

## DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

### DO

- Retain the original shape and pitch of the roof, including dormers and overhangs.
- Retain character-defining details such as parapets and cornices.
- Retain original gutter styles. Half-round gutters are generally more appropriate for historic buildings.



Asphalt shingles work well as replacement roofing material when blended with original elements such as terra-cotta ridge tiles.



These half-round gutters and downspouts are appropriately placed and well maintained.

### DON'T

- Do not remove vergeboard or other ornamental trim.
- Do not remove terra-cotta ridge tiles, roof cresting, or finials.
- Do not enclose soffits that would originally have been exposed.
- Do not replace tongue-and-groove wood soffits with plywood, aluminum, or vinyl.
- Do not add decorative elements that would not historically have been present on a roof.



Modern metal roofing is generally not appropriate on historic residences.



Enclosing soffits that were originally exposed jeopardizes a building's historic integrity.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Maintenance

As roofs are subject to wind, rain, sun, and frequent temperature variations, they should be inspected regularly for any deterioration. Because water infiltration is a major concern, gutters and downspouts should be routinely checked to make sure that they are functioning properly and are not clogged with debris. Attic areas should be checked after heavy rains to make sure that water is not entering the building. Any condensation or moisture should be noted, as this can also indicate improper venting.

Masonry chimneys may need periodic repointing because both bricks and mortar will weather over time. Chimneys should be capped, and they must also be properly flashed where they meet roof surfaces.

Other problems to look for include sagging or bowing ridges (which can indicate structural problems), loose or missing roof tiles, cracked or worn asphalt shingles, vegetation, mold, and deteriorated woodwork (particularly fascias or soffits).

### Repair

If original roof materials are still present and in good condition, they should be maintained and preserved. This recommendation applies to all elements of a historic roof, including cladding, soffits, gutters, cornices, trim, cresting, and chimney caps. For minor repairs, match existing materials and replace only those components that have deteriorated beyond repair.

In some cases, original roof cladding may be buried beneath layers of newer shingles. While this may be common practice (building codes typically specify an allowable maximum number of layers), such build-up can add significant weight to a structure. At some point, all layers need to be removed down to the sheathing, and a new roof installed. It is rarely possible to salvage the original underlying roof material, but its presence can provide important clues as to what type of replacement roof might be appropriate.

### Replacement

If it is necessary to replace a roof on a historic building, the preferred approach is replacement in-kind (e.g., clay tile with clay tile). However, the use of a historic roofing material may be restricted by building codes, the availability of materials, labor, or cost.

When that is the case, an alternative material should be chosen that complements the type and style of the structure. Asphalt shingles are widely used and generally considered acceptable alternatives for most historic buildings. With such a variety of col-

ors, thicknesses, and textures available, it is usually possible to select a shingle style that approximates the look and feel of the original roof. If other replacement materials are preferred, the HDC can advise on their suitability.

It should be noted that even when roof cladding is replaced, other character-defining elements of the roof can and should be preserved. These include wood fascias and soffits, vergeboards, and cornices. Even original ridge tiles and copper gutters can be temporarily removed and replaced once the new cladding has been installed.



A well-maintained asphalt-shingle roof

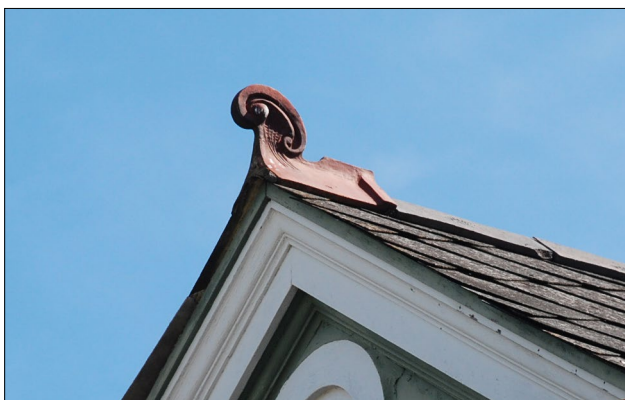


A well-maintained asbestos-shingle roof with copper flashing

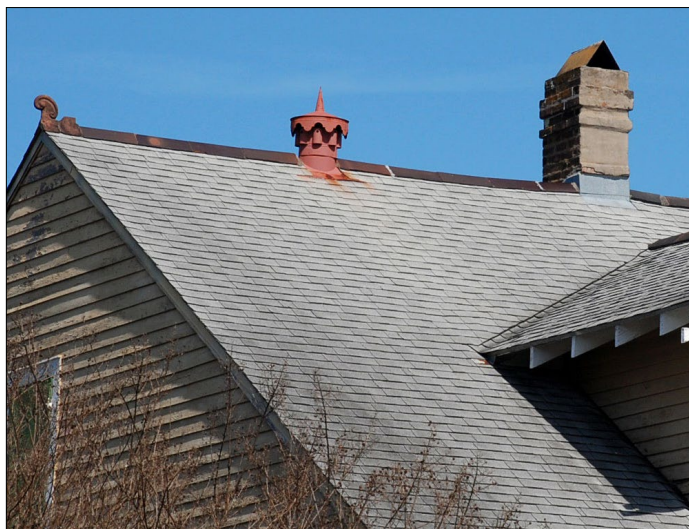


### HISTORIC MATERIALS: Cresting and Finials

The use of terra cotta as a roofing material dates back thousands of years. In colonial New Orleans, shallow-pitched roofs were often sheathed in flat clay tiles or Spanish barrel tiles. When tile gave way to slate in the 19th century, builders continued to use the clay tiles to cover the ridge-line gap where the two roof slopes meet. The two most common types of clay ridge tiles throughout the New Orleans area are the English V, which is laid flush and mortared at each joint, and the overlapping Spanish barrel tile. In the 1880s, with the popularization of the Queen Anne and Eastlake styles, the tiles grew more decorative at the top ridge. This treatment, which is called cresting, often terminates with a terra-cotta finial. In Gretna, the most common finial shape is a stylized rooster comb. The districts' remaining ridge tile and ornament examples are valuable components of the city's skyline, serving both an important protective function and helping to define a building's architectural style.



Rooster-comb finial



There are a variety of historic elements visible on this side-gable roof, including a Chinese cap, rooster-comb finial, brick chimney with V cap, and English V ridge tiles.



English V ridge tiles



The rhythm of the chimneys is a distinctive feature of this historic shotgun.



Barrel ridge tiles

# GUIDELINES: NEW CONSTRUCTION & ADDITIONS

## 6



## INTRODUCTION

Gretna's historic districts are characterized by their abundance of intact historic architecture, nineteenth-century development patterns, and distinctive streetscapes. They are also dynamic places that must continue to adapt and change if they are to stay vibrant and attractive to residents and businesses.

This chapter addresses one of the common challenges facing historic districts: how to incorporate new construction and additions without sacrificing the qualities that make older buildings and neighborhoods so distinctive.

### Compatibility and context

For both new construction and additions within historic districts, the City of Gretna encourages quality design that is compatible with its surroundings. But how, specifically, are these terms defined?

While admittedly subjective, *quality design* may be thought of as architecture that reflects a high level of attention to form, function, material, and construction. It should be thoughtful, responsive to an occupant's needs, based on solid design principles, well suited to its site, durable, well detailed, and well constructed. Quality design is an achievable objective no matter a project's scope or budget.

Buildings that are *compatible* take cues from their immediate context. They attempt to respect—rather than overwhelm or detract from—their surroundings. That means, for example, that a compatible new building is not significantly taller, or shorter, than the buildings around it; that it is set back from the sidewalk a similar distance as its neighbors; and that on a block of storefronts it does not present a blank wall to the street. Compatible buildings may continue a pattern of alternating front doors and windows, or they may follow the cornice lines of adjacent buildings. The design principles and recommendations detailed in this section illustrate ways to achieve compatibility without copying or mimicking existing historic buildings.

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Because compatibility is about responding to context, it is crucial to begin with a thorough understanding of the visual and physical characteristics that uniquely define a particular setting. Character-defining elements of historic districts that are especially important to study when contemplating new construction include building height and width, building form and massing, setbacks, orientation, facade composition, architectural elements, and materials.

Consider, for example, the buildings on your block. Are they one story tall or two? Are they narrow with steeply pitched roofs, or are they more horizontal? Are they built on slabs, or raised off the ground? Are they set back the same distance from the sidewalk? Are the entrances on the front facade or are they around the side? Are the windows and doors aligned? Do they have porches? Driveways? Garages? Are they mostly brick or wood frame?

#### **A note on building types and architectural styles**

The City of Gretna does not mandate any particular building type or architectural style for new construction or additions. In fact a modern structure reflective of current design trends and materials can fit quite well within a historic district if fundamental design principles are followed. If a building owner does choose to replicate a historic building type or style, close attention should be paid to matters of detail and proportion. For example, one of the defining characteristics of a typical nineteenth-century shotgun house is its high ceilings (approximately 11 or 12 feet), which translate into tall window and door openings on the front facade. If a new shotgun house is built with 8-foot ceilings to take advantage of standard 4-by-8-foot dimensions for building materials, the result will be awkward in appearance.

#### **Secretary of the Interior's Approach to New Construction and Additions**

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, upon which these guidelines are based, outlines three primary concepts that should be followed when planning new construction and additions:

- **Preserve historic character:** Additions and new construction should not destroy the historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize a property.
- **Differentiate old from new:** A visual distinction should be made between old and new work. While new work should be compatible with the materials, features, size, proportion, and massing of a historic building or district, it is not necessary to replicate existing building details, types, or styles. The rationale is that this can make it more difficult to identify what is truly considered historic.
- **Plan for reversibility:** Additions and new construction should be undertaken in such a way that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property would be unimpaired.



## NEW CONSTRUCTION

While the availability of vacant lots is limited within Gretna's historic districts, there are occasionally opportunities for new construction. Compatible development can have a positive impact on a neighborhood because it demonstrates re-investment, growth, and the appeal of an area. Incompatible development, by contrast, can compromise a historic district's desirability and integrity.

All new construction must comply with the City of Gretna's zoning regulations and building codes. The design principles below are intended to help residents, contractors, architects and others develop new construction projects that are compatible with their historic surroundings.

In the previous section, we identified several character-defining elements of historic districts, including building height and width, building form and massing, setbacks, orientation, facade composition, architectural elements, and materials. Here we will elaborate on each element and discuss fundamental design principles and recommendations that should be followed when planning for new construction.

