

The City of Centreville's Design Guidelines

These Design Guidelines will serve as a planning tool which will provide for harmonious growth and serve to stabilize and improve property values.

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STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation have served for many years as the "10 Commandments" for historical preservation projects. These standards are used to certify historic rehabilitations and are also used for grant-funded projects. The basic standards, listed below, are incorporated into the Centreville's Design Guidelines.

Standard One: A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characters of the building and its site and environment.

Standard Two: 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.

Standard Three: 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.

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

Standard Five: Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be retained and preserved.

Standard Six: 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.

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

Standard Eight: Significant archaeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be taken.

Standard Nine: 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.

Standard Ten: 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.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

What Design Guidelines Can Do:

1. Help maintain the character of the District.
2. Improve the quality of growth and development.
3. Protect a property owner's investment by preventing undesirable intrusions.
4. Preserve the integrity (authenticity) of existing buildings.
5. Provide an objective basis for design review.
6. Serve as an educational tool for property owners, contractors, and designers.

What Design Guidelines Cannot Do:

1. Limit change or growth. They can only address the visual aspects of growth.
2. Control how space is used within a building. Only the publicly visible portion of a building or site is governed by guidelines.
3. Restrict. They can only guide.
4. Review ordinary maintenance.

DESIGN GUIDELINES: SITE

Landscaping, the city plan, and our natural environment create the setting which places historic buildings in context

1. **Setback and Spacing Between Buildings:** Maintain pattern of spacing between buildings and the set back from the Street.

Large lots may have space to subdivide, but this should not be encouraged if it creates a greater density of buildings than found elsewhere in the district. Side additions to existing buildings should not alter the general pattern of spacing between surrounding buildings. Buildings should not sit closer or further away from the street than surrounding buildings.

2. **Orientation:** Maintain the orientation of buildings to the road.

The main entrance of the building should face the road, not the side or rear of the lot. Corner lots may have an entrance facing the corner.

3. **Sidewalks, Walkways, and Driveways:** Maintain pattern of front walkways, sidewalks, and side driveways.

On a busy road, a circular driveway may be acceptable for safety reasons but is considered an inappropriate treatment in a historic district. Octagonal pavers or light colored concrete and brick are recommended paving materials. Concrete is recommended for driveways. Avoid the use of marble chips.

4. **Retaining Walls and Fences:** Maintain existing retaining wall and stairs leading to sidewalk or walkway.

Railroad ties are not appropriate for retaining walls or borders. Picket, cast-iron, or stone and iron fences can be appropriate for Victorian homes. Front fences should be no more than three feet tall. Rustic split rail fences are not suitable in an in town neighborhood. Chain link fences are inappropriate for front yards. Stone and concrete retaining walls are appropriate.

5. **Recreational Facilities:** Modern recreational facilities should not be visible from the street.

Swimming pools, tennis courts, antennae, and satellite dishes should be situated to minimize their visual impact and should be screened or concealed from view.

6. **Parking:** Parking should not be visible from the street.

Off-street parking shall be placed to the rear of buildings where possible and fenced or screened with appropriate plantings. Parking to the side of a building is acceptable if it is screened from view. Parking in the front of a building is not appropriate. Multi-story parking decks are inappropriate. Break up large paved areas into smaller clusters of parking by incorporating landscaped islands.

7. **Exterior Lighting:** Street lights should harmonize with the surroundings.

Victorian style street lights with black cast-iron poles or steel poles are appropriate. Daylight color-corrected mercury vapor lamps are recommended. Colonial carriage lamps seek to create an earlier appearance and are not advisable.

8. **Outbuildings:** Maintain existing pattern of historic outbuildings.

Existing garages and outbuildings should be maintained in situ. For construction of garages and new outbuildings apply the guidelines listed in the "New Construction and Additions" section. Detached garages are appropriate.

9. **Signs:** Signs should be subtle and compatible to the building.

All signs must comply with the Centreville Sign Ordinance. For a copy contact the Centreville City Hall. Signs should be mounted on one or two poles and not placed directly on the building. Signs should be made of wood

or painted metal and designed to complement the site and the building. Plastic, backlit signs are not appropriate in historic districts.

10. Archaeology

Known and potential archaeological sites should be protected.

