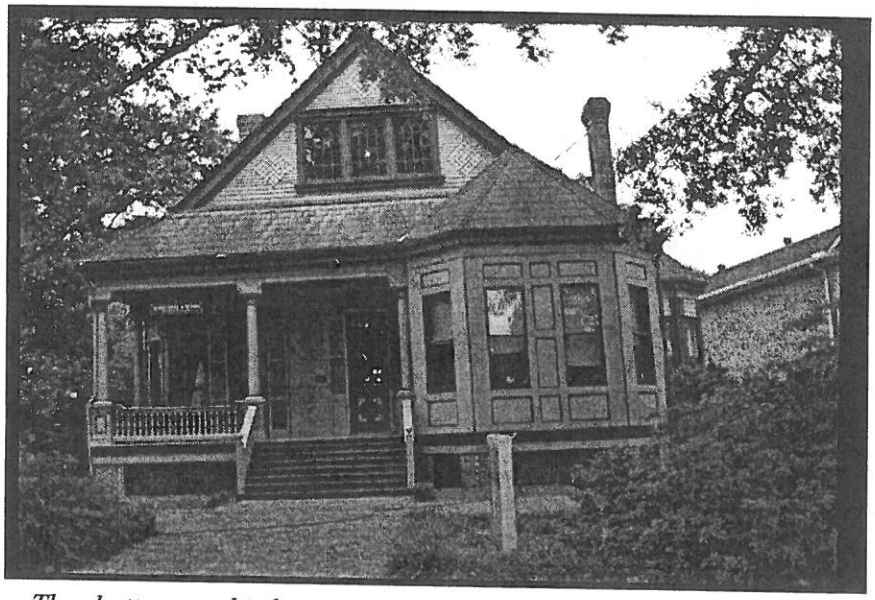
13. Security measures, other than labels giving notice of such systems, should not be visible from streets.

- Bars and gates must be approved by the Historic District Commission, and are permitted only if painted a color that matches the window framing or sash.

SHUTTERS

14. Historic shutters should be preserved or replaced in a fashion consistent with historic precedent.

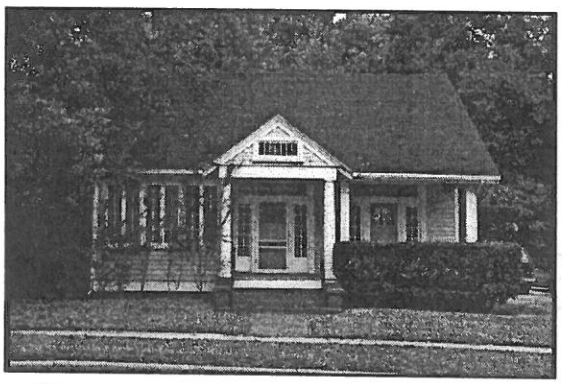
- The removal of shutters alters the appearance of a building. Shutters serve as accents and can offer protection against the climate.
- If no shutters exist but there is evidence (from historic photographs or metal hinges) that they once did, then owners are encouraged to replace them.
- Shutters are not permitted on buildings or windows where there is no evidence that they once did exist.
- The shutter design should be based on historic photographs, or from neighborhood houses of the same style and period.
- Historically, shutters were built to fit the size of the window openings. Even if new shutters are installed for appearance only, they must appear as though they work, and they must match the size of the openings.
- Shutters should be mounted on the inside casing of the window frame.
- Shutters should be fabricated of painted wood, not vinyl or aluminum.



The shutters on this house are functional and historically appropriate.

ROOFS

Historic roof shapes and individual elements, such as chimneys, gables, window dormers, steeples, and domes, are important visual features in the Historic District. The buildings of Natchitoches exhibit a wide range of roof shapes, including front gable, side gable, cross gable, hipped, and pyramidal.



There are many examples of gabled roofs in the Historic District. The building on the left has a side gabled roof and the building on the right has a front gabled roof.

1. Preserve the original roof form and design.

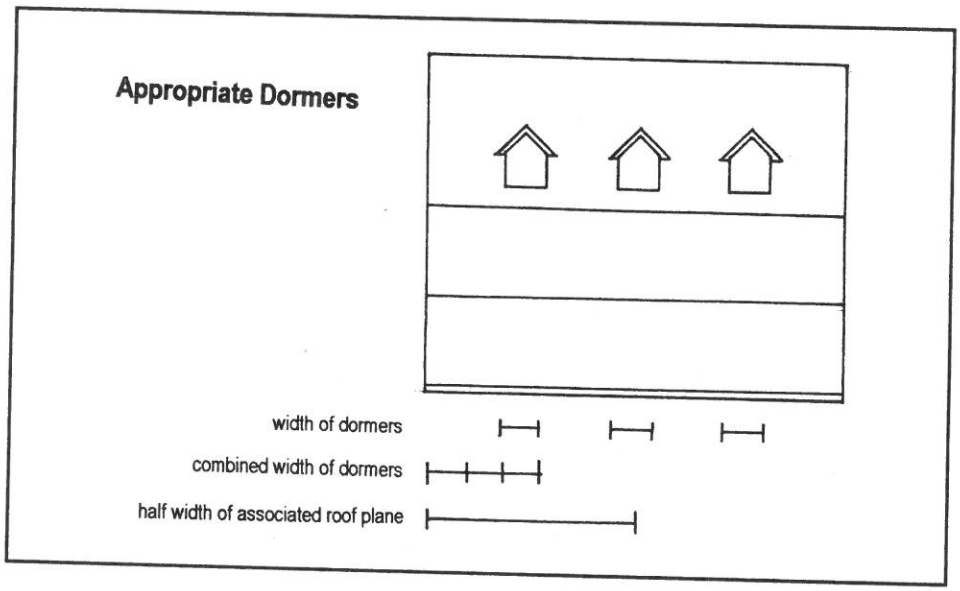
- Avoid altering the shape or slope of the roof.

2. Preserve original roof materials where feasible. When replacing your roof, select a material and a pattern that is historically appropriate to the Historic District and your house.

- Retain and repair roof material that is in good condition.
- Where replacement is necessary, use materials, unit sizes, shapes, and colors similar to the original.

3. Dormers of historic buildings should be maintained in their original size and shape on facades visible from streets.

- New dormers on the non-street sides of a building should be consistent with the use of dormers in the historic architectural style of the building in form, size, roof shape, slope, and detail, and should be set back at least two feet from the primary facades so that the original roof line is perceived from the street.
- The combined width of dormers on any given roof plane should not exceed one-half of the entire width of the associated roof plane.



4. Use gutters and downspouts similar to those employed historically.

- Replacement in a similar material to the original is recommended, but substitute materials are permitted. Match the size and profile of the replacement to the original as closely as possible.
- Galvanized steel is more durable and corrosion-resistant than untreated steel, and is recommended. Painted aluminum is permitted.

- Where gutters or downspouts are being added to building locations that did not have them, match them in size and profile to other gutters and drain spouts on the building.

- Where gutters where not used originally on the building, use simple shapes to minimize their visual impact. Half-round gutters are preferred.

- When gutters and downspouts are being added to a facade, place them so that they do not become visually prominent in the composition of the facade, and so that they do not obscure important architectural details.

- Gutters and downspouts should be painted to match the trim of the building, unless there is historic precedent to the contrary.

- Gutters and downspouts are part of a good drainage system. Install them so that they convey water away from the roof and foundation.

5. Flat skylights are permitted, but not to exceed 3% of the horizontal area under the roof to which they are installed.

- Bubbled or domed skylights are not permitted.

- Skylights are not permitted on street sides of a roof if visible from sidewalks or the opposite side of the street.

6. Chimneys should be consistent in placement and material with historic patterns in the Historic District.

- If repairs are necessary, match the original materials, colors, shape, brick pattern and details as closely as possible.

- Interior chimneys may be removed as part of a proposed alteration only if changes in plan configuration require it.

- Replacement chimneys should be reproductions of original chimneys based on historical photographs or comparables from buildings of the same type.

- Boxed wood chimneys are not permitted.

- Concrete block chimneys are not permitted in the Historic District unless stuccoed, and then only if there is precedent for stucco chimneys attached to the style and exterior wall material of your building.

7. Place vents for wood stoves, double-lined flue fireplaces, or new furnaces on interior, side, or rear walls.

- Chimney stacks for new flues should be of a material consistent with chimneys in the neighborhood.
- Chimney stacks should not exceed heights required by building codes or typical of similar structures in the District – whichever is greater.

PORCHES

Porches are one of the primary defining architectural elements in the Historic District. Almost all styles of building employ them. Important as a visual and decorative element, they are also valued for providing shade and a human presence on the street. Porches also provide a smaller, human scale element between sidewalk and building. Their general character, including columns, balustrades, steps, roof shape, and architectural detail, should be preserved.

Porches are very important to the historic character of residential neighborhoods. Original materials and details should be maintained or restored whenever possible.

1. Maintain the original porch or stoop on your house where feasible.

- Replace missing columns and railings where necessary to be of similar size and shape to the original.

- Match the original proportions and spacing of balustrades.

2. Use as much of the original materials and ornament as possible if repair or restoration is necessary.

3. In most cases, use wood for porch details and structural parts, including steps and foundations.

- Other materials, including stucco, brick, and poured concrete, are acceptable only if they can be documented as being used on the house originally or at an early date.

- Concrete blocks, pipe columns, other poured masonry, or masonry units are not permissible as visible structural supports for porches without historic evidence as to their previous use. On porches where skirting using latticework or other details were historically employed, these materials can be used to screen masonry structural materials. Latticework skirting requires a frame of a size consistent with precedents in the Historic District. Lattice spacing should not exceed the width of the material used.

4. If porch replacement in whole or part is necessary, reconstruct it to match the original in form, detail, and size.

- Use materials similar to the original wherever feasible.

The cast iron railing and iron poles on this porch are inappropriate.

- Do not use decorative elements not known to be on your house or others like it. Likewise, don't oversimplify the design.

5. Enclosed porches that face the street are not permitted.

- Enclosed porches change the scale of a house and separate the porch from the active streetscape to which the porch contributes.
- Enclosed porches are permitted on sides of the house that do not face streets.
- When historic porches are enclosed, design the enclosure to be recessed from the] supporting posts and railing so that the original form of the porch is perceived.
- Enclosures should generally appear darker than the original porch elements themselves, much as a shaded porch would appear, in order to set off the original porch configuration.

6. Screened porches are not recommended, but are permitted subject to certain conditions.

- When historic porches have screens added, design the screen detail to be recessed from the supporting posts and railing so that the original form of the porch is perceived.

7. A new porch may be added if a house belongs to a type to which porches have been attached historically elsewhere in the district.

- A new porch must be similar in character to those found on other buildings of the same type.
- The house in question must have a front yard setback sufficient to allow the porch to fall within the front setback rules for additions and new construction.

FOUNDATIONS

The raised base of many buildings and porches is often exposed to public view. Their construction and appearance, therefore, are important parts of the streetscape worth preserving and maintaining.

1. Use the same materials if it is necessary to replace any foundations.

2. Use appropriate materials for enclosing foundations.

- Use the material historically associated with your building. Often in Natchitoches, that is a wide horizontal baseboard.
- Do not use concrete blocks, cedar shingles, plywood, or corrugated metal, as the exterior cover for the lower level of your building or porches.
- Where walls differ from foundations in material, precedents for the combination in the Historic District must be cited.

ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS

Each style of architecture has a distinctive set of details. Even the simplest details contribute to the character of a building.

1. Maintain the original architectural details on your building. Do not confuse styles.

- If replacements are necessary, duplicate the existing details that can be documented as being used on your house or on similar house types and styles.
- Do not add architectural features representative of other architectural styles. Consult the Historic District Commission for guidance.

SITE DESIGN

1. Fences facing streets should be transparent in nature and not exceed 42" in height.

The predominate fence material, historically, was iron, which should be used whenever possible. There are other fences such as picket, brick, brick with chain, and native stone, all of which are acceptable provided they meet the height requirement. When iron is used, the design must be traditional, not modern or abstract. Iron and masonry fences/walls are not recommended for modest vernacular frame-constructed homes.

- "Brick and chain" fences historically consisted of a chain rope, and is not to be confused with contemporary chain-link fencing.

- Do not use chain-link, barbed wire, unpainted redwood, post and rail, "manufactured" wood, vinyl lattice, concrete block (unless plastered), plywood, hardboard, or asbestos board for fences in the Historic District. Do not use rough cedar or stockade fencing for fences visible from the street.

- All wood fences visible from the street should be painted. Picket fences are the preferred wooden fence type within the district. At no time should vertical boards that are set edge to edge, forming a solid barrier, be allowed to face a street.

- Vinyl is not a permitted substitute material for wooden fencing.

2. Landscaping can protect and add to the historic character of the district. The following recommendations should be followed when selecting landscaping designs and materials.

- Select plant materials that are conducive to growth in the Natchitoches area. The Department of Agriculture has divided the United States into nine growing regions, the boundaries of which are determined by the means of the average annual minimum temperature for the region. Natchitoches is located in USDA Zone 8. It is recommended that all plant material should be either native to the region or grow successfully in this zone. Plants from Zone 9 can be used, but will die back during the winter.