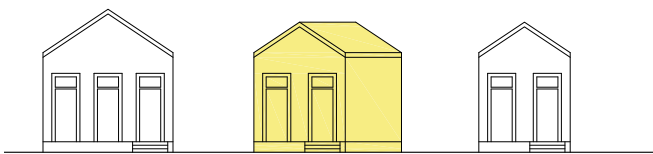
### BUILDING HEIGHT AND WIDTH

A building's height and width determine its overall size. However, the appropriateness of a building's size depends on its context. This is where the design principle of scale comes in to play. *Scale* refers to how one perceives a building's size in relation to adjacent properties. A building that towers over its neighbor may be described as over-scaled, whereas a diminutive building that is significantly smaller than adjacent structures may appear to be under-scaled.

Another design principle that must be considered is *proportion*, which in general terms refers to the relationship between building elements. Here, the relationship between height and width determines whether a building's overall proportion is predominantly vertical (tall and narrow) or horizontal (short and wide).

#### DO

- To maintain a consistency of scale and proportion, the height and width of new construction should generally be similar to neighboring buildings.



The one-story new construction (in yellow) matches the scale of its neighbors.

#### DON'T

- Do not construct a new building that is significantly taller than adjacent properties. In general, within Gretna's historic districts, the height differential should not exceed one story.
- Do not construct a new building whose proportions differ significantly from adjacent properties.



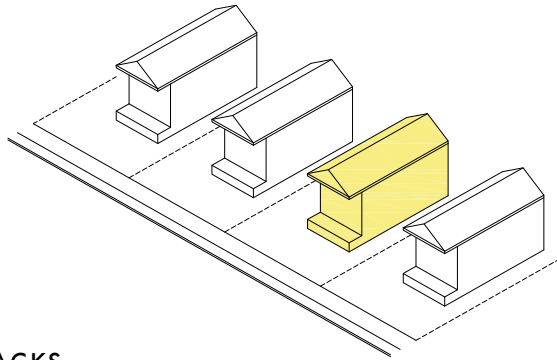
The three-story new construction (in blue) is overscaled in relation to its neighbors.

## BUILDING FORM AND MASSING

While both of these terms describe a building's three-dimensional qualities, there are slight variations in the way each is defined. *Form* refers to a building's overall shape and volume, including roofs, wings, and projections. *Massing* is commonly used to refer to a building's overall bulk or presence on a site. In new construction, form and massing may be governed in part by the maximum height limitations and minimum lot-line setbacks specified in the city's zoning ordinance.

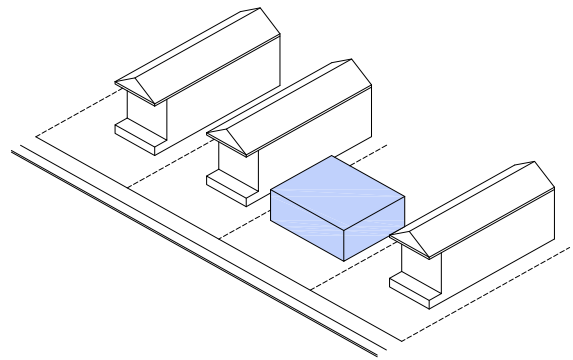
### DO

- To best blend in, the form and massing of new construction should generally be similar to that of other buildings on the block.
- As roofs are a prominent component of a building's form, consider matching the types (hip, gable, etc.) and pitches found on adjacent buildings.
- Consider visually breaking up a large building into smaller volumes in order to make it more compatible with its surroundings.



### DON'T

- Do not construct a new building whose form and massing vary substantially from its surrounding context.

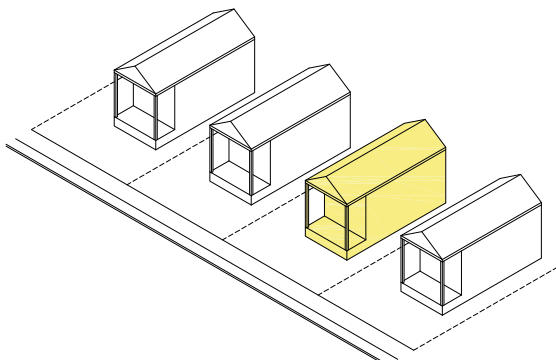


## SETBACKS

Setbacks refer to the distance between a building and a property line, with minimum requirements typically specified in zoning regulations. Front yard setbacks are particularly important in defining a building's relationship to the street. To achieve a sense of continuity, it is recommended that buildings in sequence have consistent front yard setbacks. Often, on a block where many of the buildings were developed at the same time—for example a row of 1920s Craftsman double shotguns—it is not uncommon to find elements such as fences, gates, steps, and porches in alignment as well. The net effect is a streetscape with a consistent pattern and rhythm.

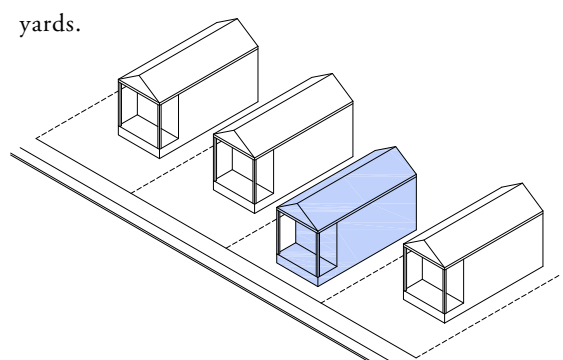
### DO

- To achieve a cohesive and continuous streetscape, new buildings should maintain the front yard setbacks characteristic of the district or block.
- If incorporating fences, porches, balconies, or similar elements, they too should match the prevailing setbacks on the block.



### DON'T

- Do not site a building too close or too far from the front property line relative to adjacent buildings, as this will result in unnecessary setbacks that disrupt the continuity of the street frontage.
- It is inappropriate to create large front yards for parking when such an arrangement was not part of the historic development pattern of the block. It is more appropriate to provide parking within side or rear yards.

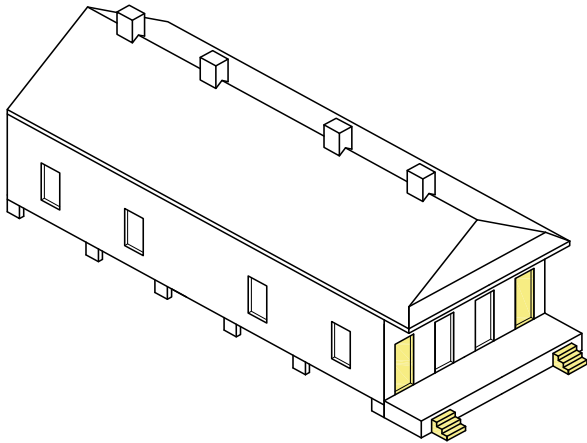


## ORIENTATION

The orientation of a building is simply the direction it faces. Within Gretna's historic districts, most buildings squarely face the street and have their primary entrance located on the front facade.

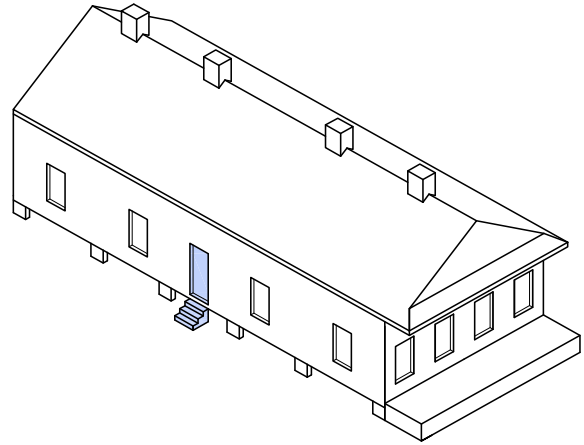
### DO

- Orient new construction to reflect the orientation of neighboring buildings. This includes the location of front entrances.



### DON'T

- It is not appropriate to locate a main entrance on the side of a building when adjacent buildings have prominent front entrances.



## FACADE COMPOSITION

Facade composition refers to the arrangement of doors, windows, and other similar features present on a facade. Most of the historic building types found in Gretna have character-defining patterns of openings set within individual bays. Consider, for example, the door-window-window-door configuration common to shotgun doubles. When repeated across multiple facades, this sets up a well-defined rhythm along the street. A similar effect can be achieved on a commercial block through the arrangement of storefronts and entrance vestibules.

There are also vertical relationships between building elements. For example, consider the distance between floors, the vertical spacing between rows of windows, or the alignment of building cornices. Repetition of these elements, too, contributes to a sense of continuity along a street facade.

### DO

- New buildings should respect the proportions, sizes, and locations of existing window and door openings that are characteristic of a streetscape or block.
- Door and window openings should be organized so as to promote a pedestrian-friendly presence at ground level.



The new construction (in yellow) complements the window and door arrangements of its neighbor.

### DON'T

- Do not propose buildings with blank or opaque front facades (including windows and doors with reflective mirrored glass).
- Do not propose prominent garage doors on a front facade, as this is not consistent with the traditional development patterns found in historic districts.



The new construction (in blue) is incompatible with the facade composition of its neighbor.



## MATERIALS

Materials used for roofs, walls, foundations, windows, doors and details are important contributors to the visual character of a historic district. While it is advisable to use compatible materials such as brick, wood, iron, and stone when building within historic districts, one should not go to great lengths to make such materials appear aged or historic. The patina of century-old wood or iron is nearly impossible to duplicate, and in fact the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties discourage any attempt to do so because it confuses one's perception of what is truly historic.

### DO

- Do select high quality, durable materials such as actual brick, wood, or stone for primary elevations that are visible from the street.
- Materials selected for new construction should complement those found on surrounding buildings through the careful consideration of color, pattern, and texture.

### DON'T

- Do not try to "historicize" a building material through artificial aging or weathering.
- Artificial materials such as vinyl "weatherboards" and faux plastic "bricks" are not recommended within historic districts, particularly along a building's primary facade.

## ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS

Architectural elements such as porches, galleries, chimneys, dormers, and parapets provide a common vocabulary among historic buildings. Incorporating modern versions of such elements can be an effective way for new construction to relate to its context. Keep in mind that when such elements are incorporated in new construction, they should have simplified detailing reflective of their contemporary design.

### DO

- Consider incorporating architectural elements similar to those found on neighboring buildings.



The simply detailed porches on these newly constructed shotguns capture the appropriate rhythm and scale of their historic counterparts.



This well-scaled new construction is compatible with its historic surroundings.

### DON'T

- Do not construct a "historicized" architectural element (mimicking traditional ornament and detailing) on a contemporary building.



These modern "historicized" details lack the proportions and craftsmanship of their historic counterparts.



This new construction lacks the full-length windows, steps, and main entrance of a traditional front porch.

