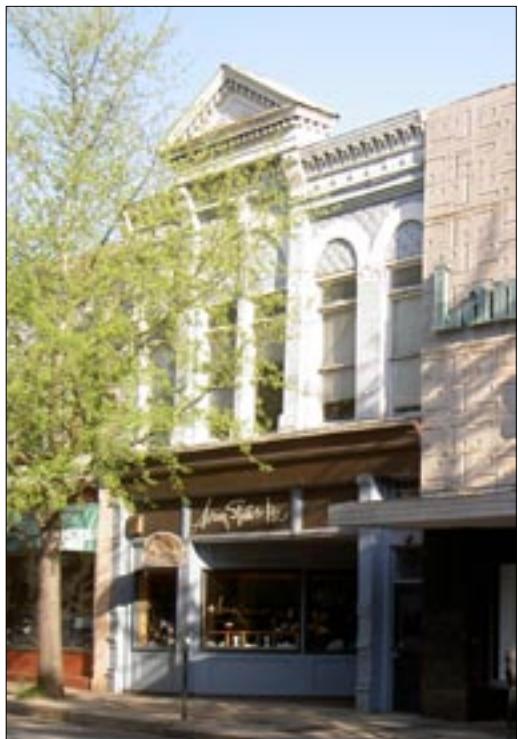


# Downtown Historic District Design Guidelines

## Athens-Clarke County, Georgia



**April 19, 2006**  
**Revised July 25, 2006**



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# **Downtown Historic District**

## **Design Guidelines**

### **Athens-Clarke County, Georgia**

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# Credits

**Athens-Clarke County Unified Government**

**Athens-Clarke County Citizen's Advisory Committee on  
Downtown Designation**

**Athens Clarke Heritage Foundation**

**Athens Downtown Development Authority**

**Citizens of Athens-Clarke County**

**Chamber of Commerce**

**Downtown Business Council**

**Downtown Property Owners**

**Prepared by:**

Winter & Company

1265 Yellow Pine Ave

Boulder, CO 80304

Phone: (303) 440-8445

Fax: (303) 443-0725

[www.winterandcompany.net](http://www.winterandcompany.net)

with

Historic Preservation Consulting, Jane Cassady

Hoshide Williams Architects, Jack Williams

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# Introduction

This document presents Design Guidelines for the Athens-Clarke County Downtown Historic District and other individual landmark properties within the Central Business District. The area now designated as the Downtown Historic District has been a significant educational, cultural and commercial center for over two centuries, and historic buildings found there remain tangible reminders of the history of Athens and Clarke County. These guidelines provide a means of preserving the historic resources of the Downtown Historic District while accommodating compatible development and redevelopment.

This document establishes guidelines for determining the appropriateness of improvements that may be planned within the district. An introductory section provides a general overview of the Design Guidelines framework, including a description of how to utilize the Design Guidelines, understand the format of the document and how to determine which Design Guidelines are relevant for any given project.



*The Franklin House sits on a the corner of Broad and Thomas Streets in the Downtown Historic District.*

## What are Design Guidelines?

Design Guidelines convey general policies about alterations to existing structures, additions, new construction and site work. The Design Guidelines define a range of appropriate responses to a variety of specific design issues.

## Why have Design Guidelines?

Design Guidelines help establish a common understanding of preservation principles and standards. Retaining the historic character that exists downtown is an important goal to Athens-Clarke County. The historic resources of Athens-Clarke County are finite and vulnerable to inappropriate alteration and demolition.

## Who uses the Design Guidelines?

These Design Guidelines have been written primarily for use by the Athens-Clarke County Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). They are also intended for use by property owners in making decisions about proposed rehabilitation and new construction projects that will be sensitive to the historic character of the district and individual landmarks.

The Athens-Clarke County Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) and Planning staff will use the guidelines for projects subject to their review. The Historic Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 8-5 of the Athens-Clarke County Code) requires the submittal of an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for exterior modifications to existing buildings, new construction projects, as well as other elements such as signs and surface parking (see ord. 8-5-5(a)). The HPC then applies the guidelines in its considerations for issuing such a COA.

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## **When to use the Design Guidelines**

The Design Guidelines should be consulted for projects which may affect the integrity of historic resources. While ordinary repair and maintenance are encouraged, seemingly minor alterations to a historic structure, such as enclosing a storefront or changing windows, can have a dramatic effect on the visual character of a historic structure and therefore, are of concern. The following is a list of common changes that can have a significant impact on the integrity of a historic structure:

- Construction of a new addition
- Alteration or restoration of exterior features of a historic building
- Removal or demolition, in whole or in part, of a historic building
- Alteration or restoration of a storefront
- Application of a new exterior siding material
- Addition of a new window or door openings
- Creation of a driveway or a parking area
- Construction or addition of a parking deck
- Application of architectural features and other miscellaneous modifications, such as cornices and bulkheads.

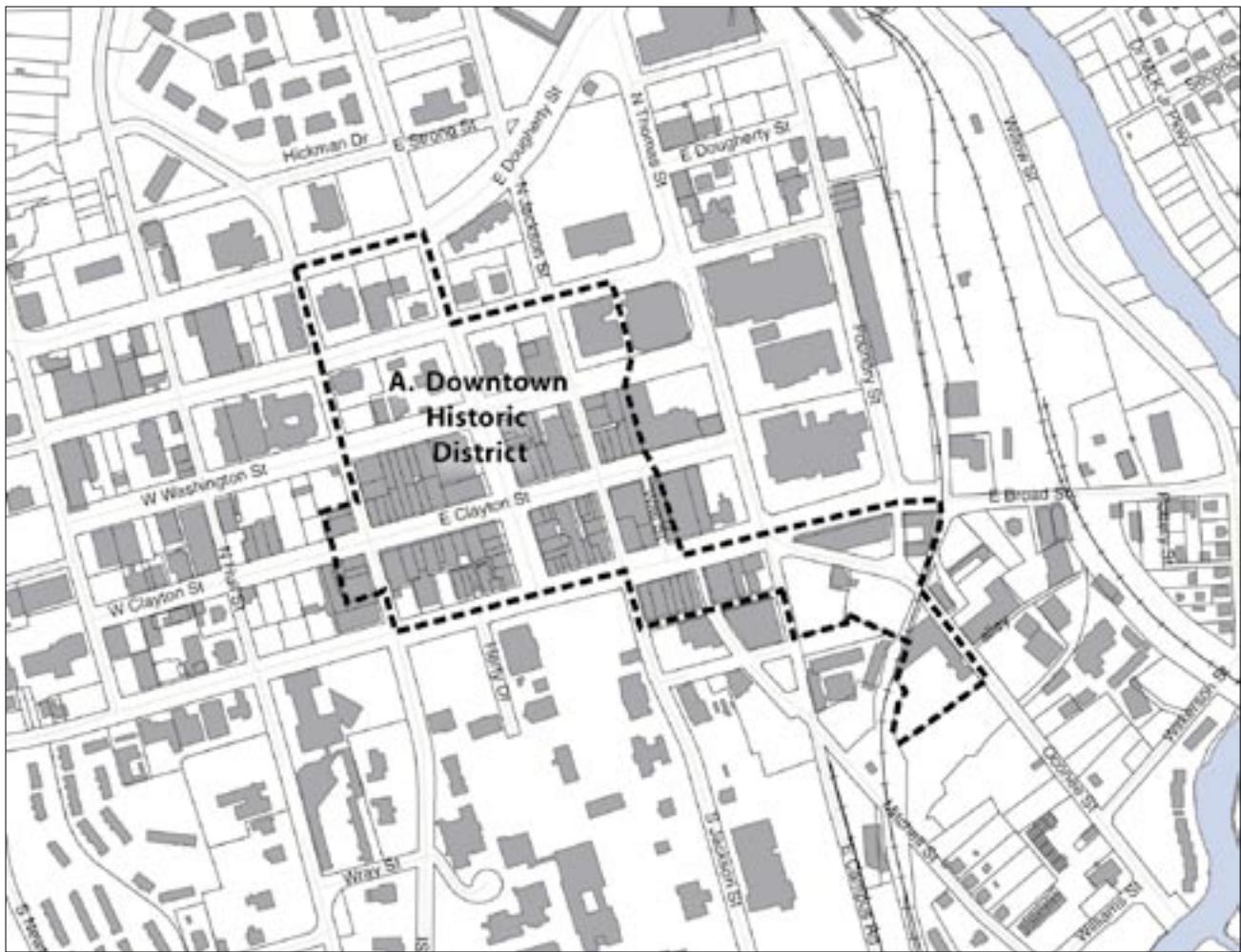
This list is **not** all inclusive, but is indicative of the types of changes to which these Design Guidelines apply. For questions regarding permits and the applicability of these guidelines, please contact the Planning Department at (706) 613-3515.

## **Where do the Design Guidelines Apply?**

The Design Guidelines apply to properties within the Downtown Historic District. The boundaries of the historic district are shown on the next page. In addition, they apply to other individually designated landmarks within the “Commercial-Downtown” (CD) Zone District (see the Official Zoning Map of Athens-Clarke County.)

## **Do Design Guidelines dictate taste?**

The Design Guidelines reflect basic approaches to design that will help preserve the historic integrity of the district. They do not dictate style, but they do require compatibility with the historic character of the district. They also reflect the values of the community, including their goals to preserve the historic core of Downtown Athens and landmark buildings in the CD Zone District.



**Athens Downtown Historic District Map**  
**Athens-Clarke County, Georgia**

 North  
Not to scale

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## Organization of the Document

The document is organized in the following chapters:

- **Introduction:** Provides a general overview of the design guidelines document.
- **Chapter 1: Purpose of Design Guidelines.** General overview of historic preservation purpose and policies.
- **Chapter 2: Design Character of the Historic District.** Summarizes the basic history of the area and describes different architectural styles. It also describes the character of the existing district.
- **Chapter 3: Rehabilitation of Historic Properties.** Design Guidelines for the rehabilitation or alteration of historic properties.
- **Chapter 4: New Construction Design Guidelines.** Design Guidelines for the construction of new buildings and alterations to non-historic structures.
- **Chapter 5: Parking Facilities.** Design Guidelines for new parking facilities and surface parking.
- **Chapter 6: Public Streetscape.** Design Guidelines for public streetscape improvements.
- **Chapter 7: General Design Guidelines.** Design Guidelines for specific design elements that could improve historic properties if installed appropriately.
- **Chapter 8: Signs.** Design Guidelines for the preservation of historic signs and the installation of new signs.
- **Appendices:** Provide other supplementary information that may be helpful when using this document.

Definitions of some terms used in this document appear in Appendices B and C; however, two important definitions are provided here due to importance:

**Contributing Property.** A building, site, structure, work of art or object that adds to the aesthetic qualities or historic values for which a historic district is significant because it possesses historic integrity reflecting the district's character or it independently meets the designation criteria. The property should meet an age criteria of fifty years, unless the property has exceptional significance.

**Non-contributing Property.** A building, site, structure, work of art or object that does not add to the aesthetic qualities or historic values for which a historic district is significant because it does not possess historic integrity reflecting the district's character and it does not independently meet the designation criteria.

## How the Guidelines Apply

Type of work:	Chapters to use:								
	Introduction	Chapter 1: Purpose of the Design Guidelines	Chapter 2: The Design Character of the Historic District	Chapter 3: Rehabilitation of Historic Properties	Chapter 4: New Construction Design Guidelines	Chapter 5: Parking Facilities	Chapter 6: Public Streetscape	Chapter 7: General Design Guidelines	Chapter 8: Signs
Work on a “contributing property” in the Downtown Historic District.	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Work on a “non-contributing” property in the Downtown Historic District.	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Work on a “new construction project” in the Downtown Historic District.	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Work on a “landmark property” in the CD Zone District.	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓

*This chart illustrates how the individual chapters of the guidelines apply to specific property types. See the appendix for an explanation of the terms used in the “type of work” column. To determine if a property is designated, please call the Athens-Clarke County Planning Department.*

 : This chapter applies to the project.

## Structure of Design Guidelines

Each design guideline presented includes several components that constitute the criteria upon which design review decisions will be made.

### Design Element

The guidelines are grouped into pertinent design element categories (e.g., site planning, building materials, storefronts).

### Policy Statement

Each design element category has a policy statement that explains Athens-Clarke County's basic approach to the treatment of that topic. In cases where the detailed Design Guidelines do not appear to address a situation, the general policy statement shall serve as the basis for determining appropriateness.

### Design Guidelines

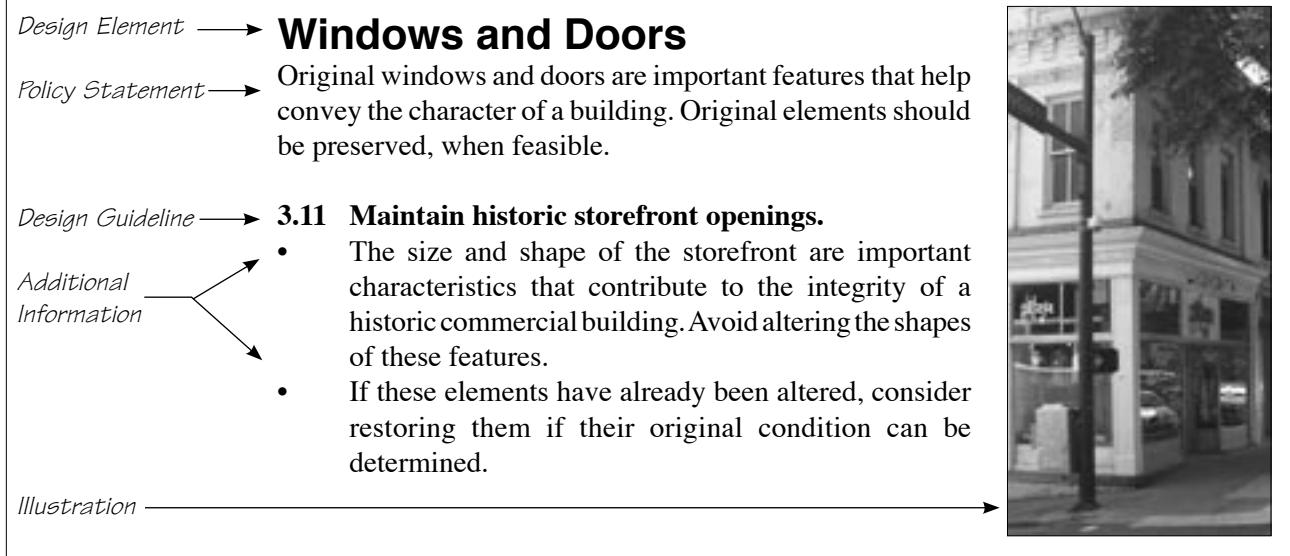
Specific Design Guidelines are numbered in order to reference them during the design review process. The guidelines are **not** numbered in order of importance.