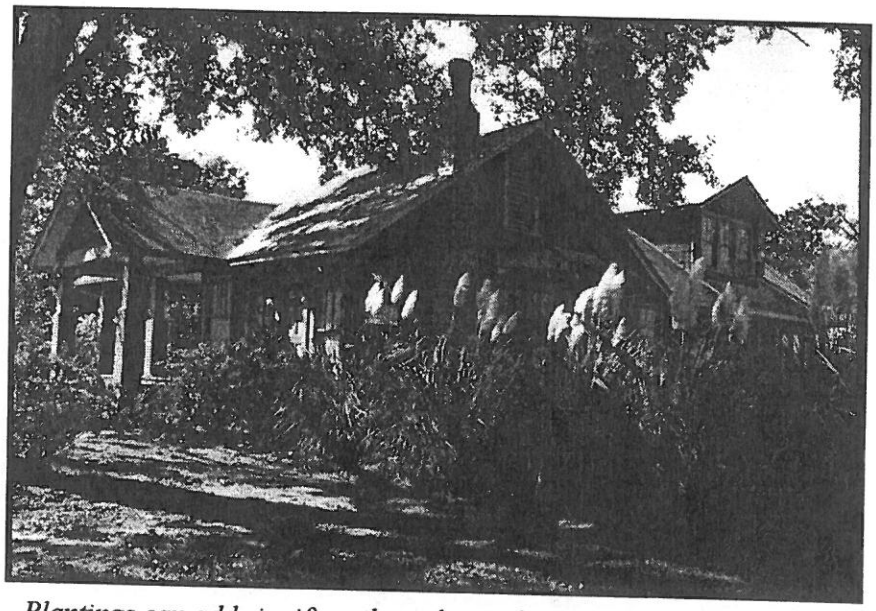
- Removal of trees and other permanent plantings from the City's right-of-way in front of your building requires approval by the Historic District Commission.

- Removal of trees with a trunk diameter of more than 8 inches (measured 36" above grade) from your property requires approval by the Historic District Commission.

- Do not use plants that will overcome the adjacent plant material. Plants such as Variegated Privet and Tall Glossy Privet or Wild Honeysuckle are prohibited for use within the Historic District.

Install landscapes to support or accent the "architectural" qualities of the associated building. Plant materials should be selected for the appropriate color, texture, size, and shape that is appropriate for specific locations at the foundation or in the yard.

- Determine the ultimate size of the plant to be used in the landscape to insure that it will not block windows or doors.



Plantings can add significantly to the quality of the Historic District.

- Avoid strongly "geometrically" shaped plants that conflict with key building elements. For example, "cone shaped" plant material points toward or leads the eye upward. Low horizontal plants are typically "rectangular," and serve nicely as foundation plantings. See ***Figure 1***, on the following page, for an illustration.

- Symmetry in design means that balance is achieved by using the same or geometrically equal elements on each side of a given line. In most cases, avoid using symmetrical plantings as this can result in visually monotonous landscapes. However, symmetrical planting schemes are recommended when associated with symmetrical architecture (classical building forms such as Greek Revival, Federal, and Neo-Classical).

Suggestions: When planting shrubs at the foundation of a commercial building, it is best to limit the number of species to one or two. A single hedge with one or two species keeps the landscape looking uncluttered and clean. In parking areas, additional varieties can be used at the entry points.

Business owners should be encouraged to use hanging baskets and pots with draping foliage under roof overhangs. Not only do the plantings add beauty, but they tend to bring the scale of the often high canopy down to something that feels more personal and intimate. However, a minimum height clearance of 7'0" must be maintained. The baskets should also be spaced in such a manner that they do not appear visually cluttered. The recommended distance between two baskets containing plants is 8'0" on center.

3. Locate off-street parking to the side or rear of the site.

- Parking should never be located between the building and the street in either residential or commercial districts.

- Driveways in the residential district should be no wider than 10'0" within the front yard.

Parking in front yards is prohibited in the Historic District, even when buffered by planting.

4. Materials used for walkways and driveways should be consistent with the historic palette of materials used within the District.

- Brick is recommended as a primary or accent paving material. As an alternate to brick, consider interlocking concrete pavers that accurately simulate brick. Limestone pavers can be used economically and with the same visual quality that brick offers.

- Exposed aggregate and stamped concrete imitating brick are prohibited as paving materials within the Historic District. Glazed tiles are permitted, but not recommended. Aggregate has no historic precedent, and stamped concrete stained to look like brick looks unnatural and is difficult to patch. Glazed tiles become slick when wet. They are permitted if produced specifically for outdoor use.

- Loose gravel with a brick or concrete edge is permitted for paved areas, including

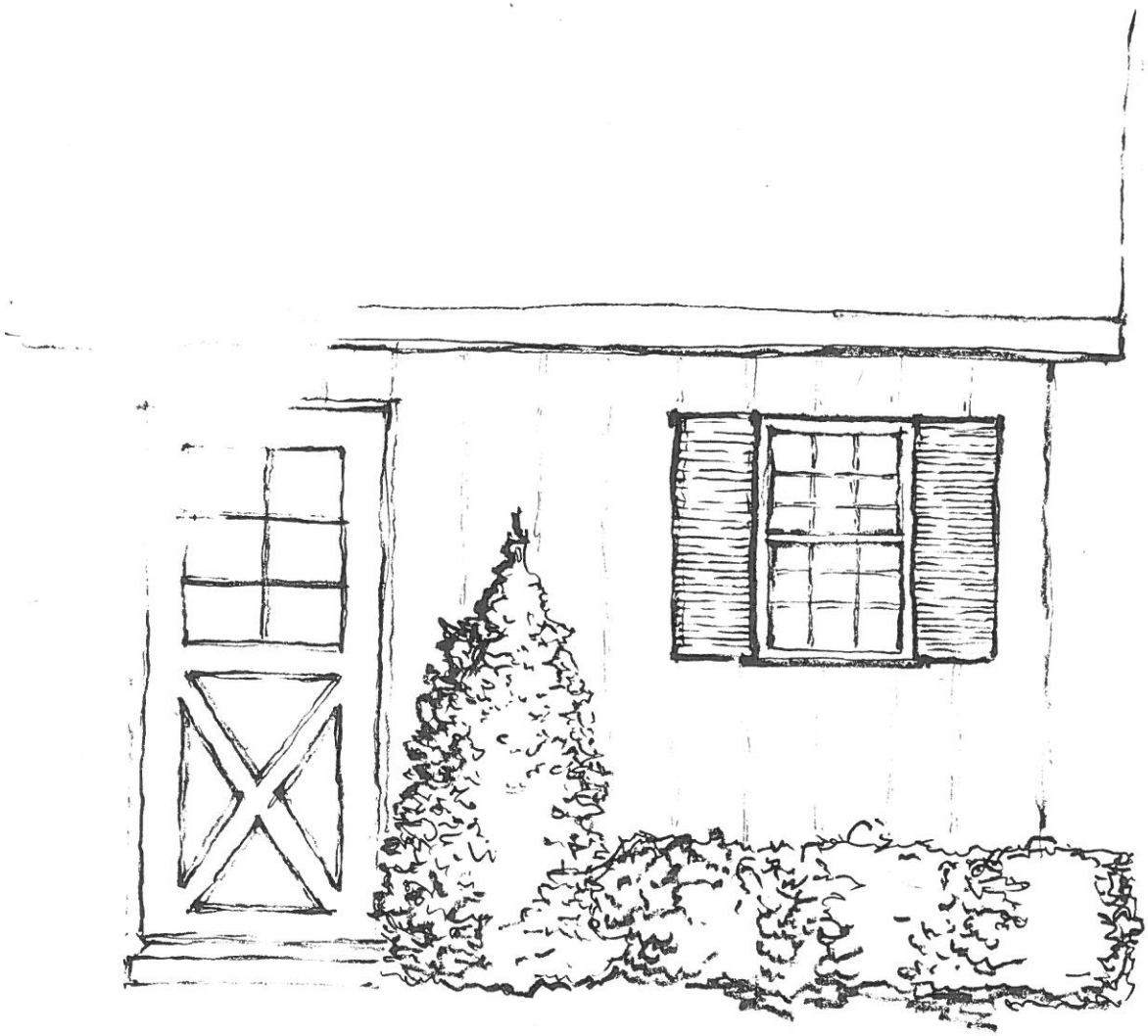


FIGURE 1: Landscaping Materials

small parking areas not heavily used. There are several advantages to using loose gravel, including the relatively low cost when compared to concrete or asphalt; the percolation of water through the surface, which, in turn, lessens runoff; the low heat gain compared to concrete or asphalt; the ease in which utilities can be accessed when placed below the gravel; and the most historically accurate appearance. Acceptable gravel types include grated cut stone (granite) and brick cinder (River Rouge rock).

To insure that the gravel keeps its manicured appearance, a firm border of brick, concrete or other similar material must be used for every 200 square feet of gravel (20' x 10' is a typical parking stall size for an unpaved and unstriped lot). A cement setting bed (11/2" min.) over 4-5" of finely crushed stone should be used to secure the border material. See ***Figure 2***, on the following page, for an diagram illustrating this.

Where the gravel meets an organic surface such as grass or planting areas, a 1/8" x 4" metal edging or a vertically placed "in-ground contact pressure treated" 2 x 6 can be used as edging. Landscape timbers which are properly treated to prevent rotting are permitted, but railroad ties and other untreated materials are not permitted. See ***Figure 3***, following *Figure 2* for a diagram of this cross-section.

- The number of brick patterns used within one property is recommended to be limited to no more than two. Historically, basket weave, herringbone, and running bond brick patterns were predominate. These patterns were often bordered with a rolok of brick or stone. In order to maintain the simplicity of design and eliminate visual confusion, it is best to use one brick pattern with a border, or a running bond and rolok combination. See ***Figure 4***, following *Figure 3*, for samples of brick paving patterns.

- Walkways extending from the street edge perpendicularly into the property are recommended to be no less than one-half the width of the associated building entrance. A minimum of 4'0" width allows a person to be assisted if necessary, but walkway widths should be determined by the width of the entry into the structure. Natchitoches houses built in the 19th century were usually entered through a porch or verandah supported by columns. The distance between the columns dictated the width of the steps and, ultimately, the walkway.

- All driveways within the residential district should be no wider than 9'0" within the front yard. On heavily traveled roads with higher speeds, this width can be extended to 12'0" for the driveway apron (first 10'0" of distance off of the road) for driving safety reasons. Approval must be obtained from the Historic District Commission for any new or expanded driveways or parking areas.

Suggestion: When brick is used as a paving material, the brick should be one that is resistant to deterioration caused by water penetrating its surface, and it should be properly

installed. Several of the older bricks used in building construction were manufactured using a mixture of very fine clay and sand. These brick types that have been removed during building demolition have become available on today's market. The most common of this type brick is known as "Old Chicago," and is popular for its blend of colors. This brick and those similar should not be used as a paving material because they deteriorate rapidly from water dropping onto the surface. Also, brick should be installed on a bed of sand rather than on concrete. While this will result in some degree of differential settlement, it will look more historically accurate, it makes utility access easier, and it improves drainage.

5. In the Historic District, lighting is recommended in areas that experience heavy pedestrian traffic and in areas that, if un-lit, would be unsafe, such as stairs, ramps, and abrupt changes in grade.

- All landscape lighting in residential areas that is visible from the road is required to be gas, incandescent, or halogen not exceeding 75 watts. The intensity of the light determines the ambiance of the surroundings, so it is best to keep residential lighting subdued. When using light to accent an architectural feature, the wattage can be increased to no more than 150 watts.

- Low level path lighting (18" or less) is prohibited in yards facing streets. This type of lighting is out of character in historic areas, as it did not become popular until the late 1960's. Post lamps are recommended for lighting walkways.

Suggestions: Lighting fixtures should be placed so as not to present glare. Most eye-levels are between 3'8" (for wheelchair users) and 6 feet. Lights should also be shielded to prevent glare.

Avoid the use of low-voltage (12 volt) lighting for pathways. The number of lights required to adequately light a pathway can draw too much attention. It is often more cost effective and aesthetic to use 110 volt lights.

Lighting placed high in the tree's canopy is encouraged. A soft moonlighted effect can be achieved by concealing shrouded lights within the branches of the trees. These lights should be pointed both up and down, especially if the branching pattern is very interesting.

Landscape lighting should be used to accent the architectural features of a building. Shrouded flood lights not exceeding 150 watts can be fixed in a position to highlight entries or other key elements of the structure.

Landscape lighting should be used to accent a particularly interesting plant. Plant texture can transform an ordinary shrub into a piece of sculpture when correctly lighted. Place lights under the plant or light it from an obscure position.