## ADDITIONS

Additions have historically provided a way to keep an older building functioning and viable when new space is needed or an extra function must be accommodated. In fact, it is often possible to understand how a building has changed over time by studying the sequence of prior alterations and additions. Some early alterations (generally those over fifty years old) may now even be considered historically significant in their own right.

To understand the pressure placed on buildings to expand, consider for example how the size of the typical house has changed over the last century. According to the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), the average size of a new home in 1900 ranged from 700 to 1,200 square feet. Today, the average size is closer to 2,300 square feet, with 2.5 bathrooms and 3 or more bedrooms. Kitchens, once purely functional rooms at the back of a house, are now larger, more lavish, and more connected to other spaces in the home. Open floor plans, family rooms, home offices, mud rooms, laundry rooms, and master suites represent modern living concepts that were not necessarily part of the building vocabulary in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Commercial and institutional buildings, too, may face changing demands. Successful companies might require extra retail, office, or storage space. A historic bank might wish to add a drive-through, or a school might need more classrooms.

Sensitively designed additions can provide needed living and working space while still preserving historic character. Poorly designed additions, in contrast, can seriously detract from or even overwhelm a historic structure. This section will examine the two most common approaches to additions—increasing the height and increasing the footprint—and will detail the challenges and recommendations specific to each.

### PLANNING AN ADDITION

New additions may be considered appropriate as long as they do not destroy historic features, materials, and spatial relationships that are significant to the original building and site. It is usually best to place an addition towards the rear of the property where it is least visible from the public way so that the historic character of the streetscape is preserved. When possible, additions should be located on the least character-defining elevation so as to minimize their impact.

Additions should be compatible with the original building in terms of scale, proportion, composition, architectural elements, and materials. They should not overpower the original building in terms of form or massing.

While designed to be compatible, additions should also be visibly differentiated from the original building. This can be accomplished, for example, through a break in the roofline, a change in the wall plane, or a change in materials. Additions should also be planned and constructed so that they can be easily removed in the future without damage to the original building.

### INCREASING THE HEIGHT OF A BUILDING

Historically, one of the most common strategies for increasing the size of a building has been to add an additional story or build out an attic space by incorporating dormers. Both of these approaches may be appropriate for new additions so long as they are sensitively designed.

Shotgun houses are particularly well suited to partial rear second-story additions, historically referred to as *camelbacks*. Such additions should be set back at least one to two room lengths from the facade to minimize visibility from the street. Volumes should be kept simple, and roof pitches should match the original building.

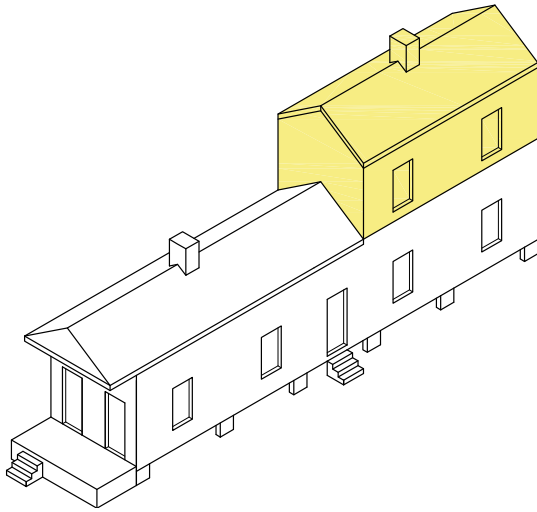
Creole cottages tend to have slightly steeper roof pitches than shotgun houses, translating into increased headroom in the attic. As long as building code requirements for habitable space can be met, these areas may be built out to provide additional living space. It is recommended that new dormers be added only to rear-facing (secondary) elevations, and that they maintain the proportions traditional for that building type.

Bungalows inherently tend to have more variety of form (such as asymmetry, changes in wall planes, and projecting bays). As a result, they may be good candidates for both second stories and dormers, provided that such additions are sensitively designed.

Most residential buildings within Gretna's historic districts are one to two stories tall. Vertical additions that increase a building's height to three full stories or more would generally be considered inappropriate.

#### DO

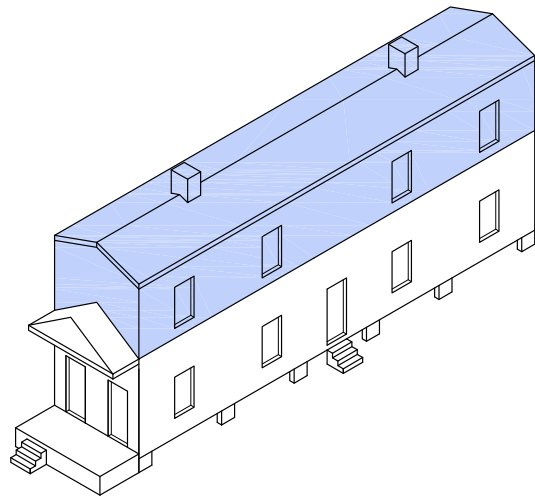
- Second-story additions should be set back from the street to minimize the impact to the front facade.
- New dormers should be located on secondary elevations.
- Existing roof pitches should be matched when possible.



This camelback addition is appropriately set back from the front facade.

#### DON'T

- Do not add dormers or vertical elements such as towers to building types that would not historically have had them.
- Do not build a second-story addition flush with the front facade.



This second-story addition is built too close to the front facade.

### INCREASING THE FOOTPRINT OF A BUILDING

Another common strategy for increasing the size of a building is to expand its footprint. The feasibility of this approach depends on the placement of the original building on the site and whether there is room within the side or rear yards for an expansion. Zoning regulations concerning setbacks and minimum yard requirements may restrict where and how an addition is sited.

Many of the lots within Gretna's historic districts are relatively long and narrow, conforming to early development patterns. Gretna's most common building type, the shotgun, maintains similar proportions. Because of the way shotguns are typically sited, there are two main options for expansion.

- First, it might be possible to continue to add to the length of the building. In fact, many existing shotguns have rear rooms that were added over time, most often to accommodate additional bedrooms, kitchens, small baths, or utility closets.
- Second, there might be enough room within a side yard to add a small addition (making the overall plan ell-shaped). Such additions are best located toward the rear of the property, where they will have less of an impact on the facade.

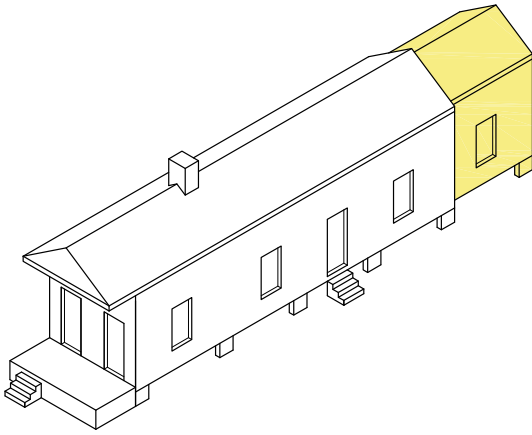
For building types with more horizontal proportions (e.g., Creole cottages and wide bungalows), rear additions are generally a more appropriate solution.

On large sites with ample room for expansion, consider incorporating a transitional space such as a hall or passageway to visually divide a new wing from an existing building.



**DO**

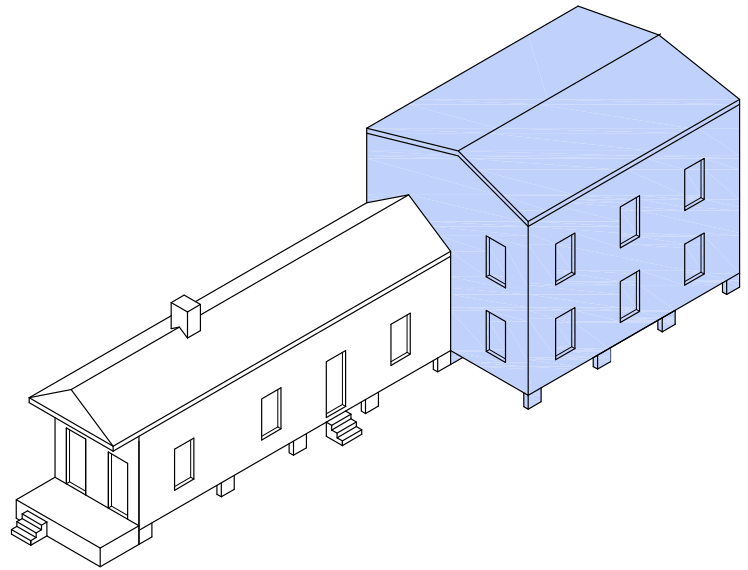
- Do consider rear-yard additions first, as they typically have very little impact on the historic streetscape.
- Side-yard additions should be set back from the street so as not to visually impact the front facade.
- It is generally appropriate to maintain similar proportions for doors and windows, and to align their openings (heads and sills) with the existing building.
- Additions typically have simpler trim and detailing that complement (but don't necessarily replicate) the trim and detailing on the original building.



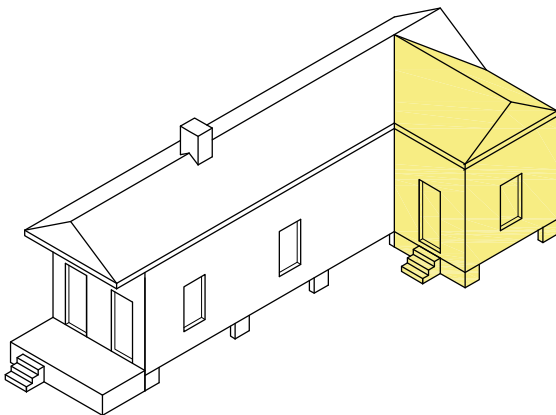
This rear addition is appropriately scaled for this shotgun. The wall plane is set back one foot to signal that it is an addition and not part of the original building.

**DON'T**

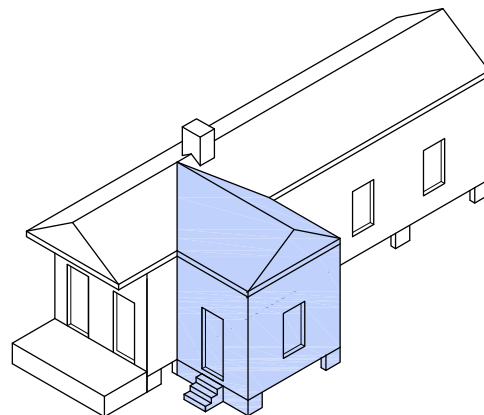
- Do not construct an addition at the front elevation of a building.
- Do not relocate a building's primary entrance to a new side or rear addition.



This rear addition is too large and overscaled in relation to the existing shotgun.