### Additional Information

Supplementary information is listed as bulleted (•) statements, and may include additional requirements, or an expanded explanation of the guideline.

### Illustrations

Design Guidelines may be accompanied by a photograph and/or illustration that supports the guideline language. Illustrations are not included for all guidelines.



*Structure of the Design Guidelines.*

---

## The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC)

The Athens-Clarke County Historic Preservation Commission members are appointed by majority vote of the Mayor and Commission of Athens-Clarke County. They are considered a part of the planning functions of the unified government. The HPC consists of seven members who are residents of Athens-Clarke County.

The Historic Preservation Commission is charged with promoting, protecting and preserving the historic, cultural and aesthetic heritage of designated historic areas. The HPC is also responsible for hearing and deciding upon all applications for Certificates of Appropriateness. The HPC is ultimately responsible for preserving the qualities of designated properties in Athens-Clarke County. See *Athens-Clarke County Code, Chapter 8-5 Historic Preservation* for the complete ordinance.

## Design Review Process

### Application Process for Certificate of Appropriateness

#### ***Step 1. Determine whether a Certificate of Appropriateness is needed.***

A Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) is required before a building permit can be issued. Projects that require a COA include but are not limited to:

- Reconstruction or alteration of the size, shape or facade of a designated historic property, including the relocation of any doors or windows or removal or alteration of any architectural features, details or ornaments.
- Demolition or relocation of a historic property.
- Commencement of excavation for construction purposes.
- Erection, alteration, restoration or removal of any building or other structure within a historic property or district, including walls, fences, steps, parking areas or other appurtenant features.

Early consultations with the Historic Preservation Planner are encouraged when considering changes that require a COA or when initially reviewing the Design Guidelines. Some projects that do not require a building permit may still require a COA. Contact the Historic Preservation Planner to determine whether or not your project will require a COA.

Certain types of routine maintenance and in-kind replacement activities do not need a COA. Administrative approval (or a staff-issued COA) may be obtained by filing a COA application with the Historic Preservation Planner for certain changes. A Staff COA may be issued for reroofing materials, decks, signage and alterations that return a building, site or structure to a historic appearance provided that certain conditions are met.



*View looking towards the Old Commerce Bank Building from the intersection of Lumpkin and Clayton.*

***Step 2. Submit an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to the Historic Preservation Planner at the Athens-Clarke County Planning Department.***

A completed application for a COA should be filed with the Historic Preservation Planner no later than the first Wednesday of the month in order to be heard at the regular monthly meeting of the HPC.

Depending on the type of material change, different submittals are required as attachments to the COA application. A *Certificate of Appropriateness Criteria Checklist* is included with each application that explains the types of drawings, photographs, plans or samples that may be required. Applicants should consult this checklist to make sure that all applicable attachments are included with the COA application. **Incomplete applications will not be placed on the agenda.** Applicants should contact the Historic Preservation Planner to ensure that their application is complete.

***Step 3. Historic Preservation Commission Reviews the Application.***

An application for a COA will be reviewed by the HPC at the regularly scheduled monthly meeting. The HPC will reference all applicable Athens-Clarke County Codes, Ordinances, Guidelines and Bylaws when reviewing an application.

All meetings will be open to the public and all interested parties may attend the meeting. The applicant and affected property owners will be given an opportunity to address the HPC during the meeting at which the application is presented.

***Step 4. A Certificate of Appropriateness is issued.***

The Historic Preservation Commission will approve, approve with conditions, or deny an application within forty-five (45) days after it has been filed. Failure of HPC to act within this time period will constitute approval.

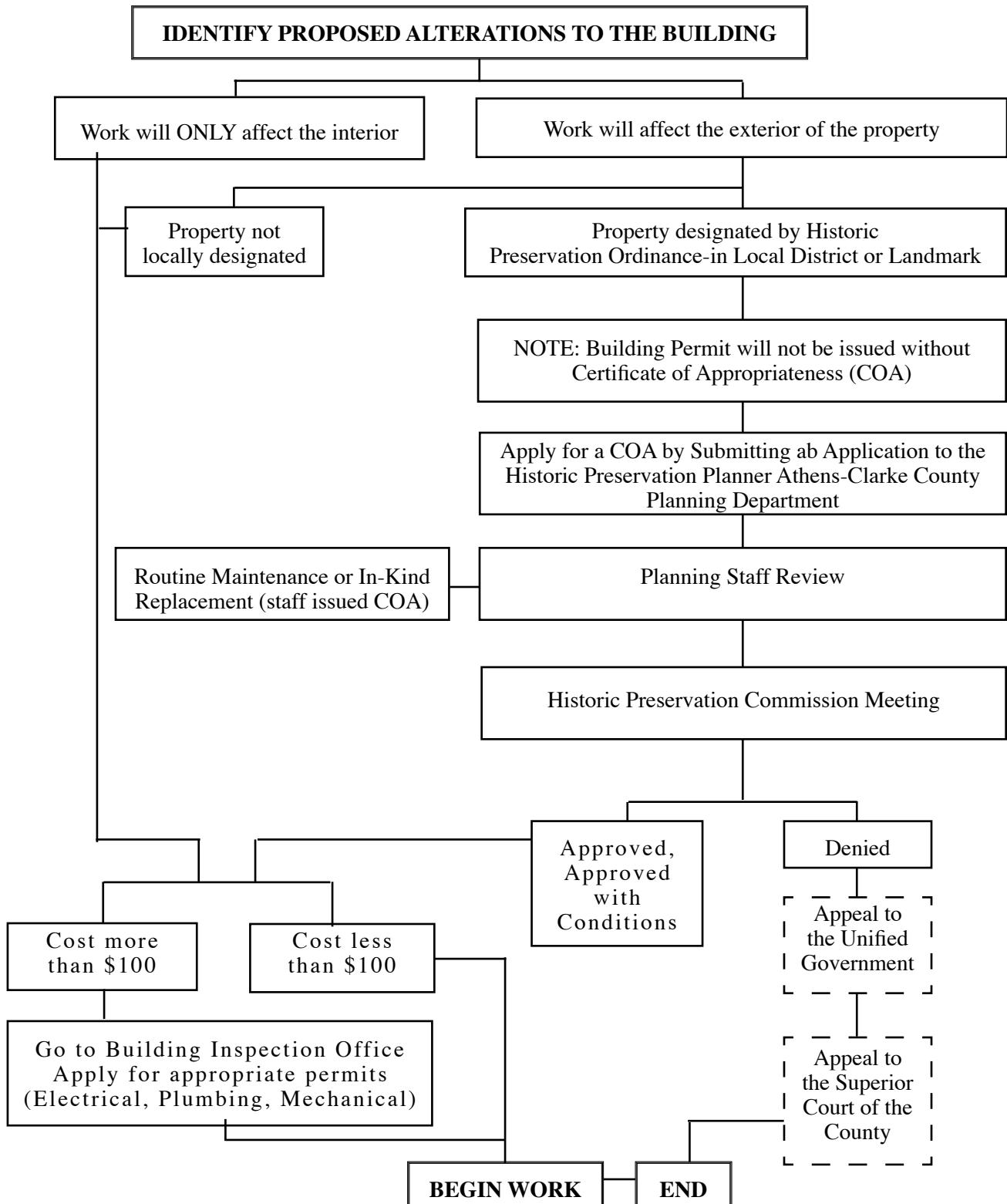
If an application is approved or approved with conditions, the Historic Preservation Planner will transmit a COA to the applicant. A copy of the certificate will be forwarded to the Athens-Clarke County Permit and Inspection Department to facilitate the permitting process and ensure compliance. Modifications of approved plans should be re-submitted under an amended COA application.

If an application is denied, the Historic Preservation Planner will notify the applicant in writing of the HPC's decision and state the reason for the denial.

Any person adversely affected by any determination made by the Historic Preservation Commission relative to the issuance or denial of a Certificate of Appropriateness may appeal such determination to the Mayor and Commission within 30 days of the date of the decision in accordance with the provisions of Section 8-5-5 of the Athens-Clarke County Code.

A summary of the design review process is presented in the flow chart on the following page.

# The Design Review Process





# Chapter 1

## Basic Principles of Historic Preservation

This chapter addresses the role of preservation in the community including a discussion of general principles and benefits of preservation. These principles are addressed by the Design Guidelines based on the long-range vision for the preservation of historic resources set forth in the Athens-Clarke County Comprehensive Plan.

The Design Guidelines incorporate principles from *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, which are general rehabilitation guidelines administered by the National Park Service. These national standards are policies that normally serve as a basis for more detailed design guidelines. Athens-Clarke County uses *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* as a basis for the Design Guidelines (See appendix A).



*Retaining the historic character that exists downtown is an important goal that design guidelines promote through preservation of the historic, cultural and architectural resources that reflect the history of Downtown Athens.*

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## **The Basic Principles for Preservation in Downtown Athens-Clarke County**

While the Design Guidelines will provide direction for specific design issues, some basic principles of preservation will form the foundation for them. The following preservation principles from the Athens-Clarke County Historic Preservation Ordinance should apply:

### **1. Retention of Distinguishing Features:**

Every building possesses some components that contribute to its architectural character. During restoration or rehabilitative work, an effort should be made to retain these original features.

### **2. Avoidance of Imitative Historic Features for which there is No Historic Basis:**

Some owners tend to make alterations to a building that have no foundation in history; they try to make the building appear to be older than it actually is. Ideally, the owner should be able to prove that the proposed alteration actually existed on the building at some previous time.

### **3. The Retention of Later Additions:**

Most buildings have been altered periodically. Sometimes a porch or sun room has been added and these changes are evidence of the building's history. Changes such as these may be significant in their own right if they represent substantial changes to the historic or architectural character of the building in a specific period in time.

### **4. Crafted Elements Should be Preserved:**

Many older structures possess characteristics that would be difficult or impossible to reproduce today. These elements include such things as carved mantels, cast iron work, terra cotta ornaments and delicate plaster decorations. Elements like these give character to a historic building and distinguish it from newer buildings.

### **5. Repair, Don't Replace:**

Historic or original building elements should be retained whenever possible. While some replacement materials may closely match the original, newer elements generally cause a loss of historic value.

### **6. Careful Cleaning Methods:**

Harsh cleaning methods for wood and masonry are discouraged. These methods can have an adverse effect on the visual qualities of the surface and thereby affect the overall appearance of a building.

### **7. Compatible Additions and Construction:**

Compatible designs for new structures and additions is encouraged. New buildings within historic districts should reflect the architecture of their time. Therefore, new construction should not attempt to imitate or copy old architecture. New buildings should relate to existing buildings in terms of height, mass, lot placement, ratio of solids to voids and materials.

### **8. Reversibility:**

All proposed alterations should be reversible. This means that new additions should be made so that the original fabric of the structure is not altered.

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## Concept of “Integrity”

Buildings with integrity have a sufficient percentage of structure exhibiting characteristics from the period of significance identified in the Local Designation Report. The majority of the building’s structural system and its materials should date from that time and its key character-defining features also should remain intact. Key features may include architectural details, materials and overall mass and form of the building. It is these key elements that allow a building to be recognized as a product of its time.

## Contributing Property

Contributing properties form the foundation of the historic district, and information on buildings identified as Contributing by the Athens-Clarke County Planning Department is available to the public. Several chapters of the Design Guidelines are devoted to contributing properties as shown on the chart on page 5.

*What defines a contributing property?* The following is recognized by the Athens-Clarke County Historic Preservation Ordinance as a contributing property: *“A building, site, structure, work of art or object adds to the aesthetic qualities or historic values for which a district is significant because it possesses historic integrity reflecting the district’s character or it independently meets the designation criteria. The property should meet an age criteria of fifty years unless the property has exceptional significance.”*

Often, a property may also be considered contributing if it:

- Has character, interest or value as part of the local, regional, state or national history, heritage or culture;
- Is the site of a significant historic event;
- Is identified with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the local, regional, state or national culture and history;
- Exemplifies the cultural, economic, social or historic heritage of the community;
- Represents a distinctive architectural era;
- Embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type or specimen;
- Includes the work of an architect, engineer or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of the community;
- Embodies elements of architectural or engineering design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represents a significant architectural innovation or which is unique.

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## Non-Contributing Property

Non-Contributing properties will also be addressed in the Design Guidelines. Although these properties do not contribute to the historic significance of the district, they are located within the historic district.

*What defines a non-contributing property?* The following is recognized by the Athens-Clarke County Historic Preservation Ordinance as a non-contributing property: *“A building, site, structure, work of art or object that does not add to the aesthetic qualities, historic values for which a district is significant because it does not possess historic integrity reflecting the district’s character and it does not independently meet the designation criteria.”*

## Landmark Buildings

Landmark properties are important assets to Athens-Clarke County, and information on buildings identified as Landmarks by the Planning Department is available to the public. Several chapters of the Design Guidelines are devoted to Landmark properties as shown on the chart on page 5.

*What defines a landmark property?* The following is recognized by the Athens-Clarke County Historic Preservation Ordinance as a landmark property: *“A building, structure, site, place, object, or work of art, including the adjacent area necessary for the proper appreciation or use thereof, deemed worthy of preservation by reason of value to Athens-Clarke County, the State of Georgia, or local region.”* See the Athens-Clarke County Historic Preservation Ordinance criteria for selection of landmarks, (8-5-3(c)).

## Alterations

Many historic structures have experienced alterations as tastes changed or the need for additional space occurred. Early alterations typically were subordinate in scale and character to the main building and were often executed using materials similar to those used historically.

Some early alterations may have historic value of their own. An alteration constructed in a manner compatible with the original building and associated with the period of significance may merit preservation in its own right.

In contrast, recent alterations usually have no historic value. Some later additions detract from the character of the building and may obscure significant features. Removing such additions or alterations may be considered.

Alterations are anticipated to continue. It is important that new alterations be designed in a manner compatible with the historic character of the building and implemented without damaging the historic fabric.