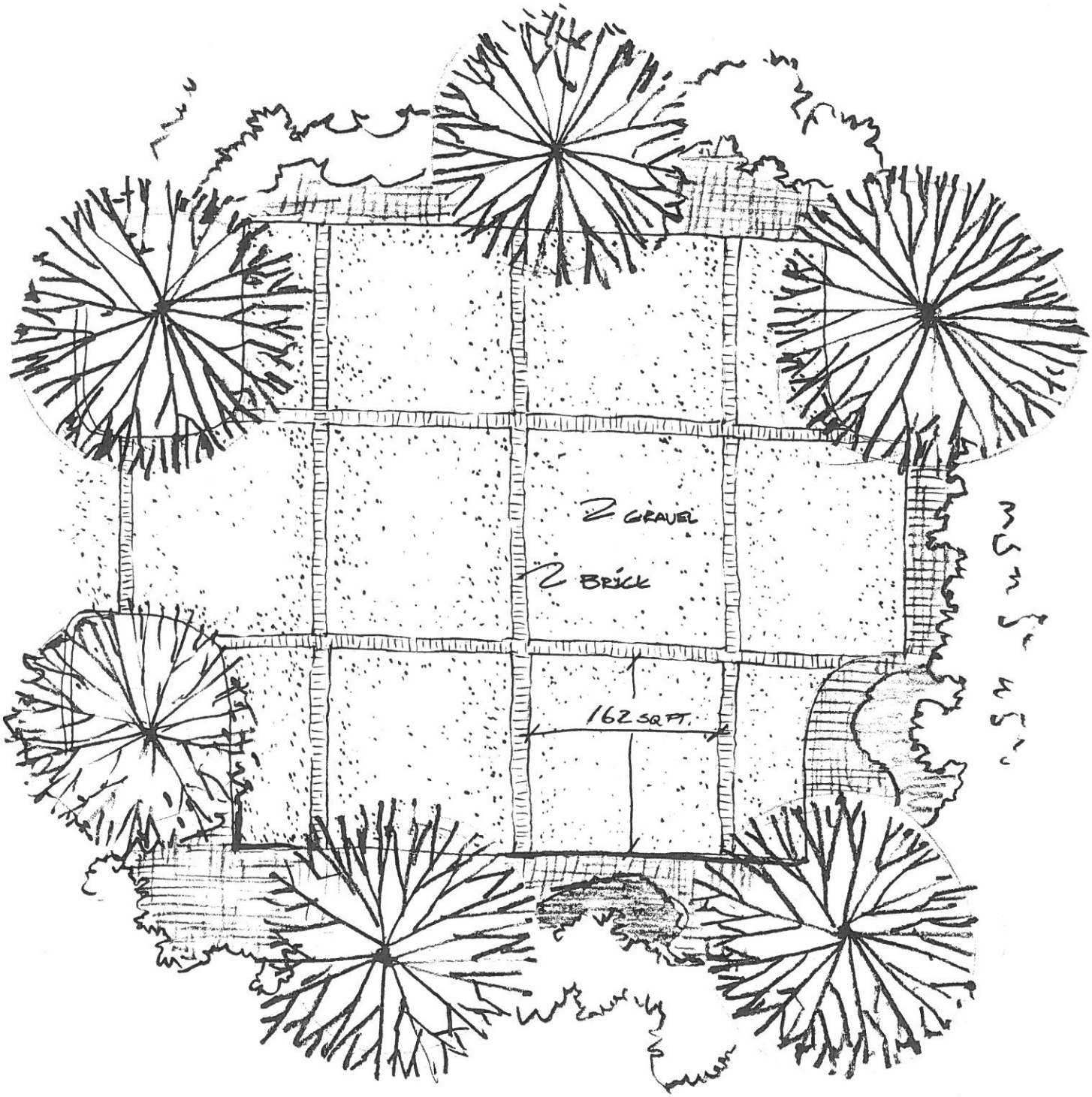


FIGURE 2: Gravel Parking Area Standards

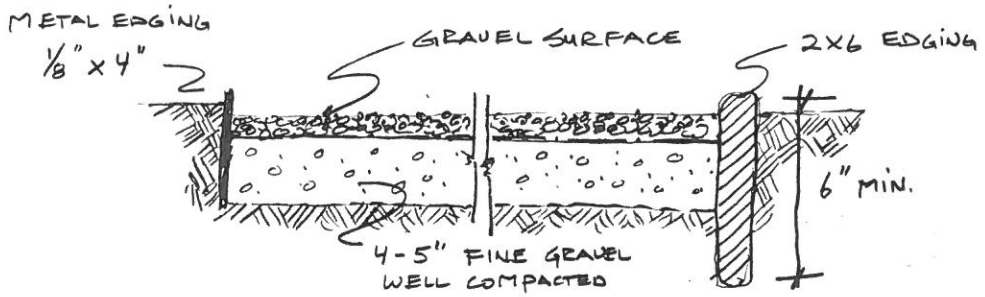


FIGURE 3: Gravel Parking Area Cross-Section

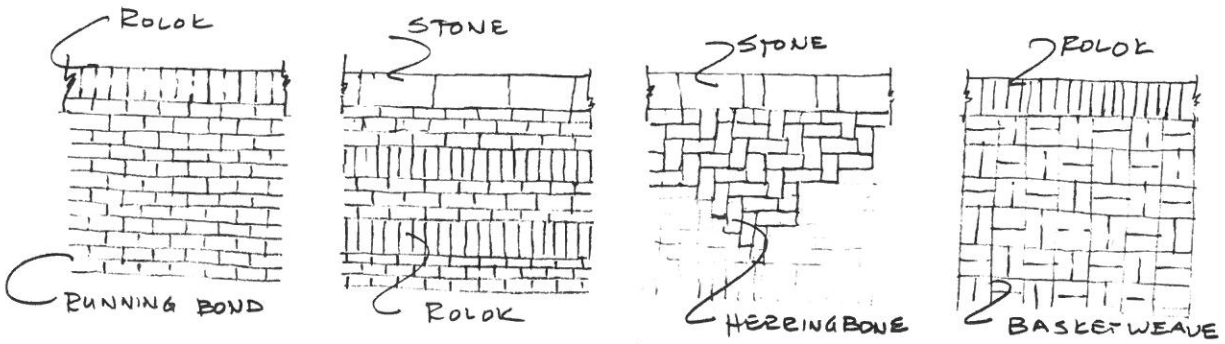


FIGURE 4: Brick Paving Patterns

6. Locate service areas in the rear of the property.

- The visual impact of mechanical, electrical, and trash disposal systems should be minimized. Commercial trash or dumpster areas must be screened with visually opaque walls or fences, 5'0" to 6'0" in height, from streets and abutting properties. The materials that are acceptable for this purpose include: brick, concrete with a stucco/plaster finish, stone or a combination of brick and wood. The chosen materials should be compatible with the architecture and materials of the associated building. Landscape screening is permissible, provided it provides year-round screening (evergreen) and does not impede the removal of refuse.

PAINT AND ROOF COLOR

1. The color of paint or stain that you can use on your building is subject to a special administrative process of the Historic District Commission.

When materials are replaced, repaired, or repainted, or when additions are made to a property, the Commission requests that wood surfaces be painted or stained and that masonry surfaces be left their natural color if they have not been stuccoed. Acceptable colors for the Historic District are kept on file at the City of Natchitoches Community Affairs office, and can be viewed there during business hours.

Applicants shall submit photographs or scaled drawings of the front, sides, and rear of their building, accompanied by paint (or material) samples for siding, trim, roofing, and any accent colors proposed for use, to the Historic District Commission. A panel of two people – the Chairman or appointee of the Chairman of the Historic District Commission and a staff member of the Community Affairs office – will review the colors submitted. If they concur that the colors match, or are sufficiently close to those on the approved list, they will grant administrative approval. If the two members of the panel disagree with one another, or if they concur that the colors submitted should not be approved, the applicant has the option of submitting the application to the full membership of the Historic District Commission.

If you are having difficulty in selecting colors, the best approach is to drive or walk through the neighborhoods looking at other buildings and noting color combinations that you prefer. You will notice, too, that it is important for paint colors to blend with the neighborhood. Very dark colors, too many colors on one building, or stained surfaces are very obvious and do not harmonize with surrounding buildings. Remember that the colors that you paint your house or commercial building will have an impact on your entire block.

2. Use color schemes that will complement other buildings nearby.

- Look to see if colors used by others on the block may be incorporated in your scheme. This will help to tie in with others on the block. "Mix and match" colors from several nearby buildings in your color scheme; don't simply copy one building entirely.

3. Use color to coordinate facade elements in an overall composition.

- Use only one base color for the majority of the background wall surface. Base colors should be muted earth tones or pastels (except in the case of Victorian structures). Look for "built-in" features of the facade that can be highlighted with an accent color. Window frames, sills, molding, and cornices are potential elements to dramatize with a contrasting color.

4. Reserve bright colors for accents only.

- Use bright colors only in small amounts. On commercial buildings, place them at the first floor level to direct the customer's eye to the business. Consider accent colors for signs, awnings, and entrance doors. Earth tones will hold their color well, as will darker pastels. Check for color stability in ultra-violet light; some colors, such as red, tend to be unstable and will shift in hue over time. Oil-based paints tend to be less stable in color than latex paints.

5. Roof colors are subject to Historic District Commission approval for sloped roof surfaces.

- The color of the existing roof should be considered when selecting a color scheme. When installing a new roof, choose a color in the range of grays and blacks (unless a metal roof is used) that will be adaptable to any future color changes on the building.

- Metal roofing may either be natural metal or painted. If painted, only subdued shades of red or green should be permitted.

CHAPTER 3: ADDITIONS TO SIGNIFICANT BUILDINGS

Within the context of these guidelines, "significant" buildings include those designated as "pivotal", "contributing" and "marginally contributing." An applicant for new construction or an addition must demonstrate to the Historic District Commission that the construction will be compatible (in terms of scale, massing, proportions of facade openings, site placement, and materials) with either: 1) the significant historic buildings adjacent to or abutting the site; 2) or, in an instance where the block in which the site is located contains a variety of architectural styles, with one of the more common styles found along the block. The intent of this requirement is not to encourage the design of historical replicas, but to promote a compatibility of design that safeguards the architectural character of the historic district.

Note: Additions to non-significant properties (non-historic or badly altered historic examples), are judged primarily for their visual impact on nearby properties. Additions will generally be recommended if their size is minor in relation to the total structure, or if they do not significantly increase the existing visual incompatibility between neighboring historic properties and any existing non-significant property that detracts from the district's character.

In some cases, additions or alterations were made to historic structures that have become a part of the historic composition. The most obvious examples are porches and kitchen wings added to houses.

1. Preserve alterations that have achieved historic significance in their own right.

2. Do not obscure the original building entry when making an addition.

- Open porches do not violate this rule. Enclosed front porches do.

3. Recent additions that are not historically significant may be removed. These often do not possess architectural or historical significance and may be removed to restore or rehabilitate the original facade if, desired.

4. Additions should appear as additions attached to the original building. They should not be confused with the original structure.

- Additions should not simply extend the recognizable volume of the original building.

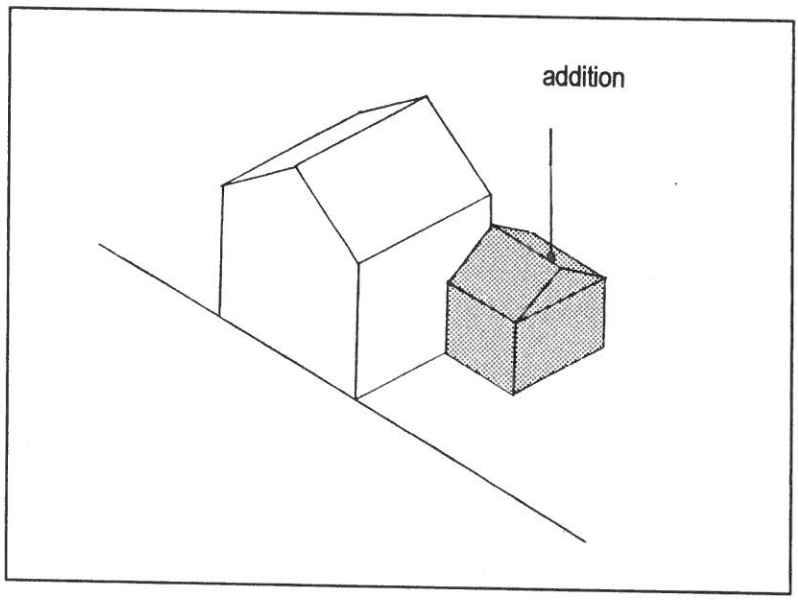
- Set additions back from primary facades, or set them apart from the main building and connect them with a "link."

5. Additions should be made distinguishable from the historic building while remaining visually compatible with its earlier features.

- Additions need not replicate the historic buildings. Rather, they should be sympathetic to them.
- Through proportion, linkage, color, materials, rhythm of openings, and/or form, the addition can differ from the original in some but not all qualities.
- It is recommended that the color of residential additions match the color of the original building.

6. Residential additions should be visually subordinate to, or simply smaller than, the main building.

- Set back residential additions from the front facade by at least 10 feet, or make the addition to the main building obviously smaller in scale and set back that secondary mass by at least 5 feet. The intention is to protect the visual and symbolic dominance of the original historic building.



7. Roof shapes on additions should be consistent with the style of architecture of the main structure.

- Look at the roof forms of secondary structures historically attached to buildings of this style (porches, smaller wings, etc.). For example, gable roofed buildings generally had additions with gables or sheds.

- Roof slopes should be roughly consistent with those of the primary structure.

- Because of moisture, few roofs, even on commercial buildings, are flat. They are typically shallow pitched hip roofs hidden behind a parapet wall. Additions to these buildings should follow that same pattern.

8. Roofing materials used on additions to historic buildings should be compatible with the materials used on the existing building.

9. Additions must respect the historic setbacks of buildings on the block.

10. An increase in height in historic commercial buildings must be accompanied by a setback from the original cornice line of at least 15 feet at street-facing facades.

- Additions in building height are permitted in commercial districts subject to the zoning limits and height guidelines set forth under the guidelines for New Commercial Construction.

- The addition of an extra floor hidden behind a mansard roof is not permitted.

11. The addition of projecting bays, oriel windows, or other additions that may be incompatible with the style of the historic structure should be avoided.

- Bays may be permitted, however, on "picturesque" building styles, including Victorian and other late 19th century "picturesque" styles.