This side addition is appropriately set back from the street.



This side addition is too close to the street. Also, the front door was inappropriately relocated to the addition and the original front steps removed.

## DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

### DO



This camelback addition is set back an appropriate distance from the facade.



Both the front dormer and early rear addition are appropriately scaled and are secondary to the main house.



This side addition provides additional living space and supports an adjacent carport.

### DON'T



This second floor addition is too close to the front of the building and projects awkwardly over the side.



The upper story addition to this Creole cottage is out of scale and compromises the historic integrity of the building's facade.



This porch was inappropriately filled in to accommodate a garage.



## BUILDING ELEVATION

Any proposal to elevate a historic property must carefully consider the building's relationship to other properties within the neighborhood. The increased height, taller foundations, and expanded runs of stairs associated with elevated buildings present unique design challenges that must be thoughtfully addressed in order to minimize any potential negative impacts on a district's architectural character. It is the intent of this section to provide guidelines and examples to allow elevated buildings, whether lifted a few feet or a full story above grade, to better fit within their historic neighborhoods.

Gretna's two historic districts comprise a number of different building types (see Part 3: Residential Types and Styles) that reflect architectural preferences and styles over various periods of development. Each building type was distinguished, in part, by its height above grade.

- *Creole cottages* were typically built low to the ground, with the living area situated no more than 2 to 3 feet above grade.
- *Center-hall cottages* often had main floors approximately 5 feet above grade.
- *Shotgun houses*, with their myriad variations, were initially built with low piers and first floors approximately 2 feet to 3 feet above grade. They typically had chain walls with ornamental cast-iron vents on the front façade and exposed piers on the sides and rear. Beginning in the 1910s, corresponding roughly with the influence of the Craftsman style and the growing popularity of the automobile, some shotguns were built higher off the ground (approximately 8 feet above grade) to incorporate additional storage or garage space.
- *Bungalows*, most commonly associated with the Craftsman style, were typically raised between 3 feet and 8 feet off the ground. Stairs and landings featured prominently in the composition of their asymmetrical façades.

While most property owners today choose to elevate their homes in order to minimize potential impacts from flooding and storms, others do so to gain additional living or storage space or to provide room for a garage. The guidelines in this section address both approaches to building elevation.



An example of a Craftsman-style bungalow originally built as a raised residence



An example of a Neoclassical Revival-style raised residence

### DEFINITIONS

**Raised Dwelling:** A structure originally designed and built with a first-floor living area in the range of 5 feet to 8 feet above grade. Examples include raised center-hall cottages, raised bungalows and raised basement houses.

**Elevated Dwelling:** An existing structure that is lifted and placed on a new elevated foundation, necessitating new columns, piers, posts, or raised foundation walls.

**Base Flood Elevation:** The elevation, in feet above or below sea level, shown on the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM), to which floodwater is expected to rise during a base flood (i.e., a flood having a one percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year). Building owners are typically required to meet the Base Flood Elevation when substantially improving a property. All requirements relating to building elevation should be verified with the City of Gretna's Department of Building & Regulatory Inspections.

**Open Foundations:** Foundations characterized by the use of piers or piles. The resulting open area under the elevated structure may be screened with non-structural porous panels (e.g. lattice panels) through which rising flood water can flow freely.

**Closed Foundations:** In a closed foundation, perimeter walls (of masonry, concrete, or wood studs) enclose the area beneath the main level of the structure.



## LIMITED ELEVATION CHANGE (TO MEET OR MINIMALLY EXCEED BASE FLOOD ELEVATION)

This approach generally involves raising an existing building a few additional feet to meet or minimally exceed the required Base Flood Elevation (BFE). Throughout most of Gretna's historic districts, this means elevating a structure to be approximately 3-4 feet above grade. Typically, this involves the replacement of piers on both sides of the house, construction of a new chain wall at the front porch, and new porch steps. There is generally very little noticeable impact to the streetscape with this type of minimal elevation.

### DO

- From the standpoint of maintaining architectural character, it is advisable to elevate historic buildings only the amount needed to meet Base Flood Elevation.
- Consider a building's type and style to understand if a proposed change in elevation is within the range of what might be considered historically appropriate.
- Chain walls along front facades and porches should be rebuilt. Retain and replace any existing vents, and match the finish of the original material (e.g. stucco, brick, or historic pressed concrete block). See Part 5: Guidelines: Repair & Renovation for additional information regarding foundation design.



This bracketed shotgun has been minimally elevated. Landscaping effectively screens the foundation and provides a graceful transition to the ground plane.



An example of a historic shotgun in which the first floor sits approximately 4 feet above grade

### DON'T

- Unless the concrete block is of the historic pressed variety, do not leave new concrete piers or chain walls exposed on the front facade of the building.
- Although new treads and risers will likely be needed, do not alter the position or orientation of the front steps unless site constraints (e.g. a shallow setback) require it.



This Craftsman double shotgun was elevated more than 6 feet above grade, the concrete block chain wall was inappropriately left exposed, and the original front steps consolidated and repositioned.



This two-story home was elevated approximately 6 feet above grade and the front porch was enclosed and finished with a layer of stucco. The foundation vents appear out of proportion compared to the prominence of the foundation.

## SIGNIFICANT ELEVATION CHANGE (TO INCREASE THE BUILDING HEIGHT BY A FULL STORY)

A building elevated a full story above grade (approximately 8 feet to 9 feet) has the potential to significantly alter the streetscape, particularly on blocks where adjacent buildings share similar porch heights and ridgelines. Not only might such buildings be considerably taller than their neighbors, but they also often combine new elements such as expanded stairs and modern garages with existing historic porches and ridgelines. Potential impacts to architectural character, however, can be mitigated through the sensitive design of foundations, garages, and entry stairs. Each is addressed below.

**Foundations:** Whether designed as closed masonry walls or open piers, foundations can become imposing and out of scale in relation to neighboring houses when structures are significantly elevated. Measures may be taken to mitigate these impacts by selecting materials and finishes compatible with the rest of the house, using screening and landscaping to soften the transition to the ground, and carefully designing the foundation's outward appearance. A solution that may be appropriate for some structures, and was historically employed in many early 20th-century Craftsman residences, involves designing the ground floor as a wood-framed "first floor" supported by a low, continuous foundation. This allows the "first floor" to more easily accommodate windows and doors, and to continue the same wall cladding (e.g., wood weatherboards or stucco) used on the rest of the house.

**Garages:** Garages added to elevated historic homes should be kept as visually unobtrusive as possible. Modern roll-up garage doors can appear out of scale on historic houses, while carriage doors (typically smaller, of wood construction, and with greater architectural detail) may be a more suitable choice depending on the building's architectural style.

**Entry stairs:** Most of the residences located in Gretna's two historic districts have prominent porches and stairs that clearly signify a front entrance. Even when a house is elevated, it is important to maintain this sense of hierarchy. When houses are elevated, it is typically necessary to expand and sometimes reposition the front steps and landings, a task that is more difficult on tightly constrained urban lots.

### DO

- New expanded foundations should be designed to coordinate visually with the main portion of the house. For example, align structural piers with key façade elements (e.g., existing columns, colonnades, corners, trim elements, and other architectural features).
- Use landscaping to screen and lessen the visual impact of new foundations.
- Where possible, minimize the visual impact of new garage doors by setting them back from the street and limiting their prominence. Consider carriage doors which may be more appropriately scaled for historic buildings.
- Openings (e.g., windows, doors, vents) planned for the foundation/first floor should correspond to the design of the rest of the building in terms of materials, detailing, proportion, etc.
- Maintain historic porches and their important character-defining features.
- Plan new entry stairs to be sufficiently wide (typically at least the width of a bay) in order to maintain a sense of hierarchy, prominence, and scale.
- New entry stairs should generally have a closed foundation that matches or complements the foundation of the house.

### DON'T

- Do not elevate a historic structure more than one full story, which would significantly alter the building's architectural character.
- Do not leave new piers or concrete masonry walls exposed, particularly along any street-facing facades. Exposed concrete should generally be covered with a coat of paint or stucco.
- Even when an open foundation is the preferred alternative, the front of the building should be well-screened. A house should not look like it is supported on stilts.



## DO



This double shotgun was likely elevated in the early 20th century. The ground floor, with its recessed entrances and darker paint scheme, visually recedes into the background.



This Craftsman double effectively incorporates screening to minimize the impact of the elevated first floor. The front steps are sufficiently wide and are a prominent feature of the facade.



Likely elevated earlier in the 20th century, the structural piers and porch columns create strong vertical elements on this facade, and the front steps are well proportioned.

## DON'T



This Craftsman bungalow has been elevated more than 1 story above grade, and as a result the building towers over its more modestly scaled neighbors.



This front elevation could use screening or landscaping to lessen the impact of the visually dominant stucco chain wall.

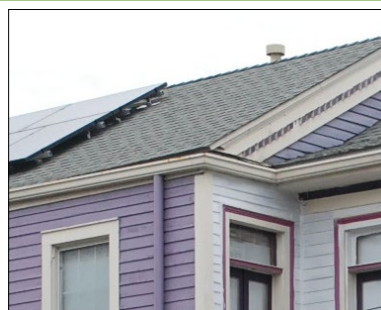


The porch roof of this elevated double shotgun was inappropriately extended, and the steel stairs and railing are not compatible with the rest of the house. The lack of ground-floor openings on the prominent side elevation is visually jarring.



# GUIDELINES: BUILDING & SITE AMENITIES

## 7



## INTRODUCTION

This section addresses auxiliary structures and amenities that have the potential to impact the streetscape within historic districts. Many of the topics covered, including fences, detached structures, solar panels, and antennas, are also addressed in the city's municipal code. The guidelines presented here are intended to complement, not replace, the city's regulations by adding perspective on design, historic context, and best practices.

## GARAGES AND CARPORTS

Garages and carports are functional structures designed to shelter one or more vehicles. Garages are fully enclosed, whereas carports are open-sided and usually attached to the side of a building.

While contemporary houses are often built with attached garages, early garages were more often free-standing. They were smaller than their modern counterparts, designed for one car only, usually with wide side-hinged carriage doors for vehicle access. While utilitarian in purpose, they were sometimes detailed to mimic the style and features of the main house.

The proliferation of both garages and carports in the 1920s and 30s corresponded to the rise in automobile ownership among the general population. Many early garages and carports have been demolished and replaced over the years with more modern structures. The few that remain, however, are generally considered to be contributing elements to Gretna's historic districts.

## DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

- Historic garages and carports should be preserved. They should be maintained and repaired in keeping with the guidelines described in Part 5.
- If historic garages are no longer suitable for sheltering vehicles, they should be adapted to an alternate use such as a storage or garden shed.
- New garages and carports should be located so as to minimize their visibility from the street.
- When designing a new garage, take cues from the appearance and detailing of the principal residence. For example,

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consider matching the roof pitch, form, color, and wall cladding.

- It is inappropriate to build an attached garage on a historic building that would not originally have had one. Consider a free-standing garage instead.
- New carports should generally be simple in appearance so as not to detract from the historic character of the building or district.



A Craftsman garage with a modern roll-up door retains its original use.

## FENCES AND GATES

Fences and gates are important and highly visible elements of a streetscape. They demarcate boundaries between public and private property, and also provide privacy and security for building owners. Until the early twentieth century, it was common to locate fences and gates adjacent to the sidewalk at the property's perimeter. Gradually the practice of fencing front yards fell out of favor, however, and by the 1940s typically only rear yards were enclosed.

While few early wood fences and gates remain in Gretna, many of those made from cast iron have lasted because of their high degree of material durability. Dating primarily from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they are considered to be important character-defining features of Gretna's historic districts and should be maintained, even when only partial remnants remain. Minor deterioration due to rust can usually be addressed by light sanding, followed by an appropriate primer and paint.

When contemplating new fences and gates for historic properties, some styles tend to be more complementary to older buildings than others. Factors to consider include material, the opacity and spacing of pickets, scale, and simplicity of design.

### DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

- Fences and gates in front yards, when permitted, should be kept relatively low (approximately 3 feet to 4 feet in height) with a fair degree of transparency in order to preserve the visibility of the primary building.
- Fences and gates for rear yards can generally be taller and more opaque, allowing for greater privacy.
- Generally speaking, the more modest the building, the simpler the fence design. So, for the traditional shotguns and bungalows common in Gretna, simple wood picket or metal fences would be considered most appropriate.
- Wood picket fences in front yards should be painted or stained with a solid, opaque finish. Light wood stains or clear coats are more appropriate for the taller capped pine, cedar, or redwood fences usually found in rear yards.
- Metal fencing should be either wrought or cast iron, or an alternate material similar in appearance (aluminum with a matte black painted finish is acceptable.)
- Solid masonry walls are generally considered inappropriate in front yards unless their presence can be supported by historic documentation.
- Fence types considered *inappropriate* when visible from the street include vinyl fencing, chain-link, and barbed wire. Exposed concrete block piers are also discouraged.

#### HISTORIC MATERIAL: Cast Iron

Cast iron is a brittle form of iron that is cast or poured into a mold to take on an infinite number of shapes. Beginning in the mid-19th century, the New Orleans area had several foundries that produced both heavy equipment and ornamental cast-iron work, from steam engines to delicately scrolled railings. Most of Gretna's historic cast iron takes the form of fences and gates, which outpaced wood picket varieties in popularity in the second half of the 19th century. One of the best-known local manufacturers, Hinderer's Iron Works, produced many of Gretna's historic iron fences. Their work is often marked with a small plaque that bears the company name. These fences are irreplaceably important visual components of the city's historic streetscapes.





## SHEDS AND GAZEBOS

Small tool and garden sheds, gazebos, and similar structures that are visible from the public way can impact the historic integrity of a site and its surroundings. These small structures should be treated with the same care and attention to detail accorded to the main building, and should be maintained and repaired in keeping with the guidelines described in Part 5.

### DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

- Sheds and similar structures should be located in rear yards when possible.
- If an existing shed or outbuilding is visible from the street and detracts from a historic building or property, consider screening it from view with fencing or landscaping.
- When designing or selecting a new shed, consider matching the material, color, style, or detailing of the main building.



Historic shed

## SOLAR PANELS AND ANTENNAS

As people consider various strategies for increasing the energy efficiency of their buildings, one option growing in popularity involves the installation of roof-mounted solar panels. While individual solar panels are approximately 3 feet by 5 feet, they are typically grouped together in larger arrays to provide the desired wattage. An installation can occupy anywhere from 100 square feet to well over 400 square feet of roof area. Because solar installations are visually prominent, they have the potential to significantly impact the historic integrity of a property.

Antennas and satellite dishes are also examples of building-mounted equipment that can affect the integrity of a historic property. Because of this, the City of Gretna restricts antennas, aerials, and satellite dishes within historic districts to locations that are not visible from the public way (see Municipal Code Section 52-9(6) in Part 9: Appendix).

### DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS FOR SOLAR INSTALLATIONS

- The City of Gretna's municipal code (Section 52-9(6)) requires that solar installations within historic districts be a minimum of 10 feet behind the front wall of the structure, a minimum of 12 inches below the ridgeline, and project less than 8 inches above the roof surface.
- Flat-roof structures should also have solar panels set back from the roof edge a minimum of 10 feet. Pitch and elevation should be adjusted to reduce visibility from the public way.
- When solar panels are installed on buildings that are considered to be historic, the installation should be reversible (i.e., it should be possible to remove the panels without harming the original structure.)
- Solar panels should be positioned behind existing architectural features such as parapets, dormers, and chimneys to limit their visibility.
- Select solar panels and mounting systems that are compatible in color with the existing roof.
- For new construction within historic districts, solar panel installations should be designed from the start to be as unobtrusive as possible. When possible, they should be placed towards the rear of the site.



These solar panels are appropriately set back from the facade.



## OTHER EQUIPMENT

Air-conditioning condensers, water heaters, generators, and trash dumpsters are examples of equipment that can impact the historic integrity of a site and its surroundings. Generally, these are best located in a rear yard out of view from the public way. If that is not an option, then they should be set back from the street to the extent possible and screened with solid landscaping (such as shrubs) or fencing.

## ACCESSIBILITY

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), passed in 1990, is a comprehensive piece of legislation intended to ensure that individuals with disabilities are not discriminated against and that they have the same opportunities as others in areas such as employment, public accommodations, and transportation. This means that people with disabilities (including those who may be wheelchair bound, or vision- or hearing-impaired) should be able to work, eat, and shop within their communities.

Federal regulations, standards, and model building codes have been developed that mandate the level of accessibility required for particular types of buildings and circumstances. While new construction must comply with accessibility requirements, older structures built prior to the enactment of the law often lack accessible features. Many are brought into compliance only as they are renovated.

Historic properties (those that are listed or are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, or properties designated as historic under state or local law) must still comply with the provisions of the ADA. However, if following the usual standards would threaten to destroy the building's historic significance, then alternative standards may be considered. The goal is to provide the highest level of access with the lowest level of impact to the property.

The law applies to places of public accommodation, so private residences are generally exempt. However, it is good practice to consider how any building might be made more accessible, whether part of an immediate building project or a plan for the future. Often, accessible features extend benefits to other members of the community (ramps and low thresholds, for example, are much appreciated by parents with strollers, the elderly, and others who have difficulty with steps).

The recommendations below primarily relate to site access, entrances, and doors, as these are the main exterior features under HDC review likely to be impacted. Steps, landings, doors, and thresholds often pose barriers for persons with physical disabilities. A number of solutions are available to increase accessibility while limiting the impact to a building's historic integrity.

## DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

- Any work to increase a building's accessibility should be carefully planned and undertaken to prevent the loss of character-defining spaces, features, and finishes.
- Whenever possible, access to historic buildings should be through a primary public entrance. It may be possible to modify existing entrances (e.g., by adjusting hardware or thresholds) to make them more accessible.
- If the original primary entrance cannot be made accessible without compromising character-defining features, then a new accessible entrance should be located as close to the principal entrance as possible.
- Historic doors generally should not be replaced, nor should door frames on the primary elevation be widened, as these actions can alter important character-defining features. However, if historic doors have already been replaced, there may be more flexibility in modifying the entrance to increase accessibility.
- Ramps or lifts should be designed to be as unobtrusive as possible. Railings should generally be simple, and materials should complement the building's exterior.

# GLOSSARY & ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## 8



## GLOSSARY

**Accessory building:** a structure detached from a principal building on the same lot that is incidental and subordinate to the principal building or use

**Accessory use:** a use of land or of a building or any portion thereof that is incidental and subordinate to the principal use of the land or building and located on the same lot with the principal use

**Addition or Enlargement:** any construction that increases the size of a structure in terms of site coverage, height, building depth or width, or floor area

**Alteration:** any change because of new construction, repair, or maintenance that changes the architectural integrity of an historic district, building, or landmark

**Applique:** applied ornament

**Arcade:** a series of arches supported by columns or piers

**Arch:** a curvilinear structural opening

**Architrave:** the lowest part of an entablature

**Attic:** all the space under a pitched roof of a building

**Awning:** a roof-like cover with no supports extending to the ground, constructed of fabric, metal, glass or other material, designed and intended for protection from the weather or as a decorative embellishment, and attached to the wall of a structure over a window, entryway, or walkway

**Balcony:** a platform projecting from an upper level of a building and surrounded by a railing

**Baluster:** a shaftlike element used to support a handrail

**Balustrade:** a railing composed of rails, balusters, and posts

**Bargeboard:** large boards salvaged from river barges and used to construct early buildings

**Barrel tile:** a half-cylinder-shaped clay roof tile

**Bays:** repetitive divisions into which a building is divided

**Beam:** a horizontal supporting member

**Bracket:** a structural or ornamental support element under eaves, balconies, or other overhangs

**Brick veneer:** a nonstructural layer of brick applied to an exterior wall

**Building:** any structure or any part of such structure when subdivided by division walls or party walls extending to or above the roof and without openings in such separate walls

**Cabinet:** a small room situated in the rear outer corner of certain house types, primarily French Colonial, Creole cottages, and American cottages

**Capital:** the uppermost part of a column or pilaster

**Canopy:** a rooflike cover carried by a frame supported by the ground, constructed of fabric, metal, glass or other material, designed and intended for protection from the weather or as a decorative embellishment, and projecting from the wall of a structure over an entryway

**Carport:** an open-sided shelter for automobiles

**Casement window:** a window that opens on hinges like a door

**Casing:** the exposed trim molding around a window that may be flat or milled with a decorative profile

**Cast iron:** iron shaped by placement in a mold, used for railing, fences, etc.

**Cheek wall:** either of two sides of a projection, such as a dormer or stoops

**Chinese cap:** a traditional, metal, ornamental roof vent

**Cistern:** a permanent artificial reservoir built to catch rainwater

**Colonnettes:** slender, turned wood columns

**Colossal column:** a column that continues uninterrupted for two or more stories

**Column:** a vertical support typically consisting of a base, a round shaft, and a capital

**Construction:** the erection of any on-site improvements on any parcel of ground

**Context:** the buildings, structures, landscape elements, and features immediately surrounding a historic resource

**Corinthian order:** the most ornate of the classical Greek orders, characterized by a bell-shaped capital decorated with acanthus leaves

**Cornice:** the upper, projecting section of an entablature or ornamental molding along the top of a building. Also, the molded trim above windows (*window cornice*) and doors (*door cornice*), generally limited to the building's facade.