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# Benefits of Preserving Historic Buildings

## Construction Quality

Many of the buildings in Downtown Athens were constructed with care. These buildings were thoughtfully detailed with high quality finishes—features that owners today appreciate. The high quality of construction in historic structures is therefore a “value” for both the building owner and the community.

## Livability and Quality of Life

A physical sense of identity can reinforce desirable community social patterns and contribute to a sense of security. When groups of commercial buildings compliment each other in their historic context, they create a street scene that is “pedestrian friendly,” which encourages walking and neighborly interaction. Decorative architectural features and distinct architectural styles also contribute to a sense of identity, an attribute that is rare and difficult to achieve in newer areas of the city.

## Economic Incentives

Owners of historic properties may be eligible for tax incentives and should contact the Athens-Clarke County Historic Preservation Planner and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Division, to see if they qualify for these or other benefits. The Athens-Clarke County Heritage Foundation also has information on facade easements. In some cases, owners may donate a facade easement and take a charitable gift donation. Property tax relief may also be available.

## Regulatory Incentives

Owners of historic properties may take advantage of special parking allowances and building provisions in Athens-Clarke County codes and ordinances.

## Economic Benefits

Historic structures are irreplaceable. They bestow an identity and provide a tangible history of a place. These qualities make them highly desirable to both members of the community and property owners. Rehabilitation projects also contribute more to the local economy than do new building programs because each dollar spent on a preservation project has a higher percentage devoted to local labor and to the purchase of materials available locally. By contrast, new construction typically has a higher percentage of each dollar spent devoted to materials that are produced outside of the local economy. Therefore, when money is spent on rehabilitating a building, it has a higher “multiplier effect,” keeping more money in the local economy. Studies show that each dollar spent on a rehabilitation project continues to circulate in the local economy five to seven times, which helps support other businesses.

**Economic Benefits:** Real estate values in Athens-Clarke County and two other Georgia communities were evaluated in a study of the economic benefits of historic preservation in Georgia. The study found that districts under local preservation ordinances had appreciated in value more than counterpart neighborhoods that were not locally designated.

For more information regarding economic benefits of historic preservation in Athens-Clarke County see *Profiting from the Past. The Economic Impact of Historic Preservation in Georgia* at: [http://hpd.dnr.state.ga.us/assets/documents/profiting\\_from\\_the\\_past.pdf](http://hpd.dnr.state.ga.us/assets/documents/profiting_from_the_past.pdf).

## Adaptability

**Remodeling:** “Remodeling” is an inappropriate action because it changes the historic design of a building. The building’s appearance is altered by removing original details and by adding new features that are out of character with the original.

## Responsibility of Ownership

Ownership of a historic property carries a responsibility to respect the historic character of the property and its setting. Ultimately, residents and property owners should recognize that historic preservation is a long-range community objective that promotes economic well-being and overall viability of the community at large.

## Choosing an Approach

Preservation projects may include a range of activities, such as maintenance of existing historic elements, repairs of deteriorated materials, the replacement of missing features and construction of new additions. The following is a list of approaches that are appropriate for landmark and contributing properties:

1. **Preservation.** “Preservation” is the act or process of applying measures to sustain the existing form, integrity and material of a building. Some work focuses on keeping a property in good working condition by repairing features as soon as deterioration becomes apparent, using procedures that retain the original character and finish of the features. Property owners are strongly encouraged to maintain properties in good condition.
2. **Rehabilitation.** “Rehabilitation” is the process of returning a property to a state that makes a contemporary use possible while still preserving those portions or features of the property which are significant to its historical, architectural and cultural values. Rehabilitation may include a change in use of the building or additions.
3. **Restoration.** “Restoration” reproduces the appearance of a building exactly as it looked at a particular moment in time. This process may include the removal of later work or the replacement of missing historic features.
4. **Reconstruction.** “Reconstruction” of a building means rebuilding a structure that no longer exists exactly as it appeared historically.

## Planning a Preservation Project

The first step in planning a preservation project is to identify any significant features and materials. Retaining such features will greatly enhance the overall quality of the project and integrity of the building. Selecting an appropriate treatment will provide for proper preservation of significant features. In making a selection, follow this sequence:

1. **Preserve:** If a feature is intact and in good condition, maintain it as such.
2. **Repair:** If the feature is deteriorated or damaged, repair it to its original condition.

3. **Replace:** If it is not feasible to repair the feature, then replace it with one that is the same or similar in character (e.g., materials, detail, finish) to the original one. Replace only that portion which is beyond repair.
4. **Reconstruct:** If the feature is missing entirely, reconstruct it from appropriate evidence.
5. **New feature or Addition:** If a new feature or addition is necessary, design it in such a way as to minimize the impact on original features. It is also important to distinguish new features from original historic elements.

In essence, the preservation method that requires the least intervention is preferred. By following this tenet, the highest degree of integrity will be maintained for the property.

# Basic Principles for Site Design and New Construction

Designing a building to fit within the historic district requires careful thought. It is important to realize that while a historic district conveys a certain sense of time and place associated with its history, it is also dynamic. While the Design Guidelines for new construction provide direction for specific design issues, some basic site design and new construction principles form the foundation for compatible new construction. The following principles apply:

- 1. Respect the design character of the nearby historic properties.**  
Don't try to make a new building look older than it is. The copying or exact replication of architectural styles or specific historic buildings is discouraged. Often, a contemporary interpretation of those architectural styles seen historically will work best.
- 2. Maintain the setbacks and alignments of buildings in the surrounding context.**  
A new building should align with nearby historic buildings. Other alignments, such as those seen from similar cornice heights, storefront heights and the relative alignment of windows and moldings are also important.
- 3. Relate to the scale of nearby historic buildings.**  
A new building should relate at the street level to the general size, shape and proportions of historic buildings. This does not mean that the absolute height must be the same, but that the scale of nearby historic buildings be reflected in the infill design. It is equally important for a new building to use similar primary building materials, or materials similar in appearance.

**Sense of Place:** *Sense of Place* is the retention of the indigenous character and sense of time and location which provides identity to the community and its residents.

Waters, John C., *Maintaining a Sense of Place*. Athens, GA: Institute of Community and Area Development, 1983.

- **Context:** A key consideration is the “context” of the project. This includes properties that abut the subject site as well as contributing structures within its “sphere of influence”

Design Guidelines help assure that, when a new building is built, it will be in a manner that reinforces the basic visual characteristics of the area. This does not mean that new buildings must look old. In fact, imitating historic styles is generally discouraged; historians prefer to be able to “read” the evolution of the street, discerning the apparent age of each building by its style and method of construction. “Reading” is done by interpreting the age of a building, placing its style in relative chronological order. When a new building is designed to imitate a historic style, this ability to interpret the history of the street is confused.

Rather than imitating older buildings, a new design should relate to the traditional design characteristics of the area while also reflecting the architecture of its time. New construction may do so by drawing upon some basic building features—such as the way in which a building is located on its site, the manner in which it relates to the street, and its basic mass, form and materials—rather than applying detailing which may or may not have been historically appropriate. Therefore, it is possible to be compatible with the historic context while also producing a design that is distinguishable as being newer.



*An important principle is to maintain the setbacks and alignments of buildings in the surrounding context.*

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#### For additional information:

Athens-Clarke County Unified Government. Economic Benefits of Historic Preservation in Georgia, A Study of Three Communities: Athens, Rome and Tifton. Athens, GA: Athens-Clarke County Unified Government and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, 1996.

Leithe, Joni and Tigue, Patricia. Profiting from the Past. The Economic Impact of Historic Preservation in Georgia. Athens, GA: Athens-Clarke County Unified Government and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, 1999.

# Chapter 2

## History and Design Character of the District

Downtown Athens contains a mix of buildings that reflect the evolution of the “town and gown” community and the vitality of a university town. This chapter presents a brief summary of the historical events that helped shape downtown and highlights the features that contribute to its character today.

John Muir recorded his impression of Athens on his walk in 1867: “Reached Athens in the afternoon, a remarkably beautiful and aristocratic town, containing many classic and magnificent mansions...Unmistakable marks of culture and refinement, as well as wealth, were everywhere apparent. This is the most beautiful town I have seen on the journey so far, and the only one that I would like to revisit.” (John Muir, *A Thousand Mile Walk to the Gulf*.)



*The Athens Wheat and Oat Fair, 1901.*  
Photo courtesy of Georgia Department  
of Archives and History.

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## Historic Overview

On January 27, 1785, the Georgia General Assembly chartered the first state supported university in the nation. Sixteen years later, the legislature sent a five-man delegation to select the best location for the new university. The delegation chose to site the school on a hill above the Oconee River which was named Athens in reference to the Greek center of culture and learning.

### Early History

The General Assembly created Clarke County in 1801 and incorporated Athens in 1806. Surveys laid streets and lots in a grid pattern. Front (Broad), Hancock, Hull and Foundry Streets delineated downtown. By 1810, Athens consisted of 17 families, 10 framed houses and four stores. University President Josiah Meigs' remarked, "If there is a healthy and beautiful spot in Georgia this is one."

Athens offered fresh spring water and abundant fish from the North Oconee River. Area farmers produced beef, mutton, and pork for the Augusta and Athens market. As a pioneer town, Athens had the unique advantage of a developing university to enhance the settlement. Entrepreneurs would soon take advantage of the Oconee River's hydropower for mills and manufacturing.

Athens and the university languished until Moses Waddell arrived in 1819 to serve as the new university president. Waddell's leadership, enthusiasm and popularity benefited the community. Enrollment at the university increased under his leadership and Athens experienced growth and prosperity.



*Athens Cotton Market. Photo courtesy of Georgia Department of Archives and History.*

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In 1829 the first cotton mill began operations as Athens Manufacturing Company. Located on the North Oconee River about five miles outside of town, the mill changed ownership and became the Georgia Factory. In 1833 James Camak with ten entrepreneurs started the Camak Manufacturing Company on the Middle Oconee River. One year later Camak renamed the company the Princeton Factory. The third cotton factory was the Athens Factory on the North Oconee that suffered from floods and fires, yet by 1850 it became the most successful of the three.

Railroads created economic opportunity by offering goods to distant markets. The Georgia Railroad Commission received its charter in 1831. In 1833, the Georgia Railroad received its charter and opened up trade by rail from Athens to Augusta in 1841.

Small and large manufacturing made Athens the trade and industrial center of northeast Georgia, the Carolinas, and Tennessee. As the “Manchester of the South,” economic conditions improved, the population grew, and additional schools and businesses opened. Two banks opened in Athens, the Bank of the State of Georgia in 1834 and the Georgia Railroad Bank in 1835. John A. Cobb developed the Village of Cobbham as the first suburb on eighty lots on the west side of town.

The 1830 fire that destroyed New College on campus prompted the creation of the Athens Independent Fire Company in 1839. The company did not have a water supply until 1857 when the city installed cisterns on Broad Street and College Avenue and a reservoir on Dougherty Hill.

By 1840 Clarke County ranked second in the state for financial investment in manufacturing. Prosperity spread through the community with 45 commercial establishments in the county, most of which were in Athens. Downtown Athens was the commercial and industrial center of northeast Georgia.

Several hotels opened in the mid-nineteenth century. The Franklin House, built in 1847 on Broad Street, is a three-story brick building with Federal and Greek Revival details. The Newton House, located at the corner of College and Broad streets became the Commercial Hotel in the late 19th century.

The Southern Mutual Insurance Company, developed by Young Harris, moved their headquarters from Griffin to Athens in 1848. The Southern Mutual Insurance Company was one of the first firms to offer insurance in Georgia and offered policies for life, fire, and marine. Athens was a cultured and prosperous town by 1849.

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An early downtown residence that remains today is the c.1820 Church-Waddell-Brumby House on Dougherty Street, which was moved from its original lot on the north side of Hancock between Jackson and Thomas streets and now serves as the Athens Welcome Center. Albon Chase, founder of the Southern Banner/Banner Herald, built his house on North Hull Street in 1840. Stevens Thomas built his Greek Revival house in 1849 on the corner of Pulaski and Hancock streets. A successive owner moved the house to face Hancock Avenue. In 1911 the Y.W.C.A. purchased the house and added the gymnasium. The two buildings stand today at the western edge of downtown.

Church building proliferated across downtown. In 1850 there were twenty-one churches for five denominations in Clarke County. Ross Crane built First Presbyterian Church in 1855 on Hancock Avenue. Emmanuel Episcopal Church erected its first building on the corner of Lumpkin and Clayton streets in 1843, later the site of the Holman Hotel [now used by the Bank of America.] In 1858, the Baptist congregation hired James Carlton to design the Athens Baptist Church. First Baptist Church met on campus until 1860 when they constructed a brick and stucco church on College Avenue and Washington Street. In 1852 First Methodist Church built on the same Lumpkin Street lot that housed their first building in 1824.

Prior to the Civil War, many blacks attended white churches. The Slave Code prohibited blacks from having separate religious services without white supervision. One black church existed within the town limits in 1849. A black Presbyterian congregation worshiped in the former white Baptist chapel on the campus. Rural Clarke County black churches were Shady Grove, Chestnut Grove and Billups Grove. Henry McNeal Turner, the first black chaplain in the U.S. Army, organized a church, originally known as Pierce's Chapel. The first meetings "began in a blacksmith's shop under the hill between downtown and the Oconee River." The name changed to First African Methodist Episcopal Church.



*This image illustrates the northwest corner of Clayton and Jackson circa. 1910. Photo courtesy of Georgia Department of Archives and History.*

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The growth of Athens' population brought pressure on the town leaders to increase educational and cultural opportunities. The University's influence on education was critical in the preparation of future students. The 1855 Act of the General Assembly established the public school system in Athens. A.M. Scudder served as principal for Center Hill Academy (now the site of the U.S. Post Office on Hancock). Williams Rutherford, Jr. opened Cobbham Academy in 1855. Thomas R. R. Cobb organized Lucy Cobb Institute on Milledge Avenue in 1859 as a school for young women. Madame Sosnowski operated the Home School as a boarding school for young women.

The town grew to 3,000 people by 1850. Town Hall, completed in 1847, served several functions by providing public space for meetings, concerts, the local jail, and a food market. Athens' corporate limits extended two miles in all directions from the University Chapel. To the delight of many, the city hired the newly incorporated Athens Gas Light Company to install gas lights downtown in 1859. Downtown Athens included about fifty businesses in 1860. Athens Foundry on the east side of Foundry Street influenced industrial development downtown.