12. The height and massing of chimneys on new additions should not exceed those of the original building.

CHAPTER 4: NEW CONSTRUCTION

There is always a tension connected to the challenge of designing new infill construction in historic districts. In practice, many architects are torn between the creation of contemporary looking structures, which may have little to do with the context of their neighborhood setting, and the exact replication of a historic style. These guidelines seek a fine balance between those two extremes. While contemporary design is perfectly acceptable in other contexts, it is often found to be visually jarring within a historic district when the new building is incompatible and inconsistent with traditional building patterns established within the district. On the other hand, many preservationists and historians disapprove of the slavish replication of a historic style, arguing that the practice creates a false sense of history and discourages the public's ability to distinguish a genuine building from an imposter. The ideal then, though always a design challenge, is to create a new building that may be interpreted as a product of its own time, while, at the same time, creating architecture that respects the contextual design traditions that went before it.

In general, an applicant must demonstrate to the Historic District Commission that the construction will be compatible (in terms of scale, massing, proportions of facade openings, site placement, and materials) with either: 1) the contributing historic buildings adjacent to or abutting the site; 2) or, in an instance where the block in which the site is located contains a variety of architectural styles, with one of the more common styles found along the block. The intent of this requirement is not to encourage the design of historical replicas, but to promote a compatibility of design that safeguards the architectural character of the historic district.

1. Maintain the typical orientation of entrances to the street.

- Orient the main entrance of buildings to the street, not to side yards.

2. Select building materials that are in keeping with materials seen on the block.

- Use similar materials. For masonry walls, use bricks of a similar size, color, and texture to those historically used – do not use concrete block (unless stuccoed), reflective surfaces, jumbo brick, faux used brick, or old "Chicago brick" in varying hues. Brick should always be of a single color.

- Historically, wood was painted. Do not use unpainted wood surfaces.

- Aluminum, vinyl, and other synthetic siding surfaces are prohibited in new construction.

3. Use roof shapes and orientations similar to those found on historic or contributing buildings of similar use (e.g., residential, commercial, institutional) in the historic district.

4. The roofing material and color on new buildings should be consistent with the prevalent roofing material of the neighborhood.

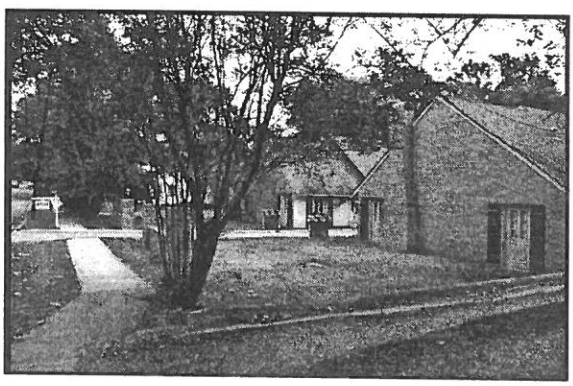
5. Compliance with health and safety codes and handicap access requirements shall be carried out with a minimum of impact to the historic character of institutional and commercial buildings.

NEW RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION

Lot widths in Natchitoches' districts vary. This leads to the possibility of conforming to the city's zoning setbacks and building code while still designing a building that looks out of place because of its site location and its massing along the front of the building lot.

1. Maintain the traditional size, proportion, and height of historic facades along the block of the building site.

- New buildings should have similar widths and heights as those historic or contributing buildings found on the block front.



The setback and proportions of these gable-end walls are at odds with the area's historic development pattern.

- The maximum width of your building at the required setback line should not exceed the widest building of similar roof type on a historic or contributing building on your blockfront.

- No residential building in a residentially zoned district shall exceed a height of 2 ½ stories.

2. Regardless of the existing zoning, new residential buildings in a historic district should not exceed the height of the tallest residential (historic, contributing, or marginally contributing) building within the district.

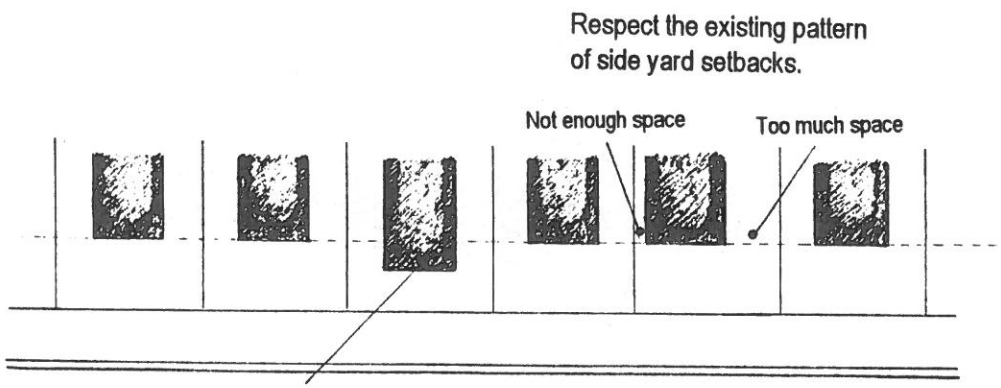
3. Maintain the historic patterns of front yards.

- On blocks where buildings are set back, new buildings should be set back consistent with the prevailing front yard depths for historic and/or contributing buildings on that block.

- Specifically, a building's setback should preferably be the same as either of its abutting neighbors, or less preferably at some dimension between the two. If one of its neighbors is a historic or contributing structure, then the new building should conform to the setback of that neighbor or be between that setback and the average setback of historic and/or contributing buildings on the blockfront.

- If three or more of a new building's neighbors to one side align more or less precisely, then the new building should conform to that alignment.

Front and Side Yard Setbacks



4. On-site parking in residential areas should occur in the side or rear yard.

- Parking shall not occur in the front yard, nor shall there be circular driveways or other access patterns not commonly associated with structures in the Historic District.

5. Maintain the historic orientation and dimension of porches.

- Use a palette of materials, styles, and dimensions of elements found on historic porches in the District.

6. Use ratios of windows to walls on street facades that are similar to historic structures.

- Feel free to open up the other facades of the building as you see fit.

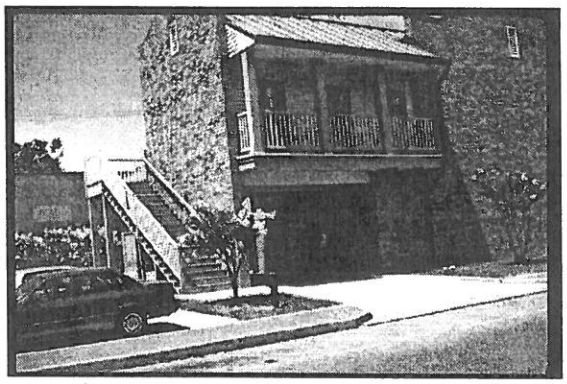
7. Use window types, proportion, and alignment typical of the historic district.

- Most windows are double hung and vertical rather than horizontal.

8. Gable roofs generally run parallel to the street. If a gable is to run perpendicular to the street, it should have secondary roof elements in front of it to soften the geometry.

NEW COMMERCIAL CONSTRUCTION

Within the context of Natchitoches' architecturally strong and visually coherent Historic District, it is especially important for new construction to fit into the established urban pattern. Unfortunately, some of the downtown's larger commercial developments of the last 30 years have turned their backs on traditional "Main Street" development practices, following a suburban site planning ideal rather than an urban one. The result has been a diminution of the downtown's historic character around the edges – buildings out of scale in floor size and height with historic structures, buildings pulled back from the property line to create plazas and yards, vast surface parking lots, and self-consciously "modern" facades that retain little of the scale of the Historic District. The guidelines below are intended to correct that trend. These guidelines supplement those set forth in chapters 1 and 2 – "General Preservation Principles" and "How Do I Rehabilitate My Historic Building?"



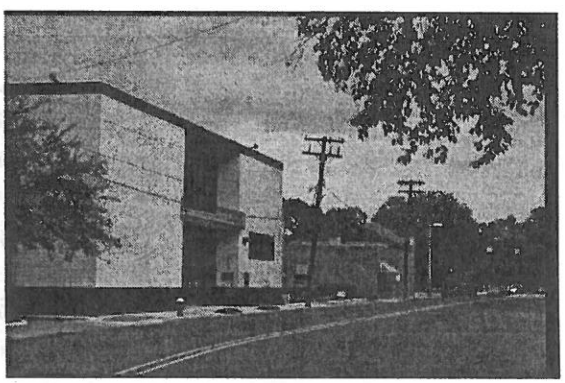
The new commercial structure to the right is a misrepresentation of an historical building typology.

Storefronts

The storefront used to display goods and services is often the most immediate advertising tool available to a small business within the commercial district. Effective presentation of a business image has always been critical for any merchant. For those reasons, storefronts have been historically the most prominent feature of commercial buildings, and the parts most likely to be remodeled over time. Within the context of a downtown historic district, however, a storefront restored to its period appearance often presents an attractive and progressive image.

While most 19th and early 20th century styles produced their own variant on the basic storefront, all historic styles shared certain key elements. These usually included large display windows, divided by columns or piers, a wood or metal kickplate that the glass rested on, recessed doors (single or double, depending on the style of the building), a signband (sometimes the lintel between the first and second floors), and, in some styles, transom windows.

The multi-step approach recommended below aims at conserving or restoring key architectural elements of the historic storefront and the way in which commercial buildings present themselves to the street.



New buildings should be sympathetic to historic structures in their massing, window patterns, and choice of materials.

1. The street facades of new commercial buildings should follow the vertical striation of historic commercial structures by having a base, middle, and top.

- Vertically, the building shall have a base (which, if it contains a store, shall follow the guidelines for storefronts), a middle (if it is three or more stories in height), and a top (in the form of a cornice or distinctively designed false front parapet).

2. The heights of new commercial buildings in the downtown B-3 District should reinforce the historic pattern of building heights.

On Front Street, Second Street between Touline and Lafayette Streets, and all those streets bounded by these streets:

- No building shall exceed a height of three stories or 45 feet, whichever is less.
- One-story buildings are not recommended within this district unless there is precedent on the blockfront of historic or contributing one-story buildings.
- Commercial buildings in B-1 or B-2 districts should not exceed the height of the tallest historic or contributing residential structure on the streetfront of which they are a part.

3. Setbacks in commercial districts should reinforce historic patterns.

Front Yard Setbacks

- In the B-3 downtown commercial district, buildings shall be built to the front property line.
- Special institutional buildings, such as houses of worship, governmental buildings, and schools, may all have greater setbacks consistent with those found for such uses in the Downtown B-3 district.

Side Yard Setbacks

- On Front Street and St. Denis Street between Front and Second Streets, buildings shall be built to their side property lines.
- On other streets within the B-3 District, buildings shall conform to the prevailing zoning (i.e., 5 feet minimum setback).

Rear Yard Setbacks

- Rear setbacks shall be permitted to conform to the prevailing pattern on the block or the prevailing zoning (i.e., 25 feet), whichever is less.

- B-2 Neighborhood Commercial uses should conform to the residential setback patterns of the blockfront(s) of which they are a part. Parking should occur in side or rear yards, never in front yards.

The continuity of the pedestrian retail experience is a critical factor in downtown revitalization.

4. At least 70% of the ground floor streetfront of commercial buildings in retail districts shall be glass.

- Office buildings or uses on retail streets must conform to the 70% rule.

- Kickplates should account for the bulk of the non-glass area. Alternating floor to ceiling glass and masonry is discouraged as a means of conforming to this rule.

Historically in Natchitoches, upper floor windows were taller than they were wide, because of the limit of masonry and wood lintels to span the opening. In the modern era those structural constraints disappeared as steel was used for lintels and masonry became a facing material. Such windows look out of place in Natchitoches' Historic Districts.

5. Windows in upper floors of new commercial structures should be taller than they are wide.

6. No parking is permitted between a new commercial building and the street(s) it faces. The same rule applies to B-3 structures outside the Central Business District.

7. Non-canvas awnings intended to shade sidewalks shall either be suspended from the building facade by cables or supported by cast iron pipe columns or decorative wrought iron columns.

- Awnings shall be attached to, never cantilevered from, buildings.

- The awning itself should be of lightweight materials consistent with historic

precedent. Heavy timber awnings are incompatible, although heavy timbers are occasionally used for balconies.

- Pipe columns supporting awnings should not exceed the diameter of those used on historic structures in the District (approximately 4"), and should be round, not square.

- Non-canvas awnings are generally flat, pitched only enough to shed water.

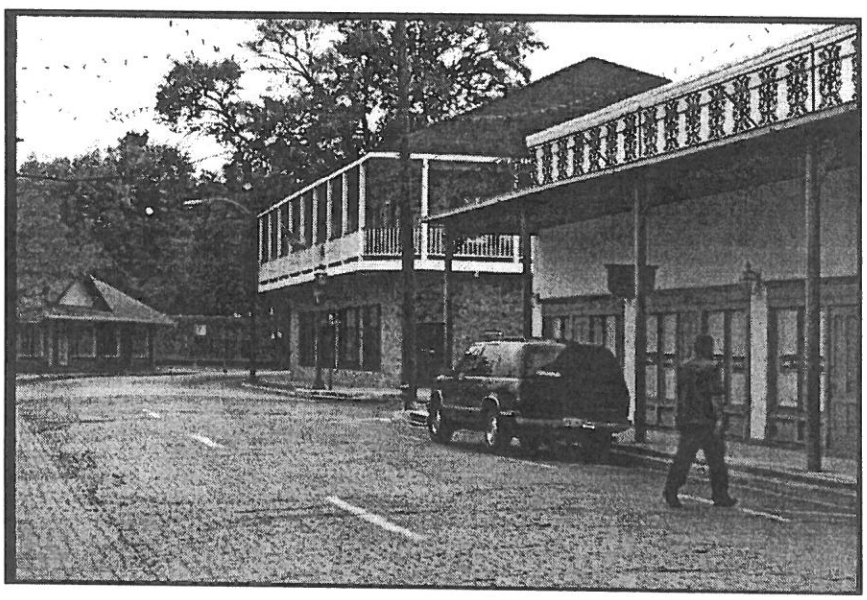
- Shingled shed or hip awnings with or without columns are inappropriate.