Installation of underground utilities or any grading or excavation work should not take place in areas that may be of archaeological importance. Contact the Alabama Historical Commission... Altering the contours of archaeological sites or earthworks should not be permitted. The areas should not be paved or landscaped and the use of heavy equipment should not be permitted. If an archaeological site is discovered during construction, cease work and immediately notify the archaeologists at the Alabama Historical Commission.

DESIGN GUIDELINES: REHABILITATION

The character of a building is identified by design elements such as: windows, doors, roofs, porches, and construction materials. These features enable us to read a building's history. Changes and the introduction of new design elements should respect the character and history of the building and not try to create an earlier appearance.

1. **Architectural Features:** Significant architectural features should be retained and preserved.

Repair rather than replace architectural features such as siding, cornices, brackets, window architrave's doorway pediments, trim and shutters. Deteriorated material should be repaired or replaced with material that duplicates in size, shape, and texture the old material as closely as possible. Changes that have taken place in the course of time which are evidence of the history and development of a building and its environment may have acquired significance in their own right; their significance should be recognized and respected.

The replacement of missing original details should be based on accurate historic, physical, or pictorial documentation and should be a close visual approximation of the original. Architectural details of any period or style not original or part of the building should not be introduced.

2. **Roof:** Maintain features which give a roof historic character.

Roof pitch and shape should be preserved. Historic roofing materials should be maintained or replaced with similar materials. Details such as bargeboard, fish scale shingles, projecting eaves, dentil molding, and brackets should be maintained. Cupolas, weather vanes, or other decorative details that cannot be documented as having existed on the building should not be added. Changes to the roof, not visible from the road or ground, may be permitted.

3. **Windows:** Maintain existing windows.

Repair rather than replace historic windows if possible. In not, replace with a similar shape, size, configuration (6/6,4/4,1/1, etc.) and molding profile. If aluminum frame storm windows are added, the aluminum elements should be painted to match the window trim. The dividers of the aluminum window

should match the existing window. Consider installing a storm on the interior. Avoid covering the window so that it can not be seen. Do not add fake shutters. Canvas awnings may be appropriate.

4. Doors: Existing historical doors and surrounds should be maintained.

Original doors should be retained and repaired whenever possible. Where doorways must be altered, entranceways should respect the historic character of the building. Storm doors and screen doors should be plain. The application of exterior metal security doors is discouraged. Historic hardware should be maintained.

5. Porches: Maintain historic porches and detailing.

Within the district, most buildings have front porches or entrance stoops. Maintain existing location, shape, details, and columns of the porch. Do not remove a simple column and add a fancy one. It is recommended that front porches be open and airy. When a side porch is enclosed or screened, it should be done with a clear transparent material. For example, use wire screen or untinted glass. This material should be placed behind porch columns. Missing or deteriorated decorative elements should be replaced with new wood, milled to match existing elements. Existing features should be repaired rather than replaced. Decorative elements should only be added when they can be documented as having previously existed. The addition of ornate decoration is discouraged.

6. Mechanical Equipment: Modern equipment should not be seen from the road.

Solar panels, fans and ducts should be installed to create the least disturbance to the historical appearance of the building. They should involve minimum alteration to the structure and site.

7. Wall Materials: Maintain existing wall materials and textures.

Within the district the majority of structures have horizontal weatherboard siding or brick veneer. Exterior wood wall should be painted, not stained. Remember not to put latex over oil paint as this will cause the paint surface

to peel. Synthetic siding (aluminum or vinyl) is not recommended because this traps moisture and can accelerate decay. Also, application of siding can cover up historic details. Do not paint unpainted brick walls. Do not clean brick by sandblasting. Do not repoint the mortar between brick with Portland cement; instead, use a mixture of lime and sand with only a small amount of cement as a binder. The combination will allow for expansion and contraction. Try to match color of the mortar and joint profile.

8. **Foundations:** Maintain appearance of original foundation.

Many early houses have pier foundations. A continuous foundation may be required to meet modern codes. If so, when underpinning a house, set the new material slightly behind the piers to create a shallow reveal. Place ventilation at regular intervals to avoid the problems of rot and insect infestation.

9. **Maintenance:** Property owners should not allow their buildings to deteriorate by failing to provide ordinary maintenance.