### **The Post Civil War Period**

Athens escaped destruction from the Civil War, but many families lost sons and husbands involved in the war. The economy slowed down with limited supplies and most workers were involved in military activity. Manufacturing shifted to products needed for the war – cloth for uniforms, rifles and cannons for the troops. University students went to war, forcing the University to close. In 1866 the University reopened, old businesses resumed and new businesses began.

The 1870s were an important benchmark for the growth of downtown. The county seat moved from Watkinsville to Athens. [Watkinsville soon became the county seat of the newly created Oconee County in 1875.] The Town Hall on Market Street served as the Clarke County Courthouse until the county commissioners agreed on a new courthouse site in 1875. Professor L.H. Charbonnier designed the three building complex to be built on the south side of Prince Avenue, next to the Cobbham neighborhood.

The banking and insurance businesses recovered quickly after the war. The National Bank of Georgia, primarily financed by John White, president of the Georgia Cotton Factory, opened with \$40,000. Cotton stockpiled behind federal lines was valuable and enhanced the Athens economy. By the fall of 1867 Athens' businesses were twice the number as before the war. Colonel Lewis J. Deupree built the first theatrical facility in downtown in 1870. Deupree Hall stood at the northwest corner of Broad and Thomas streets. By 1885 the building became Deupree's Opera House but was soon competing with the 1888 Athens Opera House.

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Jewish, Catholic and Christian congregations organized during the post war period. Robert L. Bloomfield offered the first meeting place for a small Jewish group which became Congregation Children of Israel. Moses Myers served as the president for the first 25 years. In 1884 the congregation built a synagogue on the northeast corner of Jackson and Hancock. Urban Renewal removed the synagogue in 1970 to make room for the Richard G. Stephens Federal Building. Bloomfield constructed the Gothic Revival Episcopal chapel, St. Mary's, on Oconee Street in 1873, adjacent to the Athens Factory mill village. The Archbishop of Atlanta purchased T.R.R. Cobb's former law office on Prince Avenue for the Catholic congregation. More black churches organized after the Civil War. Hill's First Baptist Church organized in 1867 and in 1882, the Gospel Pilgrim Society purchased land from Elizabeth Talmadge for their cemetery.

"African-American men and women who led active religious lives at once preserved their community, their traditions, and their African heritage. Churches functioned as the core of the black community. Most [churches] operated schools. Picnics, weddings, and political events held on church property united the community in times of celebration. In times of duress, churches provided support so Athens' blacks could endure death, slavery, and segregation.

When fire consumed a downtown block of Athens in 1867, Robert L. Bloomfield rebuilt the block with his own money. Assuming the Presidency of the Athens Factory, Bloomfield saw opportunities for expansion. He transferred weaving operations to the Cook and Brother Armory and produced the famous "daisy checks gingham." He also expanded the Athens Flour Mill.

The last quarter of the nineteenth century resulted in many public improvements for downtown. The General Assembly authorized the mayor and council to improve certain streets with grading and paving. The 1885 Sanborn Fire Insurance maps indicate that commercial establishments were concentrated along Broad and Clayton streets between Lumpkin and Foundry. By 1885, every block in downtown Athens showed intermingling of residential and commercial enterprises.

The Athens Street Railway Company laid tracks across town and over the Oconee River to transport freight to town. By the late 1890s, the Georgia Railroad took over the company, moved it to the west side and extended tracks into town. The Georgia, Carolina, and Northern Railroads reached Athens by 1891, connecting the city directly to Atlanta and thus to the entire eastern seaboard. In 1915 five railroads served Athens and Clarke County.

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The federally supported Freedman's Bureau organized to relieve suffering and to return people to work to build a free-labor society through schools, churches, jobs and reunited families. Freedman's Bureau funds built the Knox Academy on the corner of Reese and Pope Streets in 1867 as a college-prep and regular educational program. The school operated until 1928 with two hundred former slaves enrolled. Other schools were the Jeruel Academy and the Methodist School. The 1913 Athens High and Industrial School became Georgia's only black high school in 1916.

Cotton production was intensive and Athens became a major cotton market that endured until the boll weevil and Great Depression caused its collapse. Many former slaves took active roles in politics and business. Two black Athenians, Madison Davis and Monroe Bowers "Pink" Morton, became very successful businessmen. Davis, a former slave, became a Reconstruction politician who represented Athens in the Georgia General Assembly and later became a real estate agent. Morton, a former hotel porter, built the Morton Theater in 1910 as a black vaudeville theater. Doctors W. H. Harris and Blanche Thompson owned and operated the E. D. Harris Drug shortly after the Morton Theater opened. Morton built government buildings in Washington, Georgia, in addition to several buildings in downtown Athens. He also served as Athens' second postmaster from 1897 to 1902.

### **Athens in the Twentieth Century**

Most of the downtown was commercial and governmental by the end of the century and residential development occurred in the new developments of Bloomfield, Boulevard, and Cobbham. The character of downtown changed in the early twentieth century with the construction of the Beaux Arts City Hall, an imposing ninety-nine feet tall edifice on the highest point in town. James Knox Taylor, architect of the U.S. Treasury Building in Washington, D.C., designed the three-story Federal Building in 1905. The Southern Mutual Insurance Company built the first high rise in Athens in 1908 as a model for fireproof construction. Athens first luxury hotel, The Georgian, was designed by Atlanta architect A. Ten Eyck, who also designed the new Clarke County Courthouse in 1918.

Automobiles began to appear on the street in 1909, although buggies, carts, bicycles and trolleys were more common. Ben Epps designed and built the first airplane in Georgia inside his electrical shop on Washington Street. He opened a flying service in 1919 offering flight instruction, passenger flights and aerial photography. W. S. Holman built the tallest building in 1913 – 168 rooms at nine stories. The hotel was redesigned by Citizens and Southern Bank as its headquarters in the early 1960s.

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Merchants and retailers prospered in the mid and late nineteenth century. Stevens Thomas operated the principal general store on Broad Street from the towns' beginning. Moses G. Michael built Michael Brothers, the first modern department store in 1882 on Broad Street and moved the building to Clayton Street in 1890. When fire destroyed the building, Atlanta architect Neel Reid designed the 1922 building that stands today.

Banking is fundamental to downtown development and Bankers Row on Broad Street reflected the financial community. This included the Athens Savings Bank on Broad, flanked by the National Bank of Athens at Broad and Jackson and the American State Bank. In the 1920s the Commercial Bank of Athens, People's Bank, Clarke County Bank, and Georgia National Bank joined the list.

Athens was one of the largest cotton markets in the world in 1910, handling more wagon loads of cotton than any other Georgia town. Athens was a major center for trade and transportation and cotton was king. The five rail lines and 105 miles of streets and improved highways gave Athens the infrastructure to serve as a hub for wholesale grocers.

The outbreak of World War I caused cotton prices to rise and fall, affecting farmers but aiding cotton factors, fertilizer manufacturers and farm suppliers. Rural Georgia felt the Great Depression in 1929 until World War II. The boll weevil added to the misery but the New Deal and the University's building program provided jobs to former farm workers and owners.

Many businesses diversified after the Depression. Moss Manufacturing became Athens Lumber Company. Armstrong and Dobbs began as a coal and cottonseed company and then started selling oil for heating and went into the building supply business.

The Athens economy was cotton based until 1950 and local families' income decline forced some to sell the family home. Local landmarks like the Ross Crane House became the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity in 1929. Kappa Alpha Theta Sorority purchased the A.P. Dearing house on Milledge.

Athens became the commercial and industrial center for northeast Georgia. The central business district grew in correlation to the rise in population. The Athens Coca-Cola Bottling Company was the first commercial business to operate at the northeast corner of the intersection of West Hancock Avenue and Hull Street in the area west of Lumpkin Street. Downtown's "Hot Corner," located at the intersection of Washington and Hull Streets, became the center of black commercial, financial, professional and social life. The Morton Theatre attracted black vaudeville acts and jazz masters such as Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, Cab Calloway, Blind Willie McTell, and Bessie Smith. The theatre became a movie house in the 1930s and suffered minor damage in a 1950s fire. The restored Morton Theatre opened in 1994.

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In 1916 the Southern Bell Telephone Company built a new three-story yellow brick headquarters on the southeast corner of West Clayton and North Hull Streets. In 1917 the Improved Order of Samaritans, a black fraternal organization, constructed the Samaritan Building on West Washington Street. Black businesses such as an African-American Life Insurance Company, the Atlanta Life Insurance Company, Pilgrim Health and Life Insurance Company, and Guaranty Life Insurance were located in the Samaritan Building. Dr. E.D. Harris moved his drug store from the Morton to the Samaritan in 1920 to be near several black physicians and patients.

Several building projects in the 1900s spurred development on College, Clayton and Washington streets. The Federal Building (1906), now the First American Bank, began as the post office and federal courthouse. The Georgian Hotel followed the seven-story Southern Mutual Building on the northwest corner of Jackson and Washington streets. The nine-story Holman Building replaced Emmanuel Episcopal Church on Lumpkin and Washington streets. By 1940 manufacturing employed 20 per cent of the workforce, ten per cent worked on farms, and seven per cent were professionals.

World War II affected the enrollment at the University but the federal government used the University as one of five naval preflight schools in the nation. The Navy built several buildings on campus during their tenure. After the war, many GIs returned to finish their education on the GI Bill. Business ownership changed from locally owned to outsider-owned; mill houses were sold to individuals. Larger corporations like Johnson and Johnson bought Chicopee Mills.

In the 1960s and 70s, the University tripled in size and expanded south campus with state of the art science facilities. New public schools and hospitals expanded to meet the growing population. During the 1960s, the combined city and county population increased by nearly 45 percent.

### **Downtown Athens after 1960**

Urban renewal in the 1960s and 70s led to the demolition of many historic resources in Athens. “Georgia Project 51,” also known as the “College Avenue Redevelopment Project” eventually saw demolition of more than 300 residential and commercial buildings in downtown Athens with a goal of encouraging redevelopment and enhancing the city’s economic position.

Most of the residential buildings demolished for urban renewal purposes were in the poor and racially integrated “Lickskillet” neighborhood located north of the intersection of East Hancock Street and College Avenue. Nearly all of the structures demolished dated from the mid to late 1800s. Non-residential buildings that were demolished included the 1884 Congregational Church of Israel Synagogue at the northeast corner of Jackson and Hancock which was removed to make way for the new federal building in 1970.

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Several other historic buildings were threatened by urban renewal but ultimately saved. These included the oldest surviving dwelling in Athens, the 1820 Church-Waddell-Brumby House, and even City Hall. A vocal group of Athens residents formed the Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation (ACHF) in 1967 and arranged to save the Brumby House by having it moved a short distance away. The house was eventually adapted for use as the Athens Welcome Center, which remains open today.

In December 1965 an Atlanta firm proposed turning Clayton Street from College to Thomas into a pedestrian mall to address the declining economic role of downtown Athens. The proposal was not approved but the focus on the historic downtown resulted in the creation of the Athens Downtown Council.

The federal Tax Reform Act of 1976 stimulated interest in rehabilitation of downtown structures. The Downtown Historic District was listed on the National Register in 1978 to certify eligible buildings. A special tax assessment district was created in 1976 and the Athens Downtown Development Authority stimulated investment through economic incentives and beautification. The merger of Athens and Clarke County in 1990 has brought new initiatives, such as the Oconee River Greenways project and a more streamlined government.

Downtown Athens' character changed in response to the music scene. In the late sixties only a few music venues could be found downtown. The Last Resort on Clayton was one of the few, but the emergence of alternative music gave rise to a new downtown culture. The Warehouse District on Thomas Street provided new venues for REM, B-52's, Widespread Panic, Pylon and others. The Athens music scene now includes over 500 bands with some investing in downtown real estate and businesses. Downtown Athens remains a vibrant mixed use environment dominated by restaurants and bars – keeping it very lively and filled with people of all ages.



*Athens Downtown Circa 1967. Photo courtesy of Georgia Department of Archives and History.*

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## The Character of the Downtown Historic District

### The Unique Character of the Downtown Historic District

The Downtown Historic District is a special collection of buildings, streets and public spaces providing a mixed use environment that gives a unique identity to the community. Underlying the collection of buildings is a rectilinear grid of streets, which are oriented slightly off a true north axis. A sloping topography descends to the east, providing views to nearby neighborhoods. At the heart of this is the intersection of College Avenue and Clayton Streets. Solid blocks of storefronts extend east and west from this intersection along Clayton Street. This creates a distinctive “Main Street” image, with a rhythmic pattern of upper story windows, decorative moldings and traditional display windows. Variety occurs in the ornamentation and architectural details on buildings in this area.

Another noteworthy feature is Broad Street, which generally defines the southern edge of the historic district. Here, traditional storefronts also align, but on the north side of the street only. On the south side, the edge of the University of Georgia campus provides a contrasting green edge.

Along the northern edge of the historic district, a variety of institutional facilities provides accent. Many face onto Washington Street, and a few are on Hancock Avenue. They include City Hall and several churches. These structures typically stand apart as individual buildings, with strongly defined main entrances. Cupolas, towers and other landmark-setting features are seen.



*Details such as these create a distinctive streetscape in Downtown Athens.*



*Historically, building heights varied in the area. However, a consistent alignment of storefront heights and an apparent similarity of building widths created a uniform line and rhythm along the street. Photo courtesy of Georgia Department of Archives and History.*

Early photographs provide insight into the design features of traditional building types and the manner in which these were combined to create streetscapes in the area now defined as the Downtown Historic District. Photographs demonstrate that most buildings were built at the sidewalk edge with brick and stone as the dominant construction materials. Additional information about the character and development of the area is found in a series of maps produced by the Sanborn Fire Insurance Company. The company documented the location and footprint of each building in the area periodically during the period of significance from the late 1800s through the 1950s. These maps, combined with historic photographs, convey the historic character-defining features as well as define today's building context.

### **A Rectilinear Grid Dominates**

The squared intersections of streets established the basic framework for the organization of lots.

### **Buildings Align in Plan**

Most buildings, particularly the predominant commercial structures, are sited at the sidewalk edge. Building fronts align.

### **Buildings Fill the Widths of Their Lots**

Commercial buildings are constructed out to the side lot lines, creating a solid wall along the sidewalk edge.

### **Rear Setbacks of Buildings Vary**

Variations in building sizes are typically reflected on the backsides. While many structures occupy the entire depths of their properties, some do not. In general, the earlier, smaller buildings left room on the rear of their sites.