- Canvas awnings are permitted at the discretion of the HDC.

8. Balconies should be supported from the ground up by pipe columns, wrought iron, or heavy timber.

- Balconies should never be cantilevered from any floor of a building.

- Balconies should be able to cite historic precedent for their specific design, although variations may be approved by the HDC in wrought iron patterns and balustrade design.



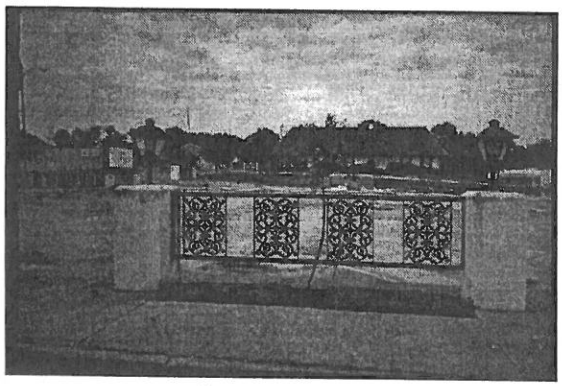
The building in the middle of this picture has good intentions, but the balcony should be supported by columns rather than being cantilevered.

CHAPTER 5: PARKING LOTS AND STRUCTURES

PARKING LOTS

1. No single parking lot may exceed 50 spaces. Those uses requiring more parking must be designed with sufficient perimeter screening to constitute separate lots when exceeding 50 spaces, even if adjacent to another lot.

2. All redeveloped or new public parking lots are required to have a perimeter screening of landscaping, fences, walls, or a combination thereof.



Surface parking lots are limited to 50 spaces per lot and require peripheral and internal parking.

This buffer should be a year-round opaque screen of no less than 36" in height. See ***Figure 5***, following this page, for an illustration. This screen should be constructed of any of the following materials:

- Evergreen shrubs which have a mature height of 36" when used as a solid mass. To achieve a taller barrier, small trees such as Crepe Myrtles can be incorporated, forming a translucent screen. The main objective with using plant materials as a screen is to provide a continuous year-round barrier up to 36", but allow a view into the parking lot for security purposes.

- Iron fences (wrought or cast iron) of appropriate style between 3'0" and 5'0" in height and faced with plant materials at the foundation sufficient to create a minimum 36" tall year-round opaque screen.

- A combination of brick columns and a semi-transparent iron fence. Wood panel and lattice fences are not permitted in the Historic District.

- Decorative picket fences between 36" and 42" in height are appropriate, and they should be painted. This type fencing is more closely related to residential areas rather than commercial areas.

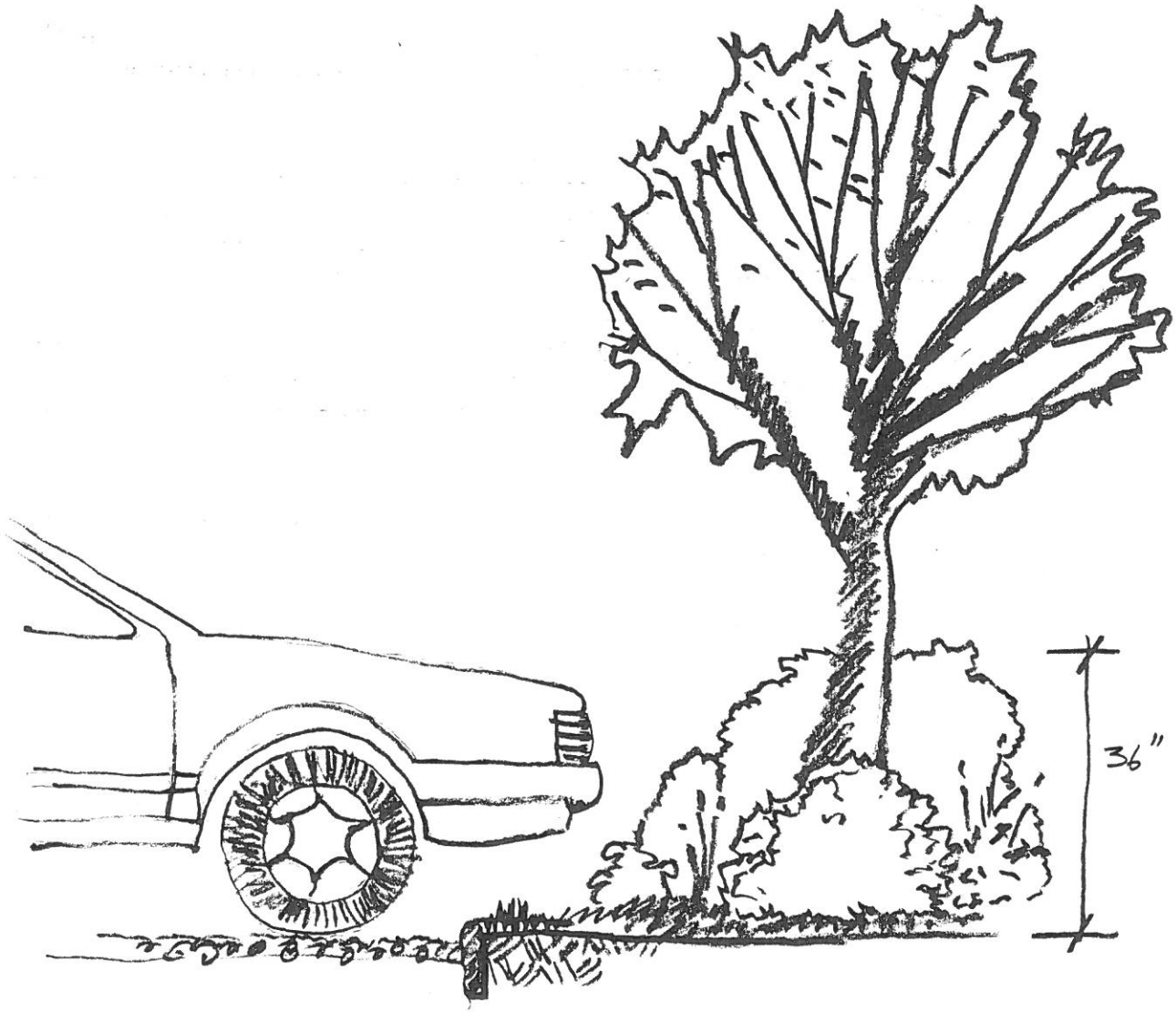


FIGURE 5: Parking Area Perimeter Screening Standards

3. In perimeter landscaping, there should be one shade tree for every four parking spaces along the perimeter of parking lots.

If the perimeter is constructed of a material other than landscaping, the tree should be located in a planted island equivalent in size to approximately one paved parking space (162 sq. ft.). See ***Figure 6*** on the next page for an illustration.

4. In exterior landscaping within the interior of parking lots, there should be one planted island (no less than 162 square feet) for every ten parking spaces. See *Figure 6* for an illustration.

5. All parking spaces within a parking lot should be delineated clearly.

In parking lots constructed of something other than concrete or asphalt with paint-striping, the spaces can be defined by using a secondary material. For example, in brick parking lots, the spaces can be defined with a rolok pattern or with 4" ashlar cut limestone or a similar stone. Another way to delineate spaces in gravel lots is the provision of small metal or wooden bollards (vertical posts not exceeding 4' in height) along the peripheral edge of the parking area that are aligned with the delineation of parking stalls.

6. All parking areas should be adequately maintained.

Property owners shall repair large cracks and pot holes in a timely manner. Those property owners that have unpaved areas should be encouraged to use a gravel mat at least 4" in thickness, with a fabric mat underneath to prevent weed growth.

PARKING STRUCTURES

1. Parking structures shall not exceed the height of the tallest abutting historic or contributing building on the same block frontage, or 4 stories, or 36 feet, whichever is less.

- The height of a parking garage shall be measured from the sidewalk to the top of the parapet wall at the top floor of the garage, along whichever street the elevation is highest.

2. All parking structures shall be designed with horizontal floors.

- Sloped floor parking is prohibited in the Historic District.

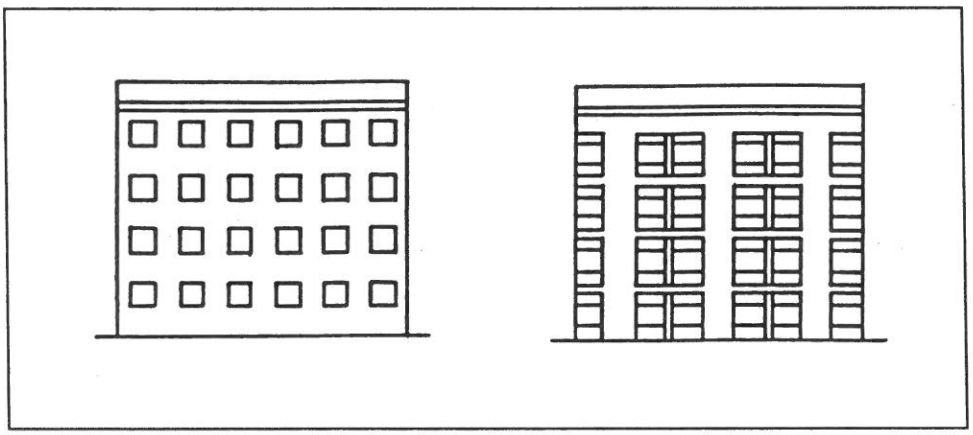
- Ramps to upper floors should not abut public streets, but should be internal to the building or abut adjacent structures or lanes.

3. Continuous horizontal openings between floors are prohibited. It is intended that garages in the Historic District be designed to contribute to the historic character of the district.

- Openings in street walks should appear as "punched" openings in a solid wall or as spandrel pieces between vertical piers.

- No opening of more that 12'6" in width is permitted without some vertical member subdividing the opening.

- Piers, if used, are required at intervals not to exceed 30 feet on center. The width of the piers shall suggest that they are capable of supporting the building. Single or paired openings between piers are acceptable. *See illustration.* Recessed horizontal panels (screening cars between floors) are encouraged in order to accentuate the vertical dimension.



4. Walls and parapets of at least 3 feet in height above parking level should screen parked cars from public view.

- At the top floor, the parapet should be decorative in nature, per parapets and cornices in the Historic District.

5. Parking structures shall have exterior walls of brick, stucco, or pre-cast concrete panels with a stucco finish.

- The color palette shall be sympathetic to commercial buildings within the Historic District.

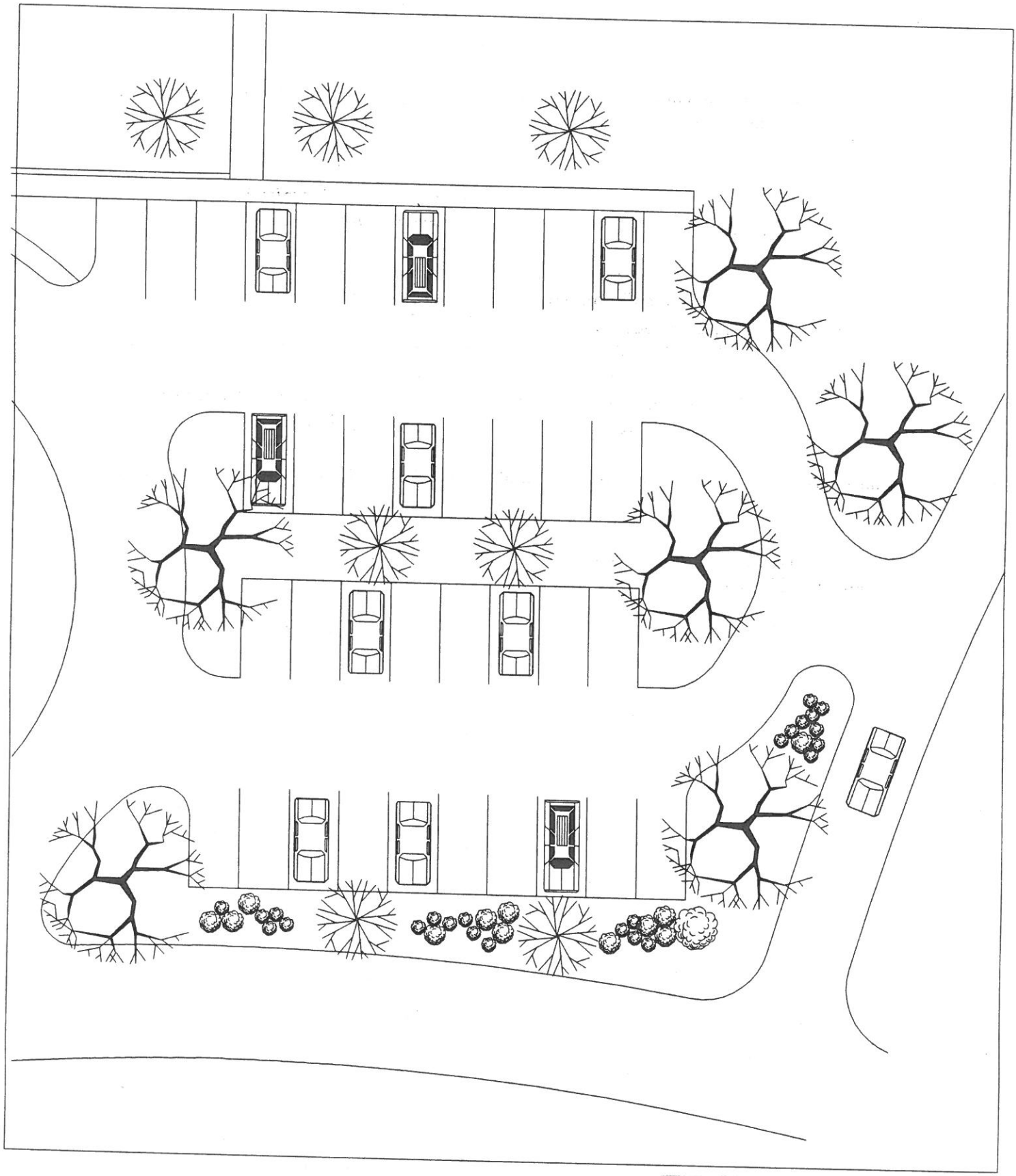


FIGURE 6: Parking Area Perimeter and Interior Planting Requirements

- Lintels, sills, awnings, and other decorative elements are encouraged to animate the facade.