**Cresting:** ornamentation occurring at an upper limit, such as the ridge of a roof

**Crossette frame:** an overlapping lintel over a doorway with a slight flaring out of the face of the doorway surround from the top to the bottom; also known as a Greek Key frame

**Deck:** a raised platform built above grade on support structures that is open to the sky and attached to the principal building; a deck is distinguished from a terrace in that a terrace is a raised surface constructed above grade built upon a solid base

**Demolition:** the complete, partial, or constructive removal of a building from any site

**Dentils:** closely spaced blocks in a cornice or gable; typically found in association with Greek Ionic and Corinthian orders

**Dimensional lumber:** lumber cut at saw mills to accepted industry standards

**District:** a part, zone, or geographic area within the city within which certain zoning or development regulations apply

**Doric order:** the simplest of the classical Greek orders, distinguished by columns with unadorned capitals and no bases

**Dormer:** a roofed projection on the sloping surface of a roof that features a glazed or slatted opening

**Double-hung window:** a window type introduced to New Orleans in the early 1800s, consisting of two sashes that operate through vertical movement

**Drip edge:** a projecting molding over an exterior door or window opening for catching and shedding rainwater

**Drop siding:** a type of weatherboard with a depression in the upper part of each board; also known as droplap siding

**Eave:** the overhanging lower edge of a roof

**Efflorescence:** the migration of water-soluble salts via capillary action to the face of the brick resulting in a white and powdery surface

**Entablature:** in classical architecture, the horizontal part of a classical order supported by columns or pilasters and consisting of an architrave, the frieze, and the cornice

**Exterior:** all outside surfaces of any buildings

**Facade:** the front wall of a building

**Fanlight:** a fan-shaped or semicircular window over a door or window with radiating muntins

**Fascia:** the horizontal trim board affixed to the ends of roof rafters. When applied to a sloping gable end, it is sometimes called a *rake fascia* or a *rake board*.

**Fenestrations:** the window and door openings in a building

**Finial:** the topping ornament of a roof gable, turret, baluster, post, etc.

**Fish-scale shingles:** wooden shingles cut in a shape to resemble fish scales

**Flashing:** pieces of sheet metal or other thin, impervious material installed to prevent the passage of water into a structure from an angle or joint



**Flat-headed window:** a window whose uppermost part is horizontal as opposed to arched

**Flush siding:** flat-faced boards nailed edge to edge to form the appearance of a flat wall

**Fluting:** closely spaced, parallel, vertical channeling on the shaft of a column or pilaster

**Footprint:** the form of a building on a site

**Frieze:** the middle part of a classical entablature

**Gable:** the triangular upper part of a wall formed by the roof pitch

**Gallery:** exterior space under the main roof of a house; porch and gallery are often used interchangeably

**Grade:** ground level

**Grille:** a grating forming a barrier or a screen

**Gutter:** a channel placed at the eaves for carrying off rainwater

**Half-timbering:** a method of wall construction in which the wooden structural members are exposed on the exterior of the wall with stucco infill between

**Hip roof:** a roof with four uniformly sloped sides

**Historic building:** a structure, site, or monument that is at least fifty years old and is determined to have historical significance, which may be defined by its architectural or cultural value

**Historic district:** a designated grouping of historic resources

**Historic preservation:** a broad range of activities related to the protection, maintenance, and care of elements of the built environment that reflect its cultural heritage

**Integrity:** the authenticity of a property's historic identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the property's historic period

**Ionic order:** an order of classical Greek architecture characterized by columns with a scroll-like capital

**Jigsaw work:** decorative woodwork, generally curvilinear in shape, common in the Victorian era and produced by the use of a jigsaw

**Joist:** a beam supporting a floor or a ceiling

**Light:** a glass pane in a window or door

**Lintel:** the horizontal structural element above a window or door, usually carrying the wall load above

**Mansard roof:** a roof with a double slope on all four sides, the lower slope much steeper than the upper

**Massing:** the overall composition of the exterior of the major volumes of a building, especially when the structure has major and minor elements

**Millwork:** woodwork shaped or dressed by means of a rotary cutter

**Modillions:** small bracket-like ornamentation under the cornice of a classical entablature or in a gable

**Molding:** a linear decorative element or curved strip used for ornamentation or trimwork

**Mortar joints:** the exposed joints of mortar in masonry

**Mullion:** the vertical element separating two window or door frames

**Multi-light:** having many lights or glass panes, as a window or door

**Muntin:** the narrow molding separating individual panes of glass in a multipaned window sash

**Ogee parapet:** a parapet with an S-shaped profile at its raised central panel

**Overhang:** an extension of the roof system beyond the building's exterior walls that protects the upper portion of exterior walls from rain and direct sun

**Parapet:** a low wall or railing along the edge of a roof

**Pedestal:** a support for a column

**Pediment:** a low-pitched gable in the classical manner; also used in miniature over doors or windows

**Pier:** a square or rectangular support for a structure generally of brick or concrete block

**Piercework:** Ornamentation common in the Late Victorian period, created by cutting openings in various shapes in a solid piece of wood

**Pilaster:** a flattened, ornamental column attached to a wall

**Porch:** a structure, which can be enclosed or unenclosed, that projects from the exterior wall of a structure, has direct access to the street level of the structure, and is covered by a roof or eaves; an unenclosed porch is a porch that is open on all sides; an enclosed porch is a porch that is enclosed by walls, screens, lattice, or other material; a screened-in porch is considered an enclosed porch

**Porte cochere:** a covered entrance for the passage of vehicles

**Portico:** a covered entrance to a building

**Post:** a structural member, usually wood, set in an upright position and used as a support; a pillar; also, the structural element supporting a balustrade

**Quoin:** a stone, brick, or wood block used to accentuate the outside corners of a building

**Rafter:** a sloping structural member of a pitched roof

**Rake:** the inclined, usually projecting edge of a sloped roof

**Reconstruction:** the act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location

**Rehabilitation:** the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features that convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values

**Renovation:** the act or process of repairing and/or updating a structure to make it usable again, without attempting to restore its historic appearance or duplicate original construction methods or materials

**Restoration:** the act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of features from other periods in its history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period

**Repointing:** the process of removing deteriorated mortar from the joints of a masonry wall and replacing it with new mortar. May sometimes be referred to as “tuck pointing.”

**Ridge cap:** a convex or angled roof tile covering the ridge of a roof

**Rising Damp:** the migration of moisture from the soil into the masonry through capillary action

**Roof pitch:** the slope of a roof, often expressed in a ratio of rise to run

**Round-headed window:** a window whose uppermost part is rounded

**Rusticated:** rough-surfaced stonework

**Sash:** the wood frame of a window in which the glass panes are set

**Segmental-arch head:** the uppermost part of a door or window constructed in the shape of a circle with linear sides

**Shed roof:** a roof that is pitched in only one direction

**Shingles:** a wall or roof covering consisting of small overlapping pieces, square or patterned

**Shutter:** a hinged movable cover, usually of wood, for a window or door

**Side gallery:** a narrow covered side porch serving as an exterior corridor

**Sidelights:** stationary glass panes flanking an entrance door

**Siding:** the material used to cover the exposed side of a wood-frame building (weatherboard, drop siding, etc.)

**Sign:** any inscriptions or logos used for advertising purposes, whether painted upon, attached to, erected on or otherwise maintained on any premises and containing any inscriptions by which anything is made known, to designate an individual, a firm, an association, a corporation, a profession, a business, a commodity or product, which is visible from any public street and is used to attract attention

**Sill:** a horizontal member forming the lowest portion of a building or window; also the bottom of a door

**Single-hung window:** fixed upper sash above a vertically rising lower sash

**Site plan:** the development plan for one or more lots on which is shown the existing and proposed conditions of the lot including: topography, vegetation, drainage, floodplains, marshes and waterways; open spaces, walkways, means of ingress and egress, utility services, landscaping, structures and signs, lighting, and screening devices; any other information that reasonably may be required in order that an informed decision can be made by the approving authority

**Soffit:** the underside of a roof overhang

**Spindle:** a turned decorative wooden element

**Stile:** any of various upright members framing panels of a door or window

**Stoop:** steps that lead directly to the entrance without a landing or porch

**Story:** that portion of a building, other than a cellar, included between the surface of any floor and the surface of the next floor above it or, if there is no floor above it, then the space between the floor and the ceiling

**Stucco:** a smooth plaster exterior finish traditionally composed of sand, lime, water, varying amounts of Portland cement, and possible pigments or other additives. When applied directly to masonry surfaces, stucco becomes an integral part of the wall when set.

**Strap hinges:** hinges, used primarily on shutters and gates, that are attached to the face instead of the side

**Stucco:** exterior plaster

**Surrounds:** the framework and associated trim around a door or window

**Swags:** classical ornamentation resembling evergreen branches hanging in a curve between two points

**Tongue and groove:** a joint made by fitting a raised area or tongue on the edge of one member into a corresponding groove in the edge of another member to produce a flush surface

**Transom:** a glazed opening over a door or window

**True divided light:** a window or door in which the glass is divided into several small panes

**Turned wood:** wooden elements such as spindles or balusters produced by being turned on a lathe

**Vergeboard:** an ornamental board attached to the projected eave of a gable roof

**Volute:** spiral- or scroll-shaped ornament, typically found on Ionic column capitals

**Weatherboard:** a long, narrow board, usually slightly thicker on one edge, used for siding; applied horizontally and slightly overlapping

**Wood frame:** refers to a building whose structural elements are composed of a wood frame constructed of small dimensional lumber and held together with nails

**Wrought iron:** iron worked into shape by manual effort; used in balcony railings, fences, gates, hardware, etc.

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### History of Gretna and Jefferson Parish

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## State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)

The Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office/Division of Historic Preservation in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, operates under the umbrella of the Department of Culture, Recreation & Tourism in the Office of Cultural Development. The SHPO staff works closely with the National Park Service and Department of the Interior, and they are responsible for two preservation-related programs that may be of interest to the citizens of Gretna:

- **Historic Preservation Tax Incentives.** Historic properties located within Gretna's National Register Historic District may be eligible for a 20% federal rehabilitation tax credit, a 25% state commercial rehabilitation tax credit, or a 25% state residential rehabilitation tax credit. Individually designated National Register landmarks may also be eligible for some of the credits. Historic properties located within the City of Gretna Cultural District may be eligible for a 25% state commercial tax credit. Rehabilitation projects must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, as well as several additional requirements that can be found on the SHPO's website. Visit <http://www.crt.state.la.us/hp/> for more information.
- **National Register of Historic Places.** The SHPO evaluates all applications for inclusion on the federal government's list of historically significant sites and structures. Property owners interested in whether their property is eligible should visit [http://www.crt.state.la.us/hp/national-register/eligibility\\_guidelines.aspx](http://www.crt.state.la.us/hp/national-register/eligibility_guidelines.aspx) to learn more.