*Historic maps, combined with historic photographs, convey historic character-defining features as well as define today's building context.*

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## Storefront Heights Align

Most first floors, or storefronts, were constructed to relatively similar heights. The first floor of the building is primarily glass which creates a uniform line along the street edge, visually connecting multiple buildings along the street. This connection is further emphasized with cornices and moldings.



## A “Wall” of Buildings Two to Four Stories in Height is Defined

The first two to four stories are typically defined with windows of similar heights and with moldings that align along the block.

## Overall Building Heights Vary in the Area

Most buildings stand from two to four stories in height. Taller buildings are compatible because many of their key features relate to other buildings on the street. Key features include the building storefront, upper story windows, recessed entries and molding.

## Building Widths Appear To Be Similar

Many buildings convey the dimensions of a single building lot. Others that are larger often reflect the underlying set of lots with an “articulation” of facade details. Vertical elements, including columns and pilasters, often relate to underlying lot lines, helping to break down building widths and create a rhythm of building fronts along the street. Some buildings may appear to be exceptions, but they generally exhibit this feature in subtle ways.

## Upper-story windows create a pattern across many building fronts.

Most upper-story windows are of similarly sized and use similar spacing patterns. Windows are typically vertically proportioned with aligned arches and sills. These key features combine to create a pattern of evenly spaced openings and of horizontal features that align along the block.



*Upper-story windows create a pattern across many building fronts.*

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### **A Sense of Visual Continuity Exists**

Because most buildings share a variety of the design features described above, the area conveys a sense of visual relatedness. Within this sense of visual continuity, variety and accent occur. For example, building styles vary, reflecting their various periods of construction. In fact, each building varies from its neighbors in some manner with either a difference in scale, style or materials. For each design feature that varies from its neighbors, others are shared. Thus, a sense of continuity is maintained while accommodating individuality in design.

### **Streets Are Oriented to Pedestrians**

Key building elements, including windows, doors and details, have a “human scale” that supports pedestrian activity. Storefronts provide views to activities inside, creating interest for passersby and sidewalks are wide enough for pedestrians to pass, inviting walking and communication.

### **Civic Buildings and Spaces Provide Accents in the Streetscape**

While commercial buildings align along the street edge, civic buildings typically stand apart. City Hall, for example, sits in the center of a block, surrounded by a lawn. Civic buildings also vary more widely in their forms and details.

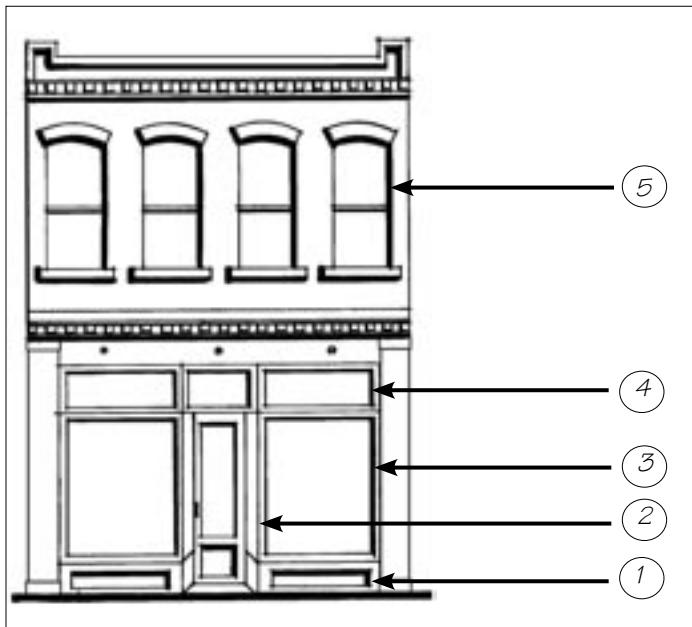


*A sense of visual continuity exists in Downtown Athens.*

## Commercial Building Types and Styles

There are clear examples of Federal, Italianate, Art Deco and Classical Revival structures in Downtown Athens. A common practice, however, was to build structures in the local “vernacular” style, closely reflecting simple construction traditions from their respective periods. In some cases, vernacular structures are decorated with a feature from one of the high style building types.

Most buildings in the Downtown Historic District are variations on the traditional American commercial storefront and may include features shown in the diagram below. Buildings were designed for retail-related functions on the ground level, with relatively large openings used to maximize visibility of the goods and services offered inside. Most are built one, two or three stories. The front masonry wall is constructed up to the sidewalk edge. Upper-story windows are smaller, with vertically oriented openings. Upper floors appear more solid than transparent. The typical building types seen in the Downtown Historic District appear on the pages that follow.



*Traditional commercial storefronts can include some of the following features: (1) bulkhead (2) recessed entry (3) display windows (4) transom (5) vertically oriented upper story windows.*

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## Federal

• circa 1790-1820

The Federal style was the dominant design in Athens-Clarke County from 1800 to 1830. Buildings of the Federal period, as well as Federal-influenced vernacular structures, are commonly a simple box, two or more rooms deep. Doors and windows are arranged with a regular symmetry.

### Characteristics

- Typically modest detailing
- Side-gabled roof
- Brick or stone construction
- Joined chimney
- Parapet walls
- Wooden shutters
- Wide doors with transom and sidelights
- Galleries
- Dormers

Many of the Federal buildings were later transformed into more “stylish” structures with the application of details popular during later periods. In many cases a structure may not have been altered until a number of years after it was built.



*The Franklin House is one of the few Federal style building in Downtown Athens.*

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## Greek Revival

- circa 1820-1850

The Greek Revival style became popular during the middle of the 19th century. By 1850, it was seen in almost all settled areas in the nation. Based on classical detailing that originated in ancient Greece, these buildings are known primarily for columns with Doric, Ionic or Corinthian capitals. Other Greek Revival detailing includes classical entablature, simple window surrounds and door surrounds consisting of transom and sidelights.



*Greek Revival style building.*

### Characteristics

- Rounded columns
- Pediment roof
- Tall first-floor windows
- Entablature
- Doors with transom, side and corner lights
- Gabled or hipped roof
- Frieze band windows



*The 1895 National Bank of Georgia building on Broad St. is a late example of a Greek Revival Commercial building in Downtown Athens.*



*Many Vernacular style storefronts exist in Downtown Athens.*

## **Vernacular Commercial Storefront**

- **circa 1860-1920**

The vernacular commercial storefront of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries appears in commercial districts throughout the country, including Downtown Athens. The first floor is usually transparent for the display of goods, while the upper floors are generally reserved for office, residential or warehousing functions. At the storefront, a bulkhead is found below the display window with a transom above. The main door is frequently recessed.

Vernacular commercial storefront buildings have brick facades, often with stone detailing. Ornamental detail exists, but is simple and limited to a shallow molding as a cornice. Some cornices were made of wood or masonry, while others were made of metal. Although construction of vernacular commercial storefront buildings began as early as 1860 and continued until 1920, the majority were constructed at the turn of the century.

### **Characteristics**

- Larger display windows
- Transom lights
- Bulkhead
- Recessed entry
- Double doors
- Tall, typically double-hung, second-story windows
- Cornice
- Italianate detailing

## Italianate

• circa 1850-1885

Originally inspired by Renaissance buildings of Italy, this blending of classical and romantic features became one of the most popular styles in the United States. Italianate details and features could be interpreted in wood, masonry or iron. Many commercial storefronts feature Italianate detailing.

### Characteristics

- Double-hung, narrow windows, often with round arch hoods
- Window panes are either one-over-one or two-over-two
- Protruding sills
- Ornate treatment of the eaves, including the use of brackets, modillions and dentil courses
- Quoins at building corners
- Cresting along roof ridges
- Transom, often curved, above the front door
- Flat roof
- Overall, a vertical emphasis in building proportions



*This image illustrates an Italianate bay window.*



*This Italianate style commercial building is on Broad Street.*

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## Classical Revival

• circa 1890-1920

The Classical Revival style was originally based upon interpretations of classical Roman models, relying on order, symmetry and detail to create a composition of formal and symmetrical features. Classical revival was adaptable to wood, brick and stone construction and was popular in many regions of the country, particularly for builders wishing to distinguish their structures from older ones in the community.

### Characteristics

- Flat roof with parapet
- Metal or cast stone cornice
- Cast stone jack arches
- Elaborate entrance
- Keystone lintels over windows and doors
- Sash windows with heavy dividers or muntins
- Usually large, elaborate brick structure (often red)
- Ornate moldings, such as dentils and modillions
- Round columns with complex capitals
- Dormers
- Prominent center window on second story, often arched or curved
- Classical ordering of windows from large at the bottom to small on top



*The Georgian Hotel is a Classical Revival style building.*

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## Richardsonian Romanesque

• circa 1880-1910

Developed by the prominent Boston architect Henry Richardson, the Romanesque Revival, or Richardsonian Romanesque style was commonly used for large public and ecclesiastic buildings beginning in the 1880s. Romanesque structures are always of masonry construction.

### Characteristics

- Masonry walls, usually with rough-faced, squared stonework
- Most have towers with conical roofs
- Round-topped arches over windows, porch supports or entrance
- Deeply recessed openings
- Decorative colonnettes around windows
- Decorative floral patterns on column capitals, on wall surfaces and around openings
- Large heavy arches articulated with contrasting materials



*The Parrott Insurance/Athens Savings Bank Building is one of the few local examples of a Richardsonian Romanesque style commercial structure.*

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## Art Moderne

• circa 1930-1940

Art Moderne style was devised as a way of incorporating the machine aesthetic into architecture in the sense that buildings could emulate motion and efficiency. Art Moderne is also referred to Streamlined Moderne, and always carried the aura of the futuristic. Whatever the term, in this case architecture followed industrial design and “the slick look” was used for everything from irons to baby carriages.

### Characteristics

- Asymmetrical facade, with a combination of rounded corners and angular shapes
- Glass block
- Metal sash windows with small panes, often placed at corners
- Horizontal bands, referred to as “speed bands”
- References to ocean liners, as in the use of “porthole” windows and metal railings



*The Greyhound Bus Station is a local example of Art Moderne Architecture.*

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## Art Deco

• circa 1930-1950

This style is related to Art Moderne in its decoration of surfaces, but in the case of Art Deco, the lines are angular rather than curvilinear. Art Deco is most easily identified by its architectural ornament, which includes stylized floral motifs and repetitive geometric forms incorporating sharp angles and segments of circles. Zigzags, chevrons and diamond patterns are typical and often are applied as decorative moldings or are integral to masonry patterns themselves. Rounded or angular corner windows were often used. Building entrances were embellished with decoration extending to hardware and light fixtures that reflected the style. Glass brick panels were often lit from behind with colored lights.

### Characteristics

- Variety of colors and textures
- Stucco and tile combined
- Projecting sunshades
- Rounded corner windows
- Colored brick or tile
- Zigzag or chevron moldings
- Molded metal panels or grills
- Stylized floral patterns
- Repetitive geometric forms
- Carrara glass



*The Georgia Theater is a local example of an Art Deco building.*



*This building was built after 1950.*

## Post 1950s Architecture

In the decades following World War II, buildings in Downtown Athens were built using techniques and materials that may or may not stand the test of time. However, many buildings that are highly valued today come from architectural traditions that were once considered obsolete. In preservation brief “Preserving Our Recent Past,” the National Park Service notes that Victorian buildings were once readily demolished to make way for more “up-to-date” structures. To avoid repeating past mistakes, it will be important to encourage an understanding of the role that more recently built structures can play in understanding our heritage in the future.



*This is an example a historic Post 1950s building in Downtown Athens.*

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### For additional information:

The Digital Library of Georgia at <http://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/>

National Park Service, Preserving Our Recent Past. Washington, DC: Technical Preservation Services Division, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior.

Thomas, Frances Taliaferro. A Portrait of Athens and Clarke County.

# Chapter 3

## Rehabilitation of Historic Properties

The Downtown Historic District Design Guidelines apply to all “contributing” properties in the district and in some cases may be used for Landmarked properties outside of the district. Note that these principles are based on the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation (See Appendix A.) For work on a “non-contributing” building, see Chapter 4: Design Guidelines for New Construction.

A basic tenet of preservation is to minimize changes to the fabric of historic buildings. It is best to preserve features that remain in good condition. For deteriorated features, repair is preferred. When replacement is necessary, it should be done in a manner similar to that seen historically.

### Considering When Reconstruction is Preferred

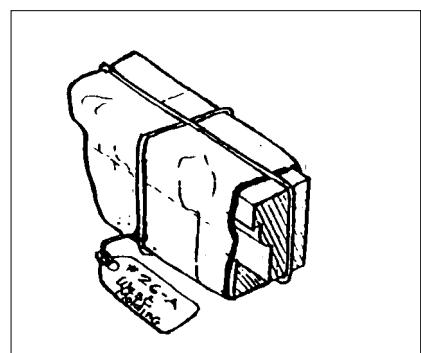
A key principle of historic preservation, as embodied in the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards, is that key character-defining features should be preserved. This includes the ornamental details and special features that distinguish an individual building from others in the area. Character defining features also include the basic form and materials of a structure, its windows and doors, as well as its orientation to the street. When some of these features have been lost, it is generally best to reconstruct missing elements. In order to develop a design that is accurate, it is important to draw upon historical information, including photographs, drawings and on-site research that reveals evidence of previous elements.

In some cases, it may be appropriate to derive the design from a similar element on a building of comparable age and style in the vicinity. In other cases, this copying from other sources may be discouraged. The circumstances depend upon the significance of the property being restored.

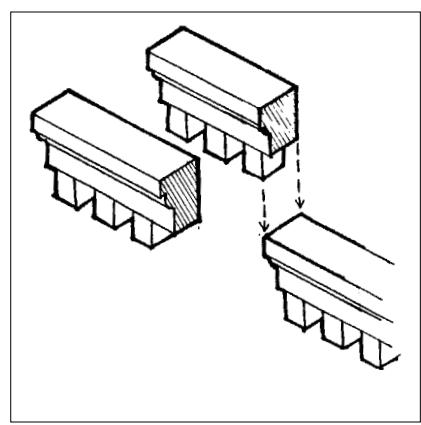
There are also times in which seeking to replicate the historic element is not practical, and designing a new element that reflects the character of the original, without literally imitating it, is an acceptable alternative. The determination of appropriateness depends upon the overall condition of the building and its significance. Here are some considerations:



*Historic character-defining features such as this column should be preserved.*



*When disassembly of historic elements is necessary for its repair, carefully identify all pieces that will be stored during the rehabilitation project.*



*Replace features that are missing or beyond repair.*

---

**1. What is the degree of integrity of the property?**

If the building is 95% intact, for example only the upper cornice is missing and information about the original design is available, then an accurate reconstruction would be preferred. Conversely, if many of the original elements are missing, a simplified interpretation of those missing elements may be appropriate; this would recall the historic arrangement of details and features while conveying the fact that the building has been altered over time.