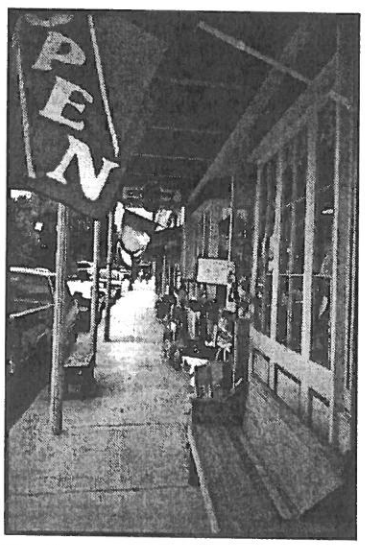
CHAPTER 6: SIGNS AND AWNINGS

In looking at historic streetscape photographs of American cities in the 19th and early 20th centuries, the proliferation and variety of commercial signs is immediately evident. Signs were placed between windows, on roof tops, over doors, between upper floors, hung over the street, suspended between buildings, and painted onto windows and walls. They were striped or bowed, wildly ornamented or carefully understated, shaped fancifully like the product being advertised, or very restrained.

This wide variety was part of the character of the 19th century commercial districts. Yet, despite the sometimes visual cacophony, it's worth noting that the vast majority of the signs were constructed of wood, that most employed light-colored letters (often gold) on a dark background (often black), and that the size of lettering was roughly the same. Although the number of signs has decreased in contemporary cities, there is now often little agreement between signs in materials and lighting, given technological advances.

Today's approach toward regulating signs tends to be conservative. Most communities, like Natchitoches, enforce sign controls through their zoning ordinance. It has generally been found that an over-proliferation of signs can be visually unattractive and confusing. Regarding historic buildings, the removal of certain signs has also been shown to improve the appearance of the building, especially large signs that obscure significant architectural features. For this reason, their removal and replacement with more appropriate signage is encouraged during the process of rehabilitation.

In general, signs should be compatible in style and size with the historic building to which they will be attached. Retaining and restoring historic signs, if appropriate to the style of the building, is strongly encouraged. In general, painted wood or metal signs will be considered most appropriate to the character of the Natchitoches Historic District.



Combinations of sign types can add vibrancy to sidewalk life.

Remember that the storefront facade of a building is as integral to the advertising image of a business as the sign is. With historic commercial buildings, the most effective way to create or improve a business image is not to disguise the building's historic character, but to restore and accentuate it. A sign which compliments this historic character is essential as an image-enhancing device.

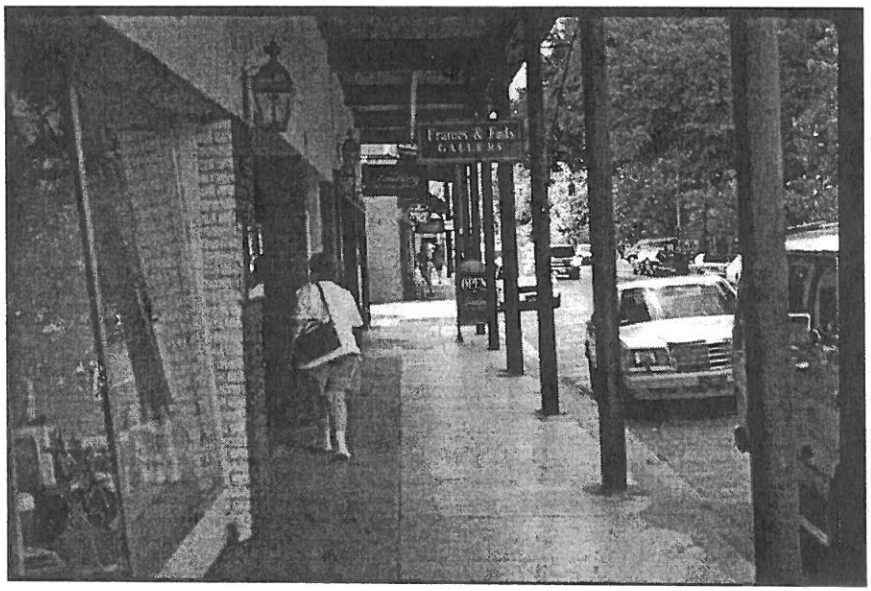
Investing in a custom-made sign with high-quality materials is often no more expensive than a stock-made sign, especially considering

the longer service it should provide. The concurrent use of a unique design or logo may also create an important public image that distinguishes your business from others. Mass-produced signs usually fail to convey that special image.

PERMITTED SIGN TYPES

1. The following types of signs are considered appropriate in commercial areas of the Historic District:

- Projecting signs that project no farther that 4 feet from the primary wall surface.



Projecting and hanging signs do not obscure building facades.

- Facade-mounted signs. Facade-mounted signs are defined as those attached to a building and projecting 5 inches or less from the primary wall of that building.
- Facade painted signs that are painted directly onto a wood surface.
- Applied letter signs wherein individual three-dimensional letters are applied directly to a facade (not contemporary type glued-on or magnetic letters).
- Lettered window signs painted directly on the inside of storefront windows or the upper floors of multi-story commercial buildings.

- Awning signs in which lettering has been silk-screened or stitched to the front and side flaps only of the canvas awning material.

- Free-standing signs of limited size, placed in the front yards of commercially-zoned properties, institutions, or bed and breakfasts.

- Object signs that are two- or three-dimensional and replicate an object associated with the business.

- Temporary banners and flags made of a flexible fabric rather than rigid materials.

- Rear service entrance signs that direct patrons to secondary means of access to establishments.

- Directional signs that direct patrons to on-site parking, where applicable. These are typically small, free-standing or ground-mounted signs located at driveways or in parking areas to direct auto traffic within the site.

- Signs that enclose menus in a small, glass-fronted box.

- "Sandwich board" sidewalk signs, generally made of wood (sometimes utilizing a chalk board), which are placed in front of a service business at an angle perpendicular to the primary facade. These signs are limited to use with establishments that serve food at tables. They <u>must</u> retain a minimum unobstructed sidewalk width of 5 ft. for pedestrian flow.

- Business Directory signs which use a common header sign identifying the building's name or address, followed by smaller business identification signs positioned below, all of which should share a similar design look.

2. The following types of signs are considered inappropriate:

- Flashing, blinking, twinkling, animated, moving signs except public service time and temperature.

- Smoke-, sound-, or vapor-emitting signs.

- Tall, free-standing signs that overpower the scale of the building facade.

- Billboards.

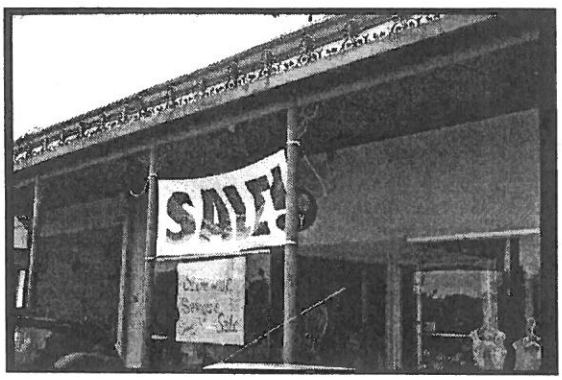
- Signs or projections placed above a building's roof line.

- Internally-lighted signs.

- Temporary signs (other than realty signs or "sandwich board" signs) or temporary flags and banners.

- Signs made of plastic or similar synthetic materials, except as these materials may be used in applied letter signs.

- Fabric or plastic signs advertising specific products, services, or sales that are strung parallel to the outside face of the building.



Temporary plastic signs such as this are inappropriate in the historic district.

- Paper signs attached to the inside or outside of storefront windows (handbills, posters, etc.).

3. Each commercial building in the district is permitted to have <u>two</u> of the following signs:

- 1 free-standing sign (only for buildings with a min. front setback of at least 10 ft.)

- 1 facade mounted, facade-painted or applied letter sign

- 1 awning sign

- 1 projecting or object or banner sign

In addition to the signage permitted as listed above, the following signs are also permitted under certain conditions:

- 1 rear service sign (for any building having a rear service entrance)

- directional sign for parking, with a maximum of two signs per property
- 1 menu sign OR "sandwich board" sign
- 1 business directory sign (only for multi-tenant buildings)

SIGNAGE GUIDELINES

1. Signs should not obscure or hide significant historic features or details, such as windows, doorways, cornices, and architectural trim.

- Wall signs, including facade-mounted, applied letter, and facade painted signs, should be designed to accentuate the horizontal lines of the building facade.
- Wall signs should generally be placed in the traditional position between the first and second floors.

2. No sign of any type may extend above the roof eaves of the associated building.

3. No portion of a projecting (perpendicular) sign may be mounted lower than 7 feet above the sidewalk (or basic grade) and no higher than 25 feet.

- It is recommended that hanging signs are placed near the front door to direct customers to the entrance. Symbols may be used to provide visual interest and memorability.

4. Wall signs, including facade-mounted and applied letter signs (but not including projecting or facade-painted signs), may not be mounted less than seven feet above the sidewalk.

5. The surface area of any sign shall be in direct proportion to the amount of front footage of each ownership and shall be as follows:

- For single-faced signs attached flat against the wall, and including painted wall signs, there shall be allowed thirty (30) square inches of sign surface area for each foot of lot frontage.
- For double-faced signs suspended by brackets or arms perpendicularly from the

wall of a building, the surface area shall be the sum of the areas of each face not to exceed thirty (30) square inches of sign surface area to each foot of lot frontage.

- In the case of multiple businesses operating at a single location, the total face area of signage may be increased to one and a half (1.5) times the maximum stipulated in these guidelines.

6. Free-standing signs shall have a maximum sign area of 10 square feet and a maximum height of 6 feet.

- This restriction shall also apply to free-standing business directory signs.
- Free-standing signs may not encroach into a public right-of-way.

7. Object signs (three-dimensional signs emulating an object associated with the relevant business) shall have a maximum volume of 50 cubic feet, with the addition of one (1) cubic foot per 50 feet of frontage. Object signs shall be a minimum of 7 feet above the sidewalk/grade level.

8. Banners may be parallel or perpendicular to the primary building facade.

- The maximum areas shall be 2.5% of the primary facade area or 15 square feet, whichever is less.
- Banners shall not hang lower than 7'0" above the sidewalk/grade level..
- Banners shall not obscure any architectural elements or detailing.
- Banners shall not impede pedestrian or vehicular traffic or visibility.

9. Directional signs shall have a maximum area of 2 ½ square feet.

- Free-standing directional signs shall not extend more than 2 ½ feet above grade.

10. Rear service signs shall be facade-mounted or facade-painted and should be located near the associated rear entrance. Their sign area size should be no greater than 5% of the total facade area or 15 square feet, whichever is smaller.

11. Restaurant menu signs shall have a maximum area of 2 square feet and be located within 3 feet of the restaurant's primary entrance.

- The sign can be externally illuminated, but not internally illuminated through a translucent material.

12. "Sandwich board" sidewalk signs must be folding in nature and removed at the close of each business day.

- The maximum permitted sign area is 6 square feet
- The maximum height is 4 feet
- When positioned on a sidewalk (within a public right-or-way), they must leave a clear unobstructed sidewalk width of 5 feet, measured from the front facade of the building

AWNINGS

1. No awning or valance (the lowest and vertical portion of an awning) should hang less than 7 feet above the sidewalk/grade level.

- Plastic, rough-sawn wood, and shake or asphalt shingles are not appropriate materials for awnings or canopies. Mansard-roofed canopies are also inappropriate.
- The awning should fit the dimensions of the storefront dimensions. It should not obscure ornamental details or the historic signboard. Generally, the top edge should be aligned with the top of the transom, or just between the transom and the storefront window.
- Awnings should be maintained properly or replaced as conditions require.
- Coordinate the color of the awning with that of the building.
- Installing lighting within awnings so that they function as internally-lit signs is prohibited. This practice distracts attention from the store front window and signboard.

CHAPTER 7: GUIDELINES FOR GENERAL MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR

In all rehabilitation work to historic structures, the methods involving the least amount of intervention are always preferred. Nothing should ever be done to a building that is irreversible. Often the simplest and cheapest approaches, such as a good cleaning of a masonry wall with mild soap and water, are overlooked in favor of costly and complex "high tech" methods. While the course of action required is often low tech, it is usually labor intensive and requires skilled professionals using quality materials. Many historic buildings have been rehabilitated by well intentioned but uninformed owners and contractors, with resulting short term costs but larger long term costs in terms of material deterioration and consequent repair bills.