## Restoration Tax Abatement Program

Properties located within the boundaries of Gretna's National Register Historic District may be eligible for the state's Rehabilitation Tax Abatement Program. Under this program, the assessed value and the property assessment of a commercial or owner-occupied property that has undergone renovation can be frozen at the pre-improvement level for five years. Renovations as well as additions are eligible improvements. Visit [http://www.crt.state.la.us/hp/tax\\_abatements.aspx](http://www.crt.state.la.us/hp/tax_abatements.aspx) or <http://www.louisianaeconomicdevelopment.com/page/restoration-tax-abatement> for more information.

## Organizations

### National

National Park Service (<http://www.nps.gov/index.htm>)

- Helpful online resources such as topic-based *Preservation Briefs* and *Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*

National Trust for Historic Preservation (<http://www.preservationnation.org>)

- A privately funded nonprofit organization that works to save America's historic places

National Center for Preservation Technology and Training, Natchitoches, Louisiana (<http://ncptt.nps.gov>)

- Informational resource for materials conservation that advances the application of science and technology to historic preservation

Association for Preservation Technology International (<http://www.apti.org>)

### State

Louisiana Office of Cultural Development, Division of Historic Preservation (<http://www.crt.state.la.us/hp/>)

- Tax credits
- National Register of Historic Places
- Main Street program
- Grant opportunities
- Archaeology

State Library of Louisiana, Louisiana Collection (<http://www.state.lib.la.us>)

### Local

Historic New Orleans Collection, Williams Research Center (<http://www.hnoc.org>)

New Orleans Public Library, Louisiana Division (<http://www.neworleanspubliclibrary.org/~nopl/spec/speclist.htm>)

Preservation Resource Center (<http://www.prcno.org>)

- Recommendations for architectural salvage resources and qualified millwork shops

Tulane University, Southeastern Architectural Archives (<http://seaa.tulane.edu>)

Tulane University, Louisiana Research Collection (<http://larc.tulane.edu>)

# APPENDIX

## 9



The following ordinance, Ordinance No. 4653, was adopted by Gretna City Council on February 11, 2015.

### Chapter 52. Historic Preservation

- Sec. 52-1. Definitions.
- Sec. 52-2. Purpose.
- Sec. 52-3. Historic District Commission; appointment; term.
- Sec. 52-4. Same—Powers and duties.
- Sec. 52-5. Same—Areas of jurisdiction.
- Sec. 52-6. Historic district powers and regulations.
- Sec. 52-7. Procedures for Application of Certificate of Appropriateness.
- Sec. 52-8. Submission Requirements for HDC Exterior Changes.
- Sec. 52-9. Certificate of Appropriateness - Criteria.
- Sec. 52-10. Recommendation and Action Thereon.
- Sec. 52-11. Appeals.
- Sec. 52-12. Enforcement powers.
- Sec. 52-13. Injunctions.
- Sec. 52-14. Neglect of Historic Structures.

#### Sec. 52-1. Definitions.

For the purpose of this chapter, the following definitions shall apply:

*Alteration.* Any change because of new construction, repair or maintenance, which changes the architectural integrity of an historic district, building or landmark.

*Applicant.* The record owner of the site and/or buildings located thereon, the lessee thereof or a person holding a “bona fide” contract to purchase same.

*Application.* The form required by the city administration for consideration by the Historic District Commission of any private building, structure or edifice, including fences, boundary walls, signs, or steps to be erected, altered, restored, moved or demolished in the historic districts; including but not limited to plot plans, surveys, elevations, photographs, architectural drawing, ornamental detail drawings, light pattern details and all other constructing documents as may be required by the administration or commission.

*Building.* Any structure or any part of such structure when subdivided by division walls or party walls extending to or above

the roof and without openings in such separate walls. The term “building” shall be construed as if followed by the words “or any part thereof.”

*Construction.* The erection of any on-site improvements on any parcel of ground.

*Demolition.* The complete, partial or constructive removal of a building from any site.

*Economic return.* The capacity of a building to generate revenue in the form of fair market rents. When the fair market rents less expenses for a building equal zero, the building shall be considered incapable of generating any net economic return on its value.

*Exterior.* All outside surfaces of any building.

*Exterior architectural features.* Exterior elements including but not be limited to, the architectural style, general design and general arrangement of the exterior of a structure, including the kind and texture of the building material, the type and style of all roofs, windows, doors, and signs.

*Historic building.* A building at least 50 years old with significant architectural value and integrity.

*Historic district.* An area designated by the city council as an historic district and declared to be subject to jurisdiction of this chapter.

*Landmark and landmark site.* An unimproved parcel of ground (landmark site) or parcel with improvements (landmark) of particular historic, architectural or cultural significance, which said parcel or parcels, plus improvements, if any:

- (1) Exemplify or reflect the broad cultural, political, economic or social history of the nation, state or community; or
- (2) Identify with historic persons or with important events in national, state or local history; or
- (3) Embody distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type inherently valuable for a study of a period, style or method of construction; of indigenous materials or craftsmanship; or
- (4) Represent notable work of a master builder, designer or architect whose individual ability has been recognized.

*Neglect of historic building.* The maintenance of any building resulting in deterioration of a building to the extent that either creates or permits unsightly, hazardous or unsafe conditions and/or conditions that will lead to the permanent loss of the

whole or any part of the structure.

*Ordinary repairs and standard maintenance.* Work done on a building to prevent deterioration, decay or damage of a building on any part thereof in order to restore same as nearly as practical to its condition prior to such deterioration, decay or damage.

*Substantive change.* Changes which alter the historical or architectural character such as windows, columns, porches, doors and exterior ornamental decorative.

#### **Sec. 52-2. - Purpose.**

The purpose of this chapter is to promote the preservation of historic districts, buildings and landmarks for the educational, cultural, economic, and general welfare of the public through the preservation, protection, and regulation of such districts, buildings, and landmarks, within the city; to safeguard the cultural, social, economic, political, and architectural history of the city; to preserve and enhance the environmental quality of neighborhoods; to ensure the appropriateness of renovations and new construction in the district; to strengthen the city's economic base by the stimulation of the tourist industry; to establish and improve property values; to foster economic development; and to manage growth.

#### **Sec. 52-3. - Historic District Commission; appointment; term.**

A Historic District Commission (HDC) is hereby established and shall consist of (7) seven members recommended by the city council and appointed by the Mayor to four year terms of service. Members shall include one architect and one historian. The architect, the historian and two members shall be appointed at the beginning of the regular term of the mayor and city council. The remaining three members shall be appointed at the beginning of the third year of the regular term of the city council and mayor. In the event that an appointment of a specific discipline is not forthcoming within 60 days of a vacancy, the mayor may appoint a resident of a historic district or property owner of a historic district property without such qualification, subject to the approval of the council. In the event that an appointment by the mayor is not forthcoming within 60 days of a vacancy, the council may appoint and fill such vacancy. Nothing shall preclude the mayor from removing or replacing an appointment, with council approval and nothing shall prohibit the reappointment of any prior member of the committee to the new term.

#### **Sec. 52-4. - Same—Powers and duties.**

The historic district commission shall exercise only those duties which may be assigned to it by the mayor and the city council.

#### **Sec. 52-5. - Same—Areas of jurisdiction.**

(a) The Mechanickham-Gretna Historic District is hereby bounded by the east side of Gulf Drive, the north side of Sixth Street to the west side of Dolhonde, on the West; the north side of Twelfth Street on the South; the east side of Amelia Avenue on the East; and the Mississippi River on the North. The Mechanickham-Gretna Historic District map shall be on file in the city clerk's office where it is available for reference and review during normal business hours.

(b) The McDonoghville Historic District is hereby bounded by the east side of Ocean Avenue from the river to the Fourth Street right-of-way to the west side of Hancock Street to the Orleans Parish line and Mississippi River. The McDonoghville Historic District map shall be on file in the city clerk's office where it is available for reference and review during normal business hours.

(c) The National Register Historic District mostly included within the Mechanickham-Gretna Historic District. The National Register Historic District map shall be on file in the city clerk's office where it is available for reference and review during normal business hours.

(d) Any other local historic district that is established by the city council upon nomination of the mayor and approval by the Historic District Commission.

(e) The McDonoghville Cemetery.

(f) Any other historic building or landmark that is declared by the city council upon nomination of the mayor.

(g) Ceramic blue letter sidewalk tiles (or similar ceramic tile lettering) and bronze letter street identifiers are hereby declared landmarks.

#### **Sec. 52-6. - Historic district powers and regulations.**

(a) No private building, structure or edifice, including fences, boundary walls, signs, or steps shall be erected, altered, restored, moved or demolished within a district until a certificate of appropriateness has been provided by the Historic District Commission and the city has issued a permit for the activity. Ordinary repairs and standard maintenance shall not require such approval. Similarly, there shall be no excavating or moving of subsoil from earthworks of historical or archaeological importance without such approval.

(b) The Historic District Commission shall consider the exterior architectural features and the relationship of the exterior of the buildings concerned with all others in the district to avoid incongruity. In all instances, the city and HDC shall regulate those elements of the outside of a building, structure or edifice, including fences, boundary walls, signs, or steps that can be viewed from a public street.

(c) The style, scale, materials, and location of signs as defined in Article IV of Chapter 102 of this code within a district shall also require a certificate of appropriateness from the Historic



District Commission prior to zoning and permitting by the city. No certificate of appropriateness shall be issued for a sign or display that does not comply with the requirements of the sign ordinance found in Article IV of Chapter 102 of this code; however a certificate of appropriateness may be more restrictive than the requirements found for signs or displays in Article IV of Chapter 102 of this code.

(d) No structure within an historic district shall be allowed to deteriorate due to neglect. All property shall be reasonably maintained to prevent or avoid deterioration described the definition, "demolition."

#### **Sec. 52-7. Procedures for Application of Certificate of Appropriateness**

A. Whenever the Director of Building , Regulatory, and/or Permits becomes aware that an application has been filed for a permit affecting a property under the jurisdiction of the preservation commission, the city shall immediately notify chairman of the HDC that such an application has been filed.