**2. What is the significance of the property?**

If the structure is unique, then an accurate reconstruction would be preferred. Alternately, if the building is one of several similar structures, then an accurate reconstruction may not be as critical.

**3. What is the context of the property?**

If the building is one of three similar facades, all in a row, and the other two retain their original details, then reconstruction for the third one that has been altered would be preferred. If, by contrast, the context is more eclectic, then a more flexible approach may be considered.

Each of these factors should be taken into consideration when determining the best approach for reconstructing missing elements or for interpreting them in new ways. Obviously, there is no hard-and-fast rule that can be stated. What is important is that a deliberate, thoughtful process be employed in which these questions are answered.



*Ornamental details and special features that distinguish an individual building from others in the area should be preserved.*

---

## Treatment of Character-Defining Features

Character-defining features of historic properties should be preserved. Collectively, they establish a sense of place, provide “human scale” and add rich detail to the street. Typical features include: original wall materials, decorative cornices, vertically aligned upper-story windows, larger first-floor openings and trim around openings.

### 3.1 Preserve character-defining features that are intact.

- Do not remove or damage character-defining features.
- Preserve intact features with appropriate maintenance techniques.

### 3.2 Repair those features that are damaged.

- Use methods that will not harm historic materials. For example, repair is preferred over replacement.
- Carefully identify how a historic element will be stored during rehabilitation when repair and disassembly are necessary.

### 3.3 Replace features that are missing or beyond repair.

- Reconstruct only those portions that are beyond repair using identical or similar materials.
- Reconstruct the original element based on adequate evidence, if possible. That is, avoid creating details from speculation that could give a false impression of the history of the building.
- Consider a simplified interpretation of historic elements if evidence is missing.

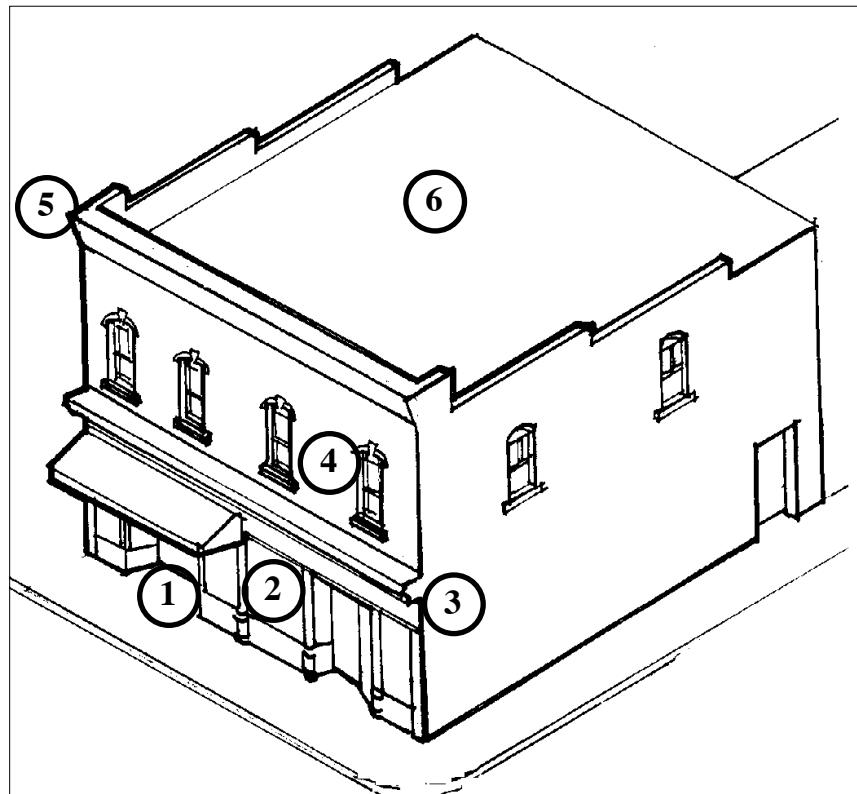


*Repair features such as this cornice rather than replace the feature.*

---

**3.4 For a commercial storefront building, a rehabilitation project should preserve the following character-defining features:**

- Display windows: the main portion of glass on the storefront where goods and services are displayed.
- Transom: the upper portion of the storefront separated from the main display window by a frame.
- Bulkhead: the area beneath the display window.
- Entry: the area surrounding the front door, usually set back from the sidewalk in a protected recess.
- Upper-story windows: windows located above the street level, usually having a vertical orientation.
- Cornice molding: a decorative band at the top of the building. A midbelt cornice may sometimes be found separating some floors.

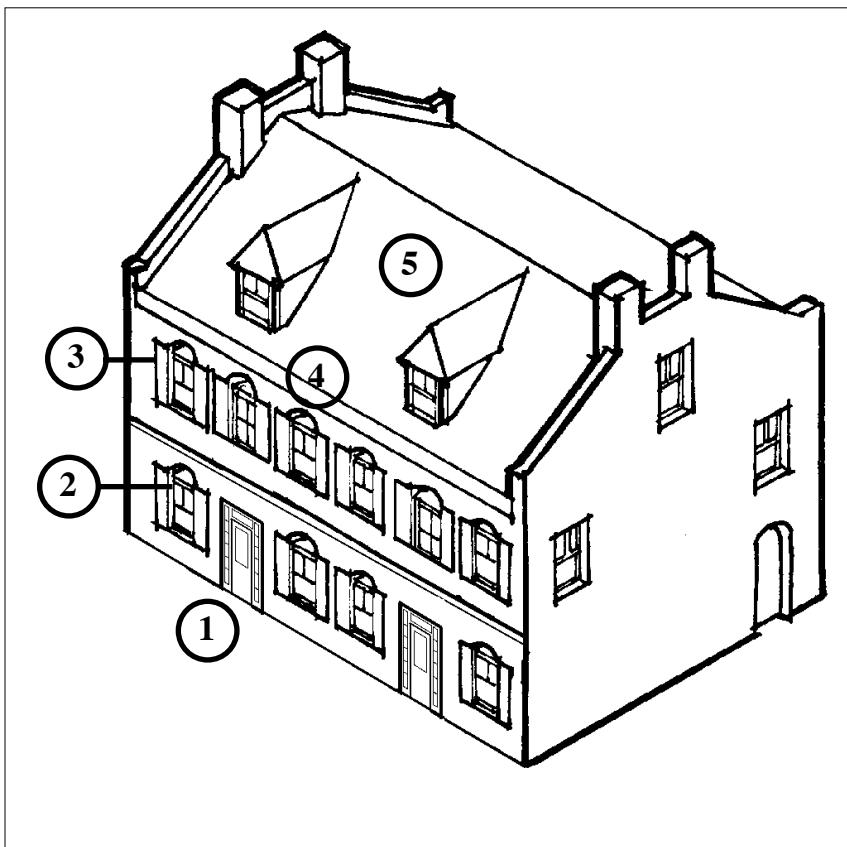


*Typical commercial building and storefront features include: 1) recessed entry, 2) storefront, 3) midbelt course, 4) upper-story windows, 5) cornice, and 6) flat roof.*

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**3.5 For a Federal storefront building type, a rehabilitation project should preserve the following character-defining features:**

- Multi-paned windows: the storefront display windows as well as the upper-story windows were both typically small and vertically oriented.
- Entry: the entry was sometimes set back from the sidewalk in a protected recess.
- Door: the door was typically single wide with a transom or sidelights.
- Cornice molding: a decorative band at the top of the building.
- Dormers: Dormers were used for expanded head room in the uppermost story of a building.
- Gabled roof: A sloping roof form with the ridge parallel to the street.



*Typical Federal building and storefront features include: 1) entry, 2) multi-paned display windows, 3) upper-story windows with operable shutters, 4) cornice, and 5) gabled roof.*

## Design of Alterations

Buildings undergo alterations over time. New alterations often occur when original material is missing and should be planned to preserve the building's integrity. Alterations should be designed to avoid destruction of key features and so that one may continue to interpret the historic character of the property.

### 3.6 Design an alteration to be compatible with the historic character of the property.

- Avoid alterations that would hinder the ability to interpret the historic significance of the original building.
- Avoid alterations that seek to imply an earlier period than that of the building. For example, don't apply "Colonial" details to an 1890s building.

### 3.7 Avoid alterations that damage historic features.

- For example, mounting a sign panel or awning in a manner that causes damage to decorative is inappropriate.

*This row of buildings had lost some details over time. Overhead garage doors that had replaced original storefronts were later alterations without historic significance. Compare this photograph with the "after" photograph below. (Fort Collins, CO)*



*After rehabilitation, the row of buildings shown in the photograph above conveys a stronger sense of its historic character. Note that some old uses were retained, while other new uses were also introduced. Some incompatible alterations were removed and storefronts were appropriately reconstructed. (Fort Collins, CO)*



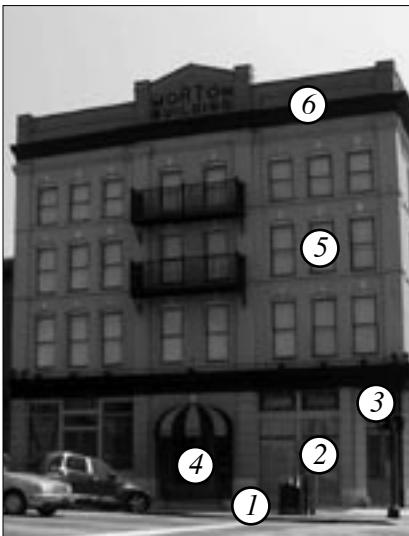
## Storefronts

Many downtown storefronts have character defining features seen traditionally on commercial buildings. The repetition of these features creates a visual unity on the street that should be preserved. See Appendix C for definitions.

Many storefront features are specific to the period of construction and style of architecture of the building. If the storefront feature defines an architectural style or period of construction, it should be preserved.

For some buildings, the specific design of an individual storefront feature is not integral to the architectural style of the building. For example, if the position of an entryway is not important to the design of the building, its location may be moved to suit functional needs.

Preserving significant historic storefronts and restoring altered or missing storefront features are important preservation goals. When planning for the rehabilitation of a storefront, an evaluation of the building's historic integrity should be conducted. Researching archival materials such as historic photos and building plans can be helpful in understanding the role of the storefront and its relationship to the street. Examining the existing building for any clues regarding the location of glass, window supports and transoms can also provide important information on the original design of a missing or altered storefront feature.



Typical storefront features include: 1) bulkhead, 2) display windows, 3) sign band, 4) recessed entry, 5) upper-story windows, and 6) cornice.



*A modest building can also be renovated to be compatible with the context. In this photograph the original millinery shop front had simple moldings at the top. Compare this photograph with the photographs below. (Fort Collins, CO)*



*Years later, all original features had been stripped from the building. Compare this photograph with the photographs above and below. (Fort Collins, CO)*



*The same building (above) after renovation exhibits the more classical features of commercial storefronts, including a painted cornice, bulkhead and recessed entry. (Fort Collins, CO)*



*Consider restoring the historic storefront opening.*



*This image illustrates a historic prism glass transom, which should be preserved.*

---

**3.8 Preserve the historic character of a storefront when it is intact.**

- Maintain the interest of pedestrians.
- Preserve the storefront glass if it is intact.
- Do not use reflective glass in storefronts, as it is important for pedestrians to be able to clearly see into the display windows.
- Do not set a storefront back from its historic position at the sidewalk edge.

**3.9 Retain the original shape of the transom glass in an historic storefront.**

- Preserve the historic shape and configuration of the transom as it is important to the proportion of the storefront.
- Install new glass if the original transom glass is missing. However, if the transom must be blocked, use it as a sign panel or a decorative band, but be certain to retain the original proportions.
- Do not increase transom areas beyond their historic size and proportion.

**3.10 If a storefront is altered, consider returning it to the original design.**

- Use historic photographs or a simplified interpretation of nearby storefronts if evidence of the original design is missing. The storefront should be designed to provide interest to pedestrians.
- Design new features to be subordinate to original historic features.
- Maintain the alignment of the storefront and the front facade of the building when altering or restoring a previously altered storefront.



*The windows in this structure are boarded and architectural features need repair. Compare this photograph with the photograph below. (Fort Collins, CO)*



*Storefront windows are reopened and upper-story windows are repaired. (Fort Collins, CO)*



*Preserve the historic character of a storefront when it is intact.*

---

**3.11 An alternative design that is a contemporary interpretation of a traditional storefront is appropriate.**

- Consider a new design that uses traditional elements when the original is missing (See the introduction to this chapter for an expanded explanation.)
- Design new storefronts to convey the characteristics of typical storefronts, including the transparent character of the display windows, recessed entries and cornices.
- Do not alter the size of an historic window opening or block it with opaque materials.
- Preserve early storefront alterations that have taken on historic significance. In some cases, removing early alterations and reconstructing the original would be appropriate.

**3.12 Maintain historic storefront openings.**

- Avoid altering the size and shape of storefront openings as they are important characteristics that contribute to the integrity of an historic commercial building.
- Consider restoring storefront openings to their original condition if it can be determined.
- Consider developing a compatible contemporary design when the original window is missing.



*Example: Where original details are missing, an alternative design that is a contemporary interpretation of a traditional storefront may be considered. The storefront should be designed to provide interest to pedestrians. (Boulder, CO)*

## Windows and Doors

Original windows and doors are important features that help convey the character of a building. Original elements should be preserved when feasible.

### 3.13 Preserve historic upper-story windows.

- Do not block or alter historic upper-story windows as the (generally vertical) proportions of these windows contribute to the character of each commercial storefront.
- Consider reopening windows that are currently blocked.

### 3.14 Preserve the functional and decorative features of a historic window.

- Maintain the historic frame, sash, muntins, mullions, glazing, sills and other window parts when feasible. It is especially important to preserve smaller panes in Federal Style buildings.
- Do not use reflective glazing. Window transparency is especially important along the street level to maintain pedestrian interest.