Ordinary maintenance, such as painting or repairing a gutter, is not evaluated by the Commission, however, when failure to maintain a property creates a public safety hazard, the City may condemn the property. This is considered to be demolition by neglect.

If a building is being allowed to deteriorate, the Commission may notify the owner and set forth steps to remedy the situation. In the event that the condition is not remedied within thirty days, the Commission with the authority of the City of Centreville may perform such maintenance or repair as necessary to prevent deterioration by neglect. The owner of the property shall be liable for the cost of maintenance or repair performed.

DESIGN GUIDELINES:

CONSTRUCTION, RELOCATION AND DEMOLITION

All too often, new construction detracts from the Historic District because it does not respect the size and scale, setback, orientation, rhythm, style, and landscape patterns of the District. The challenge is to create new construction which respects the visual character of the District.

CONSTRUCTION:

1. **Materials:** New buildings should use exterior materials common to buildings in the district

Use horizontal weatherboard, not diagonal siding. Synthetic siding may be used on new buildings. Red brick with light colored mortar is acceptable. Synthetic stucco, dry-vit, concrete, and metal are not appropriate exterior materials.

2. **Size and Scale:** New buildings should be similar in height and width to nearby buildings.

Generally buildings within the district should not be over 2-2 ½ stories tall or five bays wide. They should not be less than three bays wide and one story tall.

3. **Roof Shapes:** New construction should not introduce new roof pitches or buildings shapes not found in the district.

Flat roofs would not be acceptable. Different roof shapes, materials, and details not visible from the street may be acceptable.

4. **Rhythm:** New construction should respect the pattern of windows and doors of buildings in the vicinity.

Elements such as the pattern and placement of windows, doors, and porches establish a rhythm which creates subtle continuity between houses within the district. New construction should respect this rhythm

5. **Additions**

Additions should be subordinate to the original design.

Additions to historic buildings should not overwhelm the original design. If possible, additions should be placed to the rear of the structure. Additions should meet guidelines for new construction. Decks and balconies should not be visible from the street. Decks should not be built on the front of houses.

RELOCATION

Buildings shall be retained on their present sites whenever possible.

Moving a historic building from its original location and setting will very likely impede its eligibility for, or result in its removal from the National Register of Historic Places. Moving a building which does not contribute to the historical and architectural integrity of the District out of the District, or which has completely lost all architectural integrity due to deterioration, fire, or neglect should be appropriate on a case by case basis. A building may be moved into the District only if it maintains a sense of architectural unity in terms of style, height, scale, massing, materials, texture, and setback with existing buildings along the street. A building may be moved from one site to another in the District if:

1. The integrity of location and setting of the building in its original location has been lost or is seriously threatened.
2. The new location will be similar in setting and siting.
3. The building will be compatible with the buildings adjacent to the new location in style, height, scale, materials, and setback.
4. The relocation of the building will not result in a negative visual effect on the site and surrounding buildings from which it will be removed.
5. Relocated buildings must be carefully rebuilt to retain and maintain original architectural details and materials.
6. When relocation saves a building that would otherwise be demolished.

DEMOLITION

Historic buildings should not be demolished.

1. A prerequisite for a demolition of a historic building shall be a documentation of economic hardship, which shall contain a financial report detailing the costs of rehabilitation and evidencing that the existing building is incapable of producing a reasonable economic return on the investment.
2. If a request for demolition is based on structural instability or deterioration, a technical report prepared by an architect or professional engineer shall be submitted, detailing the nature and extent of the specific problems and providing accurate cost estimates for their correction.
3. An application for demolition shall be accompanied by a complete plan for the new development proposed on the site, a timetable, a budget for both the demolition and new construction, and satisfactory evidence that adequate financing is available.
4. A condition for approval of demolition shall be measured drawings, photographs, or other documentation of the building's elevation and architectural features.
5. When, in the interest of public safety, the removal of part of a building or complex is required, the Commission may allow limited removal of structurally-unsound construction.
6. Demolition may be allowed when a building has lost its integrity or design, and its removal would result in a more positive effect on the district. In such cases, new construction should relate better to the historic district than the existing building. The requirements listed above 1-5 should be satisfied if applicable.