B. The City shall make a preliminary determination on the completeness of an application, however the Historic District Commission shall have the final authority to determine when a filed application is complete and contains all required information. An application deemed incomplete by the commission shall not be considered to have been filed for the purposes of this ordinance.

C. The Historic District Commission shall establish a regular schedule for the hearings of the commission. One hearing shall be scheduled for each month unless no application for a certificate of has been submitted. However, the HDC must meet at least once every three (3) months even if no applications for a certificate of appropriateness have been submitted.

D. Notice of the time and place of a scheduled public meeting of the Historic District Commission shall be given by publication in a newspaper having general circulation in the city and placed on the City's official web site at least four (4) days before such meeting and by posting such notice on the bulletin board in the lobby of city hall.

E. At the scheduled public hearing, the applicant for a certificate of appropriateness shall have the right to present any relevant information pertaining to the application. Likewise, the city, the HDC, staff, and members of the public shall have the right to present any additional relevant information pertaining to the application. The HDC shall follow city council's rules of procedure specifying in detail how a public hearing shall be conducted and when comments and information from different sources shall be heard.

F. The HDC, at a public hearing, shall have the right to recommend changes and modifications to enable the applicant to meet the requirements of the HDC. The HDC may choose to convert the public hearing to a preliminary conference after an

application for a certificate of appropriateness has been filed.

G. The commission shall act upon an application, either approving, denying, or conducting a preliminary hearing and then deferring action until the next meeting of the commission , giving consideration to the factors set forth in Section 52-6 and 52-9 hereof. Evidence of approval of the application shall be by certificate of appropriateness issued by the commission and, whatever its decision, notice in writing shall be given to the applicant and the city building official within 48 hours.

H. The issuance of a certificate of appropriateness shall not relieve an applicant of the requirement for a companion building permit, special use permit, variance, or other authorization and compliance with any other requirement or provision of the laws of the city concerning zoning, construction, repair, or demolition. In all such cases, applicants are encouraged to apply first for a certificate of appropriateness as other city agencies will be advised by the commission in making their subsequent decisions.

I. No building permit which affects the historic district shall be issued by the city official prior to the issuance of a certificate of appropriateness by the commission. Even if a building permit is not otherwise required by the city ordinances for construction, alteration, demolition, or relocation of any resource, a certificate of appropriateness from the commission is required.

J. Application for a historic district certificate of appropriateness shall be made in the office of the building official. Each application shall be accompanied by a \$50.00 administration fee. Such application must be filed no later than 3 business days prior to any meeting of the HDC at which time such application is to be heard.

#### **Section 52-8. Submission Requirements to HDC for Exterior Changes**

A. The owner of any property within the Historic District shall apply for a certificate of appropriateness from the Commission before the commencement of any work in:

- (1) Demolition of an historic building.
- (2) Moving an historic building.
- (3) Material change by additions, reconstruction or alterations in the exterior appearance of existing buildings classified as historic.
- (4) Any new construction of a building or accessory building or structure if subject to view from a public street.
- (5) Change in existing walls and fences or construction of new walls and fences, if along a public street.
- (6) Change in the exterior appearance of existing non-historic buildings by additions, reconstruction, alteration or maintenance of exterior, if subject to view from a public street.

B. The application therefore shall be made to the HDC, accompanied by the full plans and specifications thereof so far as they relate to the proposed appearance, texture, materials, and

architectural design of the exterior, including the front, sides, rear and roof of such buildings, alterations or addition of any building or outbuilding, party wall, courtyard, sidewalk, driveway, parking area, fence or other dependency thereof.

#### **Sec. 52-9. Certificate of Appropriateness - Criteria.**

The HDC shall adhere to and seek compatibility of structures in the district in terms of size, texture, scale, and site plan. The following guidelines shall be applied in evaluating applications:

(1) New construction.

- a. All new construction shall be visually compatible with the buildings and environment with which they are related.
- b. The general design, scale, gross volume, arrangement, site, plan, texture, material and exterior architectural features of new construction shall be in harmony with its surroundings and shall not impair the historic character of the neighborhood.
- c. No one architectural style shall be imposed.
- d. Quality and excellence in design shall be major determinants.

(2) Exterior alterations.

- a. All exterior alterations to a building shall be compatible with the building itself and other buildings with which it is related, as provided in(1)b above and in applying these standards, the original design of the building shall be considered.
- b. Exterior alterations shall not affect the architectural character or historic quality of the building.

(3) Signs.

- a. General prohibitions of miscellaneous signs. The display of signs of a miscellaneous character visible from public streets, within an historic district of the city, except as otherwise provided in this code is prohibited.
- b. Signs must conform to character of section. Approval of the display of a sign in any historic district shall be granted by the commission only when they meet the requirements of Article IV of Chapter 102 of this code and, the appearance, color, size, position method of attachment, texture of materials and design of such signs conform to the quaint and distinctive character of an historic district or do not injuriously affect it or impair the value of the community or those buildings having architectural or historical value.
- c. What signs may advertise. No sign shall be displayed in an historic district unless it advertises a bona fide business conducted in or on the premises.
- d. Only one sign per bona fide business. Each bona fide business shall be allowed only one sign.
- e. Recommended Surface area of certain signs.
  1. Single-faced wall sign - no more than eight square feet
  2. Double-faced attached sign - no more than 16 square feet
  3. Detached sign – no more than 28 square feet per side

f. No sign shall be displayed in any manner whatsoever to disfigure or conceal any architectural feature or detail of any building

(4) Demolition. In considering an application for the demolition of a landmark or a building in an historic district, the following shall be considered:

- a. The historic or architectural significance of the building.
- b. The importance of the building to the historic character of the district.
- c. The special character and aesthetic interest that the building adds to the district.
- d. The difficulty or impossibility of reproducing such a building because of its design, texture, material or detail.
- e. The future utilization of the site.
- f. Cost considerations in restoration. Whenever a property owner shows that a building classified as historic is incapable of earning any economic return on its value, as appraised by a qualified real estate appraiser, or if new construction can be demonstrated by a property owner to be the highest and best use of the building site, such building may be demolished provided, however, that before a demolition permit is issued, notice of proposed demolition shall be given three times during a period of 30 days to afford interested persons the opportunity to acquire or to arrange for the preservation of such buildings.

(5) Restriction of intrusions. The reconstruction of buildings legally nonconforming to the surrounding uses and destroyed by fire, storms or other Acts of God shall be governed by the provisions of all applicable building codes and ordinances.

In addition, the city shall regulate the exterior design of such buildings as stipulated by the provisions of this chapter.

(6) Prohibition of aerials, antennas, and satellites, restrictions on solar panels. The construction or installation of aerials, antennas, satellite dishes, or solar panels of any type within an historic district shall require a historic district permit. Permits of aerials, antennas and satellite dishes shall not be denied when the installation is not visible from the street. Permits for solar panels shall not be denied when the installation is ten feet or more behind the front wall of the structure, 12 inches or more below ridgeline of the installation area of the structure, and less than eight inches above the roof surface.

#### **Sec. 52-10 Recommendation and Action Thereon**

The Historic District Commission shall, upon due consideration, render its decision concerning the submitted application, which may include such changes, if any, as in its judgment are reasonably necessary to comply with the requirements of this Ordinance, and send its decision, in writing, to the applicant and the Building Inspector. If the permit is approved, the Building Inspector shall promptly issue a permit for such work in conformance with the HDC's decision.

**Sec. 52- 11 Appeals**

A. Any person or persons aggrieved by any decision, act or proceedings of the Historic District Commission shall have a right to an appeal before the City Council for reversal or modification thereof; such appeal shall be lodged with the City Clerk, and the Mayor, or presiding officer of the City Council, shall have the right to stay all further action until the City Council shall have had an opportunity to rule thereon. Any such appeal shall be taken within 5 days, exclusive of holidays and weekends from date of the written decision, and the City Council may consider said appeal at its next general or special meeting, but, in any event, not more than forty-five days thereafter. The City Council may affirm a decision of the Historic District Commission by majority vote of all its members. The City Council shall have the right to reverse, change or modify any decision of the Historic District Commission by majority vote of all its members.

B. Any person or persons aggrieved by any decision of the city council shall have the right to file a civil suit within 30 days from the date of the decision in a court of competent jurisdiction under the usual rules of procedure governing same.

**Sec. 52-12. - Enforcement powers.**

Upon request, the building official shall make all necessary inspections in connection with the enforcement of this chapter. The building official shall have the same right to inspect premises in connection with the enforcement of this chapter as he now has in relation to other violations under his jurisdiction.

Failure to comply with the provisions of this chapter the rules and procedures of the city shall constitute a misdemeanor and shall be punishable under Section 1-6 of the city Code of Ordinances.

The city shall have the right to enforce any violations of this chapter by civil action for injunctive relief or other appropriate remedy brought on in the name of the city.

**Sec. 52-13. - Injunctions.**

Whenever any person has engaged in or is about to engage in any act or practice which constitutes or will constitute a violation of this chapter, the city may make application to the appropriate court for an order enjoining such act or practice, or requiring such person to refrain from such prospective violation or to remedy such violation by restoring the affected property to its previous condition. Upon a showing by the city that such person has engaged or is about to engage in such act or practice, a permanent or temporary injunction, temporary restraining order or other appropriate action shall be granted without bond.

**Sec. 52-14. - Neglect of historic structure.**

(a) In the event the city determines that a building or landmark is being demolished or allowed to deteriorate by neglect, it shall notify the owner of the preliminary finding, to appear at the next meeting of the Historic District Commission, and direct the owner to within 15 days from the date of notice to begin rectifying the conditions determined to be causing the demolition by neglect. Such notice shall be issued by certified mail to the last known address of the owner; or if the owner cannot be located, then the notice shall be attached to the building or landmark twice within a month.

(b) At the noticed meeting of the Historic District Commission the owner shall appear and give evidence concerning the initial determination of demolition by neglect.

(c) If after the hearing, the historic district advisory committee determines: (1) that the property is a contributing element to the historic district, and (2) that the building or landmark is being demolished or allowed to deteriorate by neglect, and (3) the owner has failed to commence work sufficient to remediate the cited conditions, the city may, through the building official or other appointed officer, bring charges against the owner for the violation of this chapter; and the city may cause such property to be repaired at its expense, which expense shall be paid by the owner and the city may file an affidavit to that in the office of the recorder of mortgages for the Parish of Jefferson, which notice shall constitute a lien and privilege against the property.

(d) If it is determined by the Historic District Commission that the property is not a contributing factor to the historic district the owner may be cited by the city under the provisions of Section 42-103(c) of this Code.

(e) If it is determined by the Historic District Commission that the owner has commenced work sufficient to remediate the cited conditions, no further action shall be taken by the city for a period of 60 days.