### 3.15 Preserve historically significant doors.

- Maintain features important to the character of the historic door, including the door, door frame, threshold, glass panes, paneling, hardware, detailing transoms and flanking side lights.
- Do not change the position and function of original primary entrances.
- Do not seal secondary doors shut in an irreversible manner. Any work that is done must be reversible and maintain the door in its historic position so that the door can be used at a later time, if necessary.



*Historic doors are character-defining features and should be preserved.*



*Preserve historic upper-story windows.*

---

## Entries

The repetition of recessed entries provides a rhythm of shadows along the street that helps establish a sense of scale and identifies business entrances. Repetition patterns should be maintained.

**3.16 Maintain recessed entries where they are found.**

- If an entry is intact, preserve it as such.
- If an entry has been altered restoring it to the original design is an option. Developing a contemporary design that is compatible is another option. (See the introduction to this chapter for an expanded explanation.)

**3.17 Where an entry is not recessed, maintain it in its original position.**

- An alteration may be considered if necessary to comply with other code requirements including door width, swing and construction.
- In some cases, entries must comply with accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Some flexibility in application of these regulations is provided for historic properties.



*Where an entry is not recessed, maintain it in its original position, when feasible.*

## Bulkheads

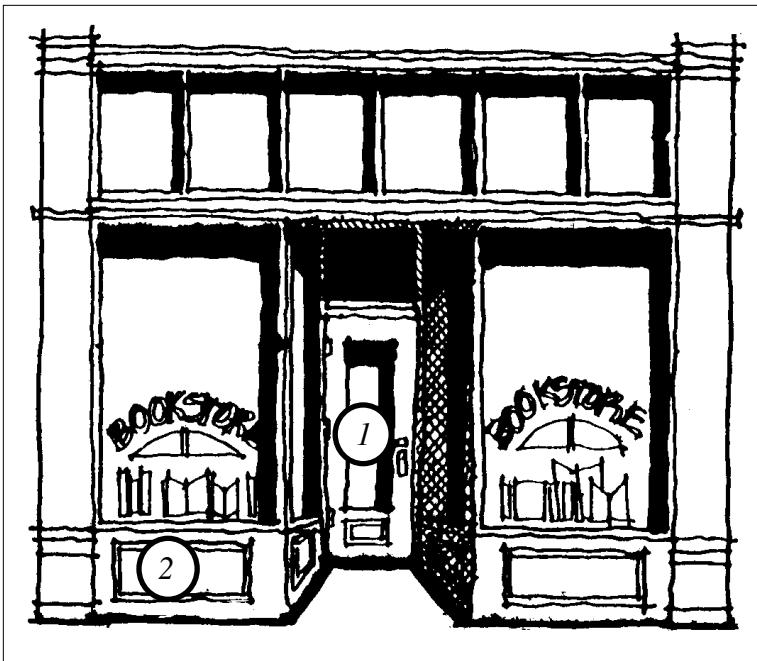
A bulkhead (or kickplate), located below the display window, is a key defining feature on most commercial buildings and should be preserved.

### 3.18 Retain an original bulkhead as a decorative panel.

- The bulkhead should be preserved as it adds detail to the streetscape.

### 3.19 If the original bulkhead is missing, develop a sympathetic replacement design.

- Replace bulkheads with wood, metal and masonry similar to the historic originals.



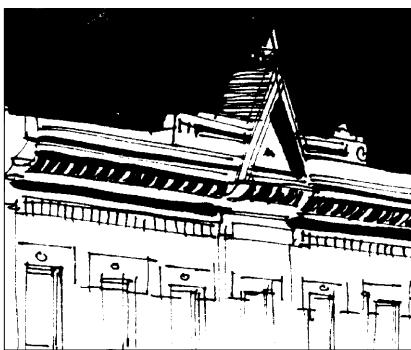
This traditional storefront sketch illustrates a (1) recessed entry and (2) bulkheads.



The bulkhead pictured beneath this display window includes appropriate historic details.



*If the cornice is missing from a building, consider reconstructing it. (See below.)*



*Reconstruct a missing cornice when historic evidence is available.*



*A simplified interpretation also is appropriate if evidence of the original is missing.*

## Cornices

Most historic commercial buildings have cornices to cap their facades. Cornice repetition and general alignment along a street contribute to the visual continuity on a block and should be preserved.

### 3.20 Preserve the character of the cornice line.

- Maintain the cornice line as a straight or stepped parapet.

### 3.21 Reconstruct a missing cornice when historic evidence is available.

- Use early photographs or physical evidence to determine design details of an original cornice.
- Consider the substitution of another old cornice for the original, provided that the substitute is similar in appearance.

### 3.22 A simplified interpretation is appropriate if evidence of the original is missing.

- Use appropriate materials such as stone, brick and stamped metal. Concrete and resin cast products may also be used.

## Facade Materials

Original exterior building materials provide a sense of scale and texture and often convey the work of skilled craftsmen. Original building materials should not be covered, damaged or removed.

### 3.23 Historic building materials add textural qualities, as well as visual continuity and character to the streetscape, and should be preserved.

- Preserve the character and finish of the dominant brick and stone building materials.

### 3.24 Protect historic material surfaces.

- Don't use harsh cleaning methods, such as sandblasting, that could damage the finish of historic materials.
- Clean historic material surfaces with a natural bristle brush, or the "gentlest means possible". Pressure washing is discouraged.
- If chemical cleaners are used, a test patch should be made in an inconspicuous area and reviewed.
- If possible, do not use mechanical means of stripping.  
(For more information, see Preservation Brief 6 cited at the end of this chapter.)

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### 3.25 Protect masonry from water deterioration.

- Provide proper drainage so water does not stand on flat surfaces or accumulate in decorative features.
- Provide a means to drain water away from foundations to minimize rising damp. Do not permit downspouts to direct water to the foundation.
- Do **not** apply protective sealants or clear coats to masonry as they prevent proper breathing and cause moisture to be trap moisture.
- Do **not** paint unpainted masonry buildings. If masonry was painted historically, it may be appropriate to repaint.



*Don't cover or obscure original facade materials.*

### 3.26 Do not cover or obscure original facade materials.

- When feasible, expose original facade material to expose interesting detail.

### 3.27 If material replacement is necessary, use materials similar to those employed historically.

- Consider using substitute materials only after all other options for restoration have been ruled out.
- Use substitute materials only if they are compatible with the original in texture and physical makeup.



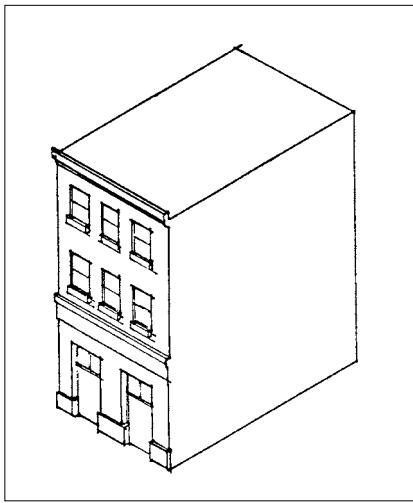
*Reconstructing missing details using sufficient information is encouraged, this can be obtained from a historic photograph or investigation of physical evidence.*



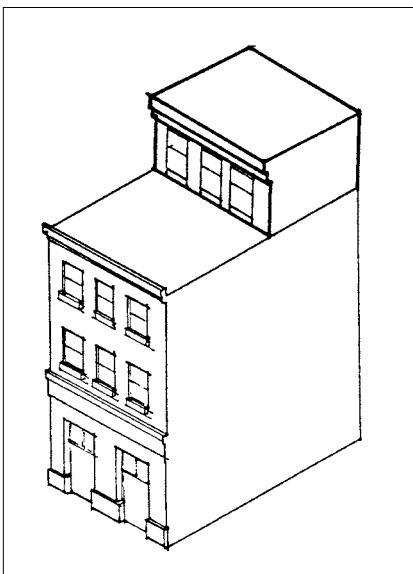
*Upper left: the original cornice is missing.*

*Above: the central portion of the pediment is under construction.*

*Lower left: the shadow lines from the completed cornice once again add interest to the building front. (Fort Collins, CO)*



*An original three-story building, before an addition. (Compare with sketches below and on the following page.)*



*A new roof-top addition set back from the primary facade is an appropriate alternative approach for an addition.*

## Design of Additions

An addition should be designed such that the historic character of the building is retained. When planning a new addition to an historic structure, negative effects such as loss of original materials, damage to structure or over-scaled additions should be minimized. While limited destruction of original materials is almost always a part of constructing an addition, such loss should be minimized. Three distinct types of additions should be considered:

- A ground-level addition that involves expanding the rear or side footprint of a structure.
- A roof addition that is simple in character and set back from the front of a building. The materials, window sizes and alignment of trim elements on the addition should be compatible to those of the existing structure.
- An addition within the wall plane of an existing building. This option will only be considered on a case-by-case basis as it requires great care to respect the historic relationship of the building to the street. Additions within the wall plane of existing buildings should provide a visual distinction between the existing structures and additions. For example, a midbelt, cornice element or a subtle change in building materials may be used to distinguish the addition.

**3.28 An addition should be compatible in scale, material and character with the main building.**

**3.29 An addition should not damage or obscure historically or architecturally important features.**

- Avoid loss or alteration of important features.

**3.30 An addition should be subtly distinguishable from the historic building.**

- An addition should be made distinguishable from the historic building, even in subtle ways, so that the character of the original can be interpreted.
- Do not build additions that seek to imply an earlier period than that of the building because it confuses the history of the structure.

---

**3.31 Additions to the rear or side of a building should meet the following criteria:**

- The addition maintains the alignment of storefront elements, moldings, cornices and upper-story windows that exist on the main part of the building and its surrounding context.

**3.32 An addition to the roof of a building should meet the following criteria:**

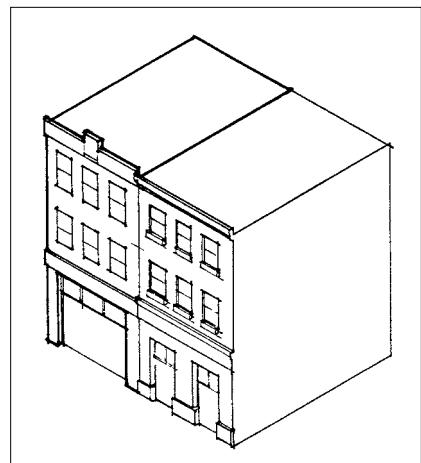
- The addition is set back from the primary, character-defining facade, to preserve the perception of the historic scale of the building.
- The addition is modest in character, so it will not attract attention from the historic facade.
- The addition is distinguishable as new, albeit in a subtle way.

**3.33 In some circumstances, an addition may be made to the roof of a building and not be set back from character-defining facades, if it meets the following criteria:**

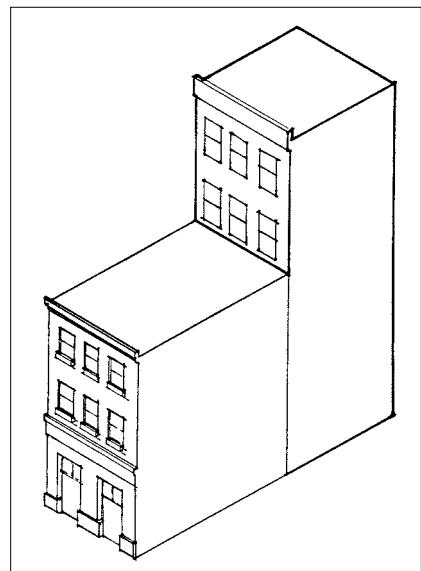
- The addition is distinguishable from the existing building by a change in material or a decorative band.
- The addition maintains the alignment of storefront elements, moldings, cornices and upper-story windows that exist on the main part of the building.
- The addition is compatible in scale, texture and material with the original.



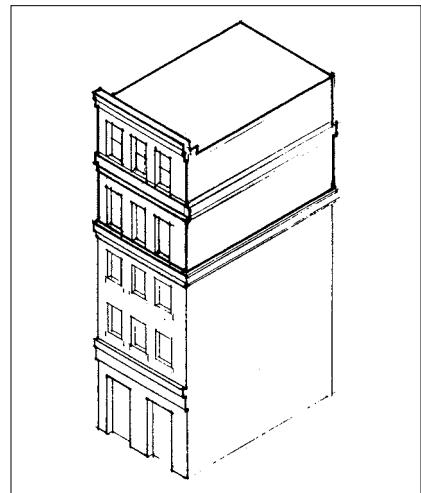
*A roof addition should be set back from the primary, character-defining facade, to preserve the perception of the historic scale of the building. (Boulder, CO)*



*New addition to the side.*



*New addition to the rear.*



*New roof-top addition, in line with the primary facade.*



*City Hall in Downtown Athens represents a typical institutional property.*



*A grand staircase creates a distinct streetscape element as it leads the pedestrian to the entrance of the First Presbyterian Church of Athens.*

## **Institutional Properties**

The Downtown Design Guidelines presented in this document focus primarily on commercial projects. While the majority of property types in Downtown Athens are commercial, religious and civic facilities are also part of the mix. New additions should be designed to complement the existing institutional building and the surrounding area.

**3.34 Additions to institutional properties should be compatible with the historic structure and context of the area. New additions should:**

- Provide a contemporary interpretation of the historic building style.
- Appear subordinate to the historic building.
- Convey a sense of human scale. This can be accomplished by using traditional building materials and dimensions and by articulating the mass of the building.
- Provide a human scaled street edge that is interesting to pedestrians.
- Maintain existing outdoor spaces designated for public use.

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### **For additional information:**

Grimmer, Anne E., Preservation Briefs 6: Dangers of Abrasive Cleaning to Historic Buildings. Washington, DC: Technical Preservation Services Division, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1979.

Jandl, H. Ward., Preservation Briefs 11: Rehabilitating Historic Storefronts. Washington, DC: Technical Preservation Services Division, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1982.

Myers, John H., Preservation Briefs 9: The Repair of Historic Wooden Windows. Washington, DC: Technical Preservation Services Division, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1981.

Park, Sharon C., Preservation Briefs 13: The Repair and Thermal Upgrading of Historic Steel Windows. Washington, DC: Technical Preservation Services Division, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1984.

Park, Sharon C., Preservation Briefs 16: The Use of Substitute Materials on Historic Building Exteriors. Washington, DC: Technical Preservation Services Division, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1988.