This chapter is intended to describe to the layman the processes involved in rehabilitating a building. To the owner, architect and contractor it recommends a series of materials to use (and not use) and procedures to follow. These should serve as the basis for contract document specifications, but should not substitute for them.

MASONRY

Virtually all buildings in Natchitoches' downtown and many of the buildings in its historic neighborhoods are made of masonry.

Causes of Deterioration

Deterioration in masonry is caused principally by water. Water can cause deterioration either mechanically, as in the case of frost, or chemically, as in the case of erosion caused by movement of soluble salts. Moisture can either rise in a wall by capillary action, or descend inside a wall by gravity. In addition to ground moisture and precipitation, moisture can be driven into a wall from the inside by condensation when the temperature difference between the outside and the inside is great.

Moisture

Masonry is by its nature a porous material. It is natural for moisture to penetrate the surfaces of the material. Problems occur when this moisture is excessive, or when it becomes trapped within the wall beneath a layer of sealant or paint, or when soluble salts from the masonry or the mortar itself are dissolved and redeposited on, or just beneath, the surface of the wall. Masonry materials of high porosity and low strength are particularly vulnerable to deterioration caused by moisture.

Rising damp can be a problem causing deterioration of masonry units at the base of a building just above the ground. This condition can be noticed usually by an area of

masonry made darker by moisture above which a line of white colored efflorescence often appears.

Efflorescence on other parts of a wall may help to identify the location of a problem. The condition of the roof flashing, gutters, and downspouts should be checked for leaks. Moisture can also enter a building because of improperly tooled or deteriorated mortar joints, caulking, sealants, and other details in the wall itself. In addition, recent changes in interior uses, or in the nature of insulation or interior finishes may result in condensation inside the wall, appearing as efflorescence on the surface. (New masonry, particularly if laid with conventional mortars rich in Portland cement, is subject to efflorescence during the first year or so.) The application of sealers and paint to a brick wall can also serve to trap moisture, not only causing the paint surface to fail, but also causing "blowing off" of the surface of the softer bricks. Masonry should be protected from excessive moisture by proper flashing and overhangs. The application of sealers or impermeable paints to previously unpainted surfaces should not be done without the professional advice of a conservator.

Hard Mortar with Soft Brick or Stone

One of the most common errors in maintenance and renovation work on historic masonry buildings is the use of Portland cement-based mortar. Mortars with large amounts of Portland cement have a compressive strength which is commonly much greater than the surrounding brick or stone. Rather than serving to strengthen the wall, they can cause rapid deterioration for a number of reasons. As a masonry wall expands from hotter temperatures, hard mortar tends to cause a concentration of loads on repointed joints, often causing a fracturing (spalling) of the edges of brick or a crumbling of stone.

Historic lime-based mortars are softer and allow the building to expand (and contract). Cement mortars also shrink and crack, whereas lime mortar is able to reseal itself through the slow movement of its components. Finally, cement mortar is less permeable than historic mortars or masonry, thus forcing moisture to penetrate the adjacent brick or stone. This makes the masonry subject both to efflorescence and damage by freezing. Mortar for repainting or rebuilding masonry should never be stronger than the masonry units themselves. It is a common mistake to assume that hardness or high strength is a measure of durability. A good starting point for most buildings constructed in the 19th century is a repointing mortar mix containing a ratio of 3:4:8 (Portland cement:lime:sand).

Staging Procedures

Problems such as leaking gutters, downspouts or flashing, or vapor penetration from the inside should be identified and repaired before working on the masonry itself.

If the building is to be cleaned, this too should occur before minor repair work or repointing. This will enable a better evaluation of the extent of the damage and the proper matching of materials for repairs. On the other hand, problems extensive enough to

permit water or chemical intrusion into the wall cavity itself during cleaning should be dealt with on a localized basis prior to cleaning. Then the building should be cleaned, and the remaining masonry repaired or replaced and repointed as required.

Cleaning and Paint Removal

For a thorough introduction to the cleaning of masonry structures, refer to "Preservation Brief 1: The Cleaning and Waterproof Coating of Masonry Buildings" and "Preservation Brief 6: Dangers of Abrasive Cleaning to Historic Buildings," published by the Preservation Assistance Division of the National Park Service.

The improper cleaning of masonry is a major cause of deterioration of historic buildings. While it may yield positive short-term visual effects, it can also lead to irrevocable material damage. Few buildings, if any, require cleaning in their entirety. The most important guideline is that cleaning should not be undertaken unless necessary to remove excessive localized staining or a deteriorating paint surface. Cleaning should never be used to remove the natural patina which gives older structures their visual interest and quality.

If it is decided to clean the building, the nature and source of the dirt must be identified, and a series of patch tests conducted to determine the most effective yet least harmful method of cleaning. Proper evaluation of these tests requires a decision on the level of cleanliness desired. A "brand new" appearance is generally inappropriate for an older building and requires overly harsh cleaning methods. Always use the gentlest means possible:

1. *Water:* Low pressure water from a garden hose and use of a natural bristle brush is the preferred method, followed by the use of a mild non-toxic detergent. These often overlooked, simple, cheap, and non-polluting methods are surprisingly effective.

2. *Chemicals:* Chemicals should only be considered after it has been proved soap and water will not work. They are available in a wide range of types with rather specific uses. It is important that all chemicals under consideration are thoroughly tested and allowed to weather in excess of one month to insure that there are no negative side effects, such as discoloration or erosion of the base material. Special precautions must be taken to safeguard adjacent property and parts of the building not being cleaned from chemical pollution.

3. *Mechanical Methods:* Methods using sandblasting, grinders, or sanding disks should never be used. No matter how skilled the operator, erosion of the surface will take place, giving it an unsightly appearance and leaving it significantly more susceptible to erosion.

4. *Poultices:* Localized, hard to remove problems such as rust, spray paint, or other deep penetrating stains may be removed by using a poultice. A poultice is made by mixing a solvent with an absorbent material such as talcum, Fuller's Earth, or Whiting to form a paste, which is then held in place in a manner that allows evaporation of the solvent

("Pampers," or shredded paper are often used). As the process proceeds, the stain is slowly drawn out of the stone and deposited in the absorbent material. The process may need to be repeated several times and may not be 100% effective.

5. *Removal of Mastic:* In many instances, mastic will have been used to attach newer materials onto the masonry, making it difficult to remove and often leaving stains.

If the mastic has become brittle, it may be possible to simply pop it off using a flat chisel, but care must be taken to avoid breaking off part of the surface of the masonry along with it. Chemicals such as acetone can sometimes be used to soften the mastic and allow it to be scraped off. Care should be taken to keep the process from staining surrounding masonry. Applying a poultice a second time may prove effective for removing the remaining stains. If the stains are severe and prove impossible to remove, it may become necessary to replace the damaged stone or brick.

Repointing

Repointing is a time consuming, labor intensive, and therefore expensive task that is of vital importance for the protection of the building. Poor mortar joints left unattended will lead to much more costly and damaging problems, such as the failure of sections of brickwork or moisture penetration into the interior of the building. Only those areas which require repointing should be repointed. Repointing of the entire facade of a building, especially with a new joint profile, should be avoided.

The following comments are condensed from "Preservation Brief: 2", published by the Preservation Assistance Division of the National Park Service.

Visual Examination

All repointing work on historic masonry buildings should be preceded by an analysis of the mortar and by an examination of the bricks and the techniques used in the original construction of the wall. For most projects, a simple visual analysis of the historic mortar is sufficient to allow an appropriate match for the new mortar. The exact physical and chemical properties of the historic mortar are not of major significance as long as the new mortar:

- matches the historic mortar in color, texture, and detailing;
- is softer (measured in compressive strength) than the brick;
- is as soft, or softer (measured in compressive strength) than the historic mortar.

A simple method of analyzing the historic mortar to aid in developing an appropriate repointing mortar for many restoration jobs and most rehabilitation work is outlined in the full document "Preservation Brief: 2".

Historic sand was not screened or graded by size as it is today. Therefore, when specifying sand for repointing mortar, consideration may need to be given to obtaining sand from several sources, and then combining them in order to approximate the range of sand colors and grain sizes in the historic mortar sample. Pointing styles and the methods of producing them should be examined. It is important to look at both the horizontal and the vertical joints to determine the order in which they were tooled and whether they were the same style. Pointing styles often differed from one facade to another. Front walls often received greater attention to mortar detailing than side and rear walls.

Replacement

Replacement brick should match the full range of the historic brick rather than a single brick. Within a wall there may be a surprising range of colors, textures, and sizes, particularly with hand-made brick. Although many bricks can be matched from existing stock, they must often be custom-ordered, a lengthy process that can seriously affect the project budget and schedule. The use of recycled brick from demolished buildings for replacement brick often results in an excellent color and texture match; however, it is important to remember that historic brick was manufactured in varying grades, ranging from high-fired exterior brick to low-fired interior "bat" or "clinker" brick. this low-fired brick was never intended to be exposed to the weather, and, when used for replacement brick on an exterior wall, will deteriorate at a rapid rate, often needing replacement within a year or two. Great care, therefore, should be taken in choosing the proper type of recycled brick.

Replacement of large areas of masonry are to be discouraged. Even with a close material match and careful craftsmanship, it will be very difficult to replace a large section of brickwork without affecting the appearance of the building.

MORTAR

Properties of Mortar

In general, mortars for repointing should be softer (measured in compressive strength) than the masonry units and no harder than the historic mortar. This is necessary to prevent damage to the masonry units. It is a common error to assume that hardness or high strength is a measure of durability. Stresses within a wall caused by expansion, contraction, moisture migration, or settlement must be accommodated in some manner. In a masonry wall, these stresses should be relieved by the mortar rather than by the bricks. A mortar that is stronger or harder than the bricks will not "give," thus causing the stresses to be relieved through the bricks – resulting in cracking and spalling. Stresses can also break the bond between the mortar and the brick, permitting water to penetrate the resulting hairline cracks.

Matching Color and Texture of Mortar

In matching the repointing mortar, the new mortar should match the unweathered interior portions of the historic mortar. The simplest way to check the match is to make a small sample of the proposed mix and allow it to cure; this sample is then broken open and the broken surface is compared with the broken surface of the largest "saved" sample of historic mortar. If it is not possible to obtain a proper color match through the use of natural materials because locally available sands are not a close match to the original sand, it may be necessary to use a modern mortar pigment, and, in fact, some historic mortars did use such additives. Pigments are available as separate ingredients or already mixed with mortar. However, the premixed mortars normally are not suited for use on repointing projects because of their high Portland cement content. Only chemically pure mineral oxides, which are alkali-proof and sun-fast, should be used in order to prevent bleaching and fading.

Execution of the Work

It is seldom necessary to repoint an entire wall of a building. Only those areas in actual need of repointing should be done.

The first step is to thoroughly and carefully clean mortar joints requiring work to a depth of approximately 1" using hand tools only. Power tools such as saws, impact hammers, or disk grinders inevitably result in damaging the brick and should be prohibited.

Just prior to repointing, the joints should be rinsed with a jet of water. At the time of filling, the joints should be damp, but with no standing water present. To minimize shrinkage and insure waterproof joints, they should be filled in 1/4" increments, allowing them time between to begin setting up before the next layer is added. When the final layer is thumbprint hard, the joint should be tooled to match the historic joint. The mortar should be slightly recessed so as to avoid a visual widening of the joint.

Patching

Many buildings retain their old iron fittings which were used to support awnings, signs, or other fixtures. If not seriously obtrusive, these should be retained whenever possible. If they have corroded to the point of damaging the surround masonry, they should be removed with great care. Usually the fittings will be anchored in the masonry joints between bricks and will be fairly easy to remove and then repointed. Occasionally, however, they will be anchored directly into a brick or stone, necessitating partial removal of the masonry itself. Holes in the stonework may be patched with a composite patching compound manufactured specifically for that purpose. Test samples should be made to insure a close match in color. Poorly-done patching can affect the entire appearance of the building.

Treatment of Exposed Party Walls

Often interior walls were built of brick, which was inadequately burned in the kiln and thus too soft to withstand the weather. Such brick will tend to be easily penetrated by moisture, and eventually suffer from spalling and decay caused by freezing. The mortar may also be very rough, which would tend to leave many channels for the entry of water into the building. The owner should inspect the wall to determine its condition, noting such things as the hardness of the brick, the density and evenness of the mortar, and the overall ability of the wall to shed water.

If the brick is sound, but the mortar is too rough, the joints should be raked out by hand, and repointed in a way compatible with the historic character of the building.

If the brick is soft, or otherwise too rough to be left exposed, a decision has to be made whether the wall should be 1) repointed, 2) resurfaced with an entirely new width of bricks over the old surface, or 3) covered with stucco.

WOOD

Causes of Deterioration

Most problems with wood are caused by moisture, insect attack, or excessive wear. All the problem areas should be identified, their causes determined, and the proper steps taken to repair them. Paint failure should not be mistakenly interpreted as a sign that the wood is in poor condition and therefore unrepairable. The wood itself is frequently in sound condition beneath unsightly paint or only in need of slight repair. To test for the soundness of wood, poke the areas in question with an ice pick or awl and lift up. Decayed wood lifts up in short irregular pieces, while sound wood separates in long fibrous splinters.

The following recommendations are adapted from "Preservation Briefs: 9,10, & 11", published by the Preservation Assistance Division of the National Park Service. These sources should be consulted before work is undertaken.

Repair and Replacement

Partially decayed wood can be patched, built up, chemically treated, or consolidated and then painted to achieve a sound condition, good appearance, and greatly extended life. To repair wood showing signs of rot, it is advisable to dry the wood; remove all paint, wood filler, and caulking; carefully apply a fungicide such as pentachlorophenol (a highly toxic substance) to all decayed areas; then treat with two or three applications of boiled linseed oil (24 hours between applications). Afterward, fill cracks and holes with putty, caulk the joints between the various wooden members, and finally prime and paint the surface. Partially decayed wood may also be strengthened and stabilized by consolidation, using semi-rigid epoxies which saturate porous decayed wood and then harden. The

consolidated wood can then be filled with a semi-rigid epoxy patching compound, sanded, and painted.

Where wood components are so badly deteriorated that they cannot be stabilized, it is possible to replace the deteriorated parts with new pieces. These techniques all require skill and some expense, and can be accomplished by cutting the decayed piece back to sound wood, splicing in a new piece, using a waterproof resorcinol-formaldehyde glue, and shaping and sanding the new piece to match the old exactly. In some cases, missing edges can be filled and rebuilt using wood putty or epoxy compounds. When the epoxy cures, it can be sanded smooth and painted with an oil-based primer and two coats of paint to achieve a durable and waterproof repair.

Storefront Reconstruction in Wood

A current trend in storefront design is the construction of a plywood pseudo-Victorian shopfront. They are often constructed poorly, using plywood butt-end joints in the horizontal and vertical directions. At every joint one can usually find, within two years, that the paint has separated from the wood and begun to curl, exposing raw wood. In time the plywood will begin to warp at these joints and pull away from the supporting structure. There is unfortunately no cure for this problem. In essence, plywood has been asked to substitute for cast iron or solid pieces of wood that historically left no exposed joints. Wood siding traditionally has repelled water through overlapping shingles, or capped siding, vertical siding with tongue and groove joints, or vertical siding with butted joints covered by wood battens, each backed by wood sheathing. Even Texture 111 plywood should utilize 2"x 4" blocking at horizontal seams, which in turn should employ vertical shiplap joints or galvanized or aluminum flashing. Vertical joints in Texture 111 plywood are normally either shiplapped, with the stud acting as a reverse board and batten, or covered with a vertical batten. Where these techniques are ignored, water will penetrate and the facade will have to be replaced at significant cost. The preferred way to construct these "piers" and fascia is to use solid wood pieces cut to appropriate lengths and sealed in an acceptable fashion. Molding strips should be primed on the back as well as front surfaces. While the initial cost will be higher for such an installation, the cost is more than amortized over the life of the storefront.

PAINT

Repainting

Wood has historically been painted to deter the harmful effects of weathering (moisture, UV rays from the sun, wind, etc.) as well as to define and accent architectural features. Repainting exterior woodwork is thus an inexpensive way to provide continued protection from weathering, and to give a fresh and historically compatible appearance to the building.

Removal and Repair

As a general rule, removing paint from historic exterior woodwork should be avoided unless absolutely essential. For example, such conditions as mildewing, excessive chalking, or staining (from the oxidization of rusting nails or metal anchorage devices) generally require only thorough surface cleaning prior to repainting. Innercoat peeling, solvent blistering, and wrinkling require removal of the affected layer using mild abrasive methods such as hand scraping and sanding. If there are many scraped areas where thick paint layers leave an edge, these may be "feathered" or flattened using an orbital sander. In all of these cases of limited paint deterioration, after proper surface preparation, the exterior woodwork may be given one or more coats of a high quality exterior oil finish paint. If painted wood surfaces display continuous patterns of deep cracks, or if they are extensively blistered and peeling so that bare wood is visible, the old paint should be completely removed before repainting. (Peeling to bare wood – the most common type of paint problem – is most often caused by excess interior or exterior moisture that collects behind the paint film. The first step in treating peeling is to locate and remove the source of moisture. If this is not done, the new paint will simply peel off.)

Acceptable methods for total paint removal include such thermal devices as an electric heat plate with scraper for flat surfaces, such as siding, window sills and doors, or an electric hot-air gun with profiled scraper for solid decorative elements, such as gingerbread or molding. Open flame "blow torches," however, should never be used. Chemical methods play a more limited, supplemental role in removing paint from historic exterior woodwork. For example, caustic or solvent-base strippers may be used to remove paint from window muntins where thermal devices could easily break the glass. Detachable wooden elements, such as exterior shutters, balusters, and columns, can probably best be stripped by means of immersion in commercial dip tanks because other methods are too laborious. All elements should be clearly marked to insure that they can be returned to their proper places. Care must be taken in rinsing all chemical residue off the wood prior to painting, or the new paint will not adhere.

If the exterior woodwork has been stripped to bare wood, priming should take place within 48 hours (unless the wood is wet, in which case it should be permitted to dry before painting). Application of a high quality oil-type exterior primer will provide a surface over which either an oil or latex top coat can be successfully used.

METALS

Metal is found in the decorative cornices and brackets of the Victorian and early 20th century storefronts. As with wood, all metal architectural features, such as columns, capitals, window hoods, cornices, storefronts, etc., should be identified, retained, and preserved along with their finishes.

Prior to starting any work, it is necessary to identify any problems causing deterioration and repair them. It must also be determined of what metal each element is made and its conditions, so that a proper treatment can be prescribed. Architectural elements were fabricated using cast iron, bronze, copper, tin, galvanized sheet iron, cast zinc, and stainless steel. Determining metallic composition can be a difficult process, especially if components are encrusted with paint.

Most of the historic metalwork in Natchitoches is either cast iron or galvanized sheet iron, although bronze can be found in a few turn-of-the-century buildings, and aluminum appears on storefronts commencing in the 1930's. The following comments are based upon "Preservation Brief: 11", published by the Preservation Assistance Division of the National Park Service and upon field experience.

Galvanized Metals

The cornices of commercial buildings are often in the style of the Italian Renaissance or some other classical revival style. Reflecting as they do the changing tastes of late 19th century America, they are usually more imaginative than historically accurate. While they are often thought to be wood or stone, nearly all of them are actually made of thin sheets of galvanized iron or sheet steel, bent and hammered into three-dimensional architectural forms. The galvanizing is a coating of zinc applied to prevent rusting. The stamped sheets are usually fastened to wooden backing with small-headed nails. To clean stamped sheet metal, you can use a rotary wire brush inserted in an electric drill. For details, this should be supplemented by a hand-held wire brush, paint scraper, and a gouging tool like a pen knife. Don't try to shake off loose paint by banging on the metal, for this may break old solder joints. Unlike cast iron, never allow stamped metal or galvanized sheet iron to be sand-blasted.

Clean the surface of paint flakes and dust. An air compressor and hose like that used for spray painting is the quickest and most thorough method. One can also use a clean, dry paint brush, a rag, or even a vacuum cleaner. Special zinc paints must be used as a primer before painting the outer coats. (Rustoleum, a rust-inhibiting primer often used, is not a good choice). Be sure that the primer used is compatible with the finish paint. If possible, prime the back of the metal also. Paint with two finish coats of flat, oil base, alkyd paint. Flat paint is now thought to be the longer lasting, and its non-glare quality also helps bring out the designs in the stamped metal. Stamped metal facades were usually painted a single color, resembling stone. Tans or grays were used, sprinkled with sand to give a more stone-like appearance.

Bronze

Bronze storefronts can be cleaned by a variety of methods. Since all cleaning removes some surface metal and patina, it should be undertaken only with good reason (such as the need to remove encrusted salts, bird droppings, or dirt). Excessive cleaning can remove the texture and finish of the metal.

Since this patina can protect the bronze from further corrosion, it should, as a rule, be retained wherever possible. If it is desirable to remove the patina to restore the original surface of the bronze, several cleaning methods can be used. Chemical compounds including rottenstone and oil, whiting and ammonia, or precipitate chalk and ammonia, can be rubbed onto bronze surfaces with a soft, clean cloth with little or no damage. A number of commercial cleaning companies successfully use a combination of 5% oxalic acid solution together with finely ground India pumice power. Fine glass-bead blasting (or peeling) and crushed walnut shell blasting also can be acceptable mechanical methods if carried out in controlled circumstances under low (80-100 psi) pressure. Care should be taken to protect any adjacent wood or masonry from the blasting. Other metals, such as lead, copper, and zinc, should likewise not be cleaned, in that they develop their own protective patina with age.

Cast Iron

Cast iron storefronts are usually encrusted with layers of paint, which need to be removed to restore crispness to the details. Where paint build-up and rust are not severe problems, handscraping and wire-brushing are viable cleaning methods. While it is necessary to remove all rust before repainting, it is not necessary to remove all paint. For situations involving extensive paint build-up and corrosion, mechanical methods such as low-pressure gentle dry grit blasting (80-100 psi) can be effective and economical, providing a good surface for paint. Masonry and wood surfaces adjacent to the cleaning areas, however, should be protected to avoid inadvertent damage from the blasting. It will be necessary to recaulk and putty the heads of screws and bolts after grit blasting to prevent moisture from entering the joints. Cleaned areas should be painted immediately after cleaning with a rust-inhibiting primer to prevent new corrosion. Before any cleaning is undertaken, local codes should be checked to ensure compliance with environmental safety requirements. Storefronts utilizing softer metals (lead, tin), sheet metals (sheet copper), and plated metals (tin and terneplate) should not be cleaned mechanically (grit blasting) because their plating or finish can be easily abraded and damaged. It is usually preferable to clean these softer metals with a chemical (acid pickling or phosphate dipping) method. Once the surface of the metal has been cleaned of all corrosion, grease, and dirt, a rust-inhibiting primer coat should be applied. Finish coats especially formulated for metals, consisting of lacquers, varnishes, enamels, or special coatings, can be applied once the primer has dried. Primer and finish coats should be selected for chemical compatibility with the particular metal in question.

Repair and Replacement of Metal

The nature of the repair will depend on the extent of the deterioration, the type of metal and its location, and the overall cost of such repairs. Patches can be used to mend, cover, or fill a deteriorated area. Such patches should be a close match to the original material to prevent galvanic corrosion. Splicing – replacement of a small section with new material – should be undertaken on structural members only when temporary bracing has been

constructed to carry the load. Reinforcing – or bracing the damaged element with additional new metal material – can relieve fatigue or overloading in some situations.

To refasten loose metal components, use long dip-galvanized nails with small stove-bolt heads in order to avoid a mixture of metals that may set up a corrosive electrolytic reaction. At the same time, check the wooden backing material. If water, dry rot, or termites have weakened it, it will be necessary to remove some of the stamped metal sheets and rebuild the wooden sections. The top of the storefront should be securely flashed to keep water from seeping behind the metal. Flashing should be of galvanized metal. Caulk all seams between components with long-lasting architectural-grade oil-based caulk. Sometimes an architectural element may be completely missing or too deteriorated to be repaired, and must therefore be replaced. Many metal elements were mass produced, and it may be possible to find a compatible component in a salvage yard.

Failing this, reproduction is the next step. Metal elements can be made in their original materials, such as cast iron or galvanized sheet metal. Reproduction of cast iron units is often difficult and expensive. Less costly methods that have proven successful employ such materials as aluminum, wood, and plastic (using a vacuum-formed process similar to that used by sign makers today), painted to match the metal. Simple sheet metal forms can be recreated at a sheet metal shop. Complicated details can be done by removing an existing piece that matches the missing one, making a plaster mold of it, then using the mold to create a fiberglass replica.

At some point, if substantial sections of the original storefront are missing or damaged beyond repair, particularly where inadequate documentation of the original condition exists, a decision based upon cost and historical accuracy will need to be made as to whether to attempt a recreation or to compose a proportionally compatible, but contemporary, storefront. This decision should be based upon the criteria set forth in the commercial storefront section of these guidelines.

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A: THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION

The design guidelines are based upon the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, the single most commonly recognized preservation guidelines for the maintenance and treatment of historic properties in the United States. Originally developed by the National Park Service for the federal tax credit program for historic rehabilitation, the Standards have been adopted by state historic district agencies across the nation, and by numerous municipal governments with their own local historic district ordinances.

Rehabilitation, which is the most common preservation approach adopted by property owners, is defined below and is considered the most practical and flexible of the five recognized preservation treatments in meeting the contemporary demands of modern code compliance and adaptive reuse for historic buildings. Rehabilitation should be contrasted with "restoration" and "reconstruction," which are both more stringent treatment approaches defined below. Restoration, for example, is usually adopted voluntarily by an institution, such as a house museum, to achieve a far higher level of preservation than required by the City of Natchitoches.

Definitions Of Preservation Treatment Approaches

Rehabilitation is the act or process of returning a property to a state of utility through repair or alteration, which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions or features of the property which are significant to its historical, architectural, and cultural values.

Preservation is the act or process of applying measures to sustain the existing form, integrity, and material of a building or structure, and the existing form and vegetative cover (or landscape) of a site. It may include stabilization work, where necessary, as well as ongoing maintenance of the historic building material.

Restoration is the act or process of accurately recovering the form and details of a property and its settings as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of later work, or by replacing missing earlier work.

Reconstruction is the act or process of reproducing, by new construction, the exact form and detail of a vanished building, structure, or object, or a part thereof, as it appeared at a specific period of time.

Stabilization is the act or process of applying measures designed to re-establish a weather-resistant enclosure and the structural stability of unsafe or deteriorated property, while maintaining the essential form as it exists at present.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the buildings and its site and environment.

2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.

3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.

4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.

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

6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the 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. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.

7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historical materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.

8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.

9. 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.

10. 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.