# Chapter 4

## Design Guidelines for New Construction

The Downtown Historic District Design Guidelines apply to new construction and alterations to existing structures in the Downtown Historic District. It is important to note that, while emphasis is placed on respecting historic resources, change is anticipated in the area; it is not to be “frozen in time.” Alterations and new construction should occur in a manner that respects the historic design context.

When new construction occurs or an existing structure is altered, it should be done in a manner that reinforces the basic, character-defining features of the area. Such features include building placement, materials and the general alignment of architectural elements and details along a block. Visual compatibility results when the design variables in a new building are arranged to be similar to historic patterns in the area.



*It is important to note that, while emphasis is placed on respecting historic resources, change is anticipated in the area; it is not to be “frozen.” However, alterations and new construction should respect the traditional design context.*

### Placement and Orientation

With the exception of small gaps for pedestrian or vehicular alleyways, most structures in the historic district are built to the full width of the parcel and align along the front lot line. The resulting “street wall” should be preserved.

#### 4.1 Maintain the alignment of buildings at the sidewalk edge.

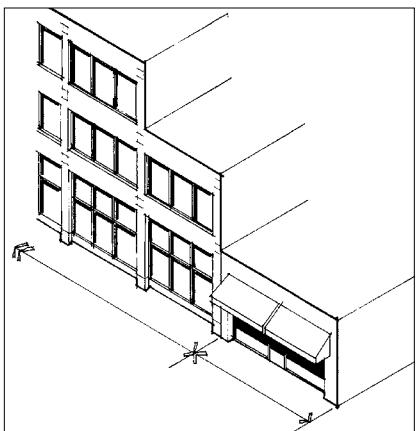
- Locate the front street wall at the sidewalk line when feasible.
- Use landscape elements to define the sidewalk edge when a building must be set back from the sidewalk based on specific site constraints (See also Chapter 6: Public Streetscape.)

#### 4.2 Orient the primary entrance of a building toward the street.

- Define a clear primary entrance.
- Provide a secondary public entrance to commercial spaces in larger buildings.



*New construction should appear similar in mass and scale to structures found historically in Downtown Athens.*



*If a structure will be markedly taller than adjacent buildings, step down the height to establish a transition in scale.*

*New construction should relate to existing historic structures by maintaining the alignment of horizontal features, producing a similar floor to floor height, dividing a larger facade into smaller modules and maintaining the visual scale of the building.*

## Massing and Scale

Although building heights vary substantially in the historic district, there is a strong similarity of scale because most buildings are between two and four stories in height. Maintaining traditional scale may be accomplished by literally constructing a building within this traditional height range; or in a taller building by using design elements that reflect this traditional height.

- 4.3 A new building should maintain the alignment of horizontal elements along the block.**
  - Align window sills, moldings and midbelt cornices.
- 4.4 Floor-to-floor heights should appear to be similar to those seen historically.**
  - Design windows in new construction to appear similar in height to those seen traditionally.
- 4.5 Consider dividing a larger building into “modules” that are similar in scale to buildings seen historically.**
  - Express “modules” three-dimensionally throughout the building’s exterior.
- 4.6 Maintain the visual building scale of two to four stories in height.**
  - Develop a primary facade that is in scale and alignment with surrounding historic buildings.
  - Consider stepping upper stories back from the main facade of taller buildings, or design the lower levels to express the alignment of elements seen traditionally in the block.





*The Hilton Garden Inn Downtown Athens has a base, middle and cap as well as facade articulation that breaks up the mass of the building.*



*This image illustrates a modern interpretation of a traditional cornice.*



*Divide larger building facades into “modules” that are similar in scale to buildings seen historically.  
(Spartanburg, SC)*



*This building steps down and back on the corner which decreases the visual scale of the building.  
(Spartanburg, SC)*

*This new infill project uses brick to delineate the base from the middle and a change in material color and architectural detailing to break down the apparent mass of the building.  
(San Antonio, TX)*

## Architectural Character

While it is important that new buildings and alterations be compatible with the historic context, it is not necessary to imitate older building styles. In fact, stylistically distinguishing new buildings from their older neighbors in the historic district is preferred.

### 4.7 New interpretations of traditional building styles are encouraged.

#### Infill construction should:

- Be a balance of new and old design
- Draw upon the fundamental similarities among older buildings in the area without copying them. This will allow it to reflect its own time and yet be compatible with its historic neighbors.
- Avoid literal imitation of older historic styles.



(Denver, CO)



(Denver, CO)



*This contemporary interpretation of a storefront includes a recessed entry and transom element. (Telluride, CO)*



*New interpretations of traditional building styles are encouraged. (Boulder, CO)*



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**4.8 A new building should incorporate a base, a middle and a cap.**

- Traditionally, buildings were composed of these three basic elements. Interpreting this tradition will help reinforce the visual continuity of the area.



(San Antonio, TX)



*These buildings all incorporate the basic building blocks: (1) base, (2) middle and (3) cap. (Boulder, CO)*



*Contemporary building materials should be used in a manner that conveys a sense of scale similar to that seen in historic materials.*



*Architectural detailing provides visual interest on these otherwise blank facades. (Denver, CO)*

## Building Materials

Masonry materials were primarily used in the historic district, and should continue to be predominant. New materials may be considered for new construction when they relate to those used historically in scale, texture, finish and detailing.

### 4.9 Materials should appear similar to those used historically.

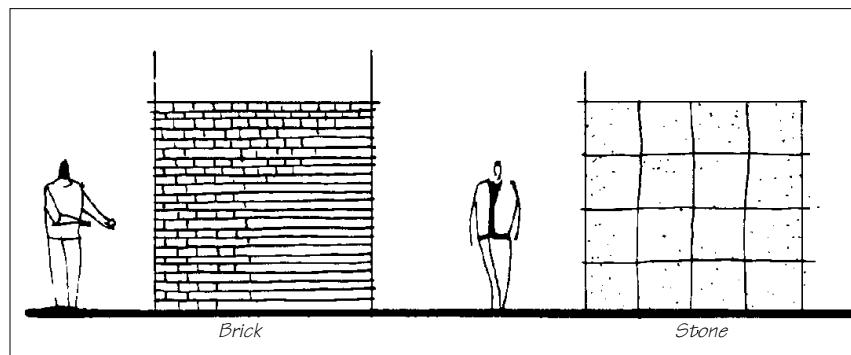
- Masonry was the traditional building material and is preferred for new construction. Brick was the most common masonry used, although there are some examples of stone masonry.
- Wood, brick, stone and metal were used for window, door and storefront surrounds and should be used in new construction.
- Unfinished or reflective materials should not be used.
- Synthetic materials may be used. Many serve best in upper floors where they are less accessible to touch.
- Synthetic stucco should only be used as a secondary material.

### 4.10 New materials should convey a sense of scale similar to that seen in historic materials.

- Large expanses of featureless materials are inappropriate.
- Appropriately scaled materials contribute to a visually interesting building facade.
- Cast concrete for example may be scored and textured to convey a character similar to traditional masonry.

### 4.11 An appropriate finish is encouraged for a large expanse of wall plane.

- Brick and stone are the dominant materials and their use in new construction is preferred. Polished stone and mirrored glass should be avoided as primary materials.



*Use building materials that are similar in their dimensions and that can be repeated as traditional modules. This will help to convey a human scale.*

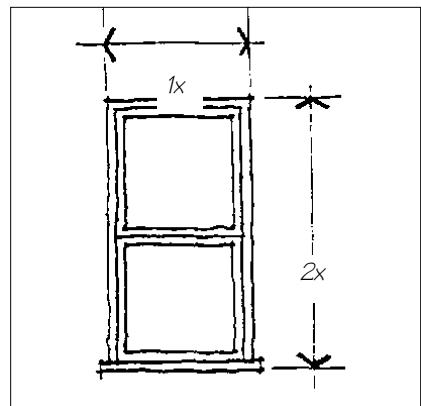
# Facade Elements

## Windows

A pattern exists along the streets with the repetition of evenly-spaced, similarly-sized, upper-story windows. These also give a building a sense of human scale—even for high rise towers. Using window sizes and proportions that are familiar to the pedestrian helps them to relate to the overall size of a building. The alignment and similar scale of windows reflect a common historic pattern that should be continued.

### 4.12 Upper-story windows with vertical emphasis are encouraged.

- A typical upper-story window is twice as tall as it is wide. Upper-story windows in new construction should relate to the window proportions seen historically. For example, upper story windows do not typically exceed 6 feet in height and 3 feet in width.



*A typical upper-story window is twice as tall as it is wide.*

### 4.13 Windows should align with others in a block.

- Windows, lintels and their trim elements should align with traditional buildings on the block.



### 4.14 Materials used in and around windows should be similar to those used historically.

- Tinted or reflective glass should be avoided.
- Aluminum storm windows are inappropriate.



*The repetition of recessed building entries occurring along the street in the historic district provides a rhythm of shadows along the street, which helps establish a sense of scale and invites pedestrians to enter buildings in the area.*

*Upper-story windows with vertical emphasis are encouraged.  
(San Antonio, TX)*



*An appropriate design of a contemporary interpretation of a storefront entry. (Boulder, CO)*



*When providing a storefront at the street level is not feasible, consider using display cases that illustrate goods and services available inside or nearby. (Boulder, CO)*

## **Entries**

The repetition of recessed building entries occurring along the street in the historic district provides a rhythm of shadows along the street, which helps establish a sense of scale and invites pedestrians to enter buildings. This trend should be continued in new construction.

### **4.15 Building entrances should appear similar to those used historically.**

- Clearly define the primary entrance with a canopy or other architectural or landscape feature.
- Recess the building entrance.
- Choose a design similar in scale and overall character to those seen historically for a contemporary interpretation of a traditional building entry.
- Place the primary building entrance at or near street level. A sunken terrace entrance is not appropriate as the primary access from the street.
- Design entries to have a high degree of transparency.

## **Pedestrian Interest**

The historic district should continue to develop as a pedestrian-oriented environment of ground floor storefronts. Buildings should relate to pedestrians by using materials and a human scale compatible with local historic patterns.

### **4.16 Develop the ground floor level of a project to encourage pedestrian activity.**

- Provide a storefront along a primary pedestrian way when feasible.
- Consider display cases, public art, landscaping and/or decorative surfaces if a storefront is not feasible.

### **4.17 Avoid blank walls or the appearance of a vacant lot.**

- Design all building facades that can be seen by pedestrians to be visually interesting.
- Provide repetitive elements, such as windows and belt courses to create a rhythm of shadows along a facade. This helps establish a sense of scale and interest for pedestrians.
- Use architectural detailing and material articulation create a visually pleasing facade.

Additional information on guidelines for new construction can be found in Athens-Clarke County Historic Preservation Ordinance Section 8-5-5(b)

# Chapter 5

## Parking Facilities

Although the streets of Downtown Athens were first designed for pedestrians and horse-drawn carriages, cars currently have a major presence. Their visual impact should be minimized by designing parking facilities to be attractive, compatible additions to the historic area. Using high quality materials and pedestrian friendly facades at the sidewalk edge can mitigate potentially negative impacts of new parking facilities. In general, a new parking garage should remain subordinate to the street scene and should be wrapped with a pedestrian-friendly facade. As a new parking garage is considered new construction, all guidelines applicable to new construction must be followed.

New surface lots are not allowed in the district although there may be some cases where an existing lot is located on the property. If the property is redeveloped and a historic building is rehabilitated the existing lot may remain. The lot should be located behind the building and if it must abut the public-right-of-way it should be screened and buffered.

### Surface Parking

**5.1 Surface should be located in the interior of a block whenever possible.**

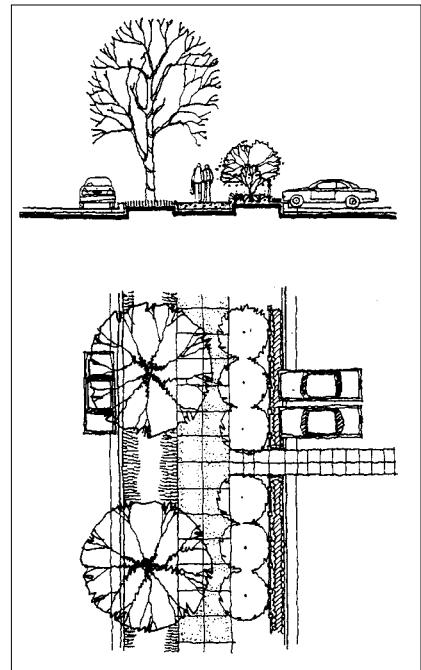
- Do not place surface lots on corner properties as they are generally more visible than interior lots and provide a sense of enclosure for intersections.

**5.2 Site a surface lot to minimize gaps in the street wall.**

- Place the parking to the rear of a building to preserve the architectural continuity of the street.

**5.3 Provide a visual buffer where surface lots abut sidewalks.**

- Consider providing a landscaped strip or planter that meets Athens-Clarke County Code requirements.
- Consider the use of a compatible wall as a screen near the edge of the lot.
- Use a combination of trees and shrubs to create a landscape buffer.



*Where a parking lot abuts a public sidewalk, provide a visual buffer.*



*Use a combination of trees and shrubs to create a landscape buffer.*

.....  
All parking facilities must comply with Chapter 9-30 of the Athens-Clarke County Code.  
.....

---

## Visual Impacts of Parking Structures

Parking structures should be designed to enhance pedestrian activity along the street in the historic district. At a minimum a parking structure should help to animate the street and be compatible with the surrounding historic context. The visual impacts of the cars themselves should be minimized.

### 5.4 Design a parking structure so that it creates an attractive, active street edge.

- Wrap parking structures with retail space or other active use along the street edge when feasible in order to shield the facility from the street.
- Provide visually attractive street edges with architectural detailing, murals, public art, landscaping and product display cases when a retail wrap is not feasible.

### 5.5 Design parking structures to be compatible with historic buildings in the surrounding area.

- Respect the character defining features of adjacent historic buildings.
- Maintain the alignment and rhythm of architectural features as seen along the street.
- Use similar building materials.
- Avoid multiple curb cuts, they complicate turning movements and disrupt the sidewalk.
- Maintain the traditional widths of buildings in the area.

### 5.6 Minimize the visual impacts of parking structure facades that are visible from the public right-of-way.

- Design walls that do not abut the street edge but extend above existing buildings to be visually attractive and compatible with their surroundings.
- Consider creating visually attractive facades by using architectural detailing, murals and product display cases.



*This parking structure incorporates a wrap of retail stores along the street edge. The storefronts are contemporary interpretations of the historic downtown context. (Boulder, CO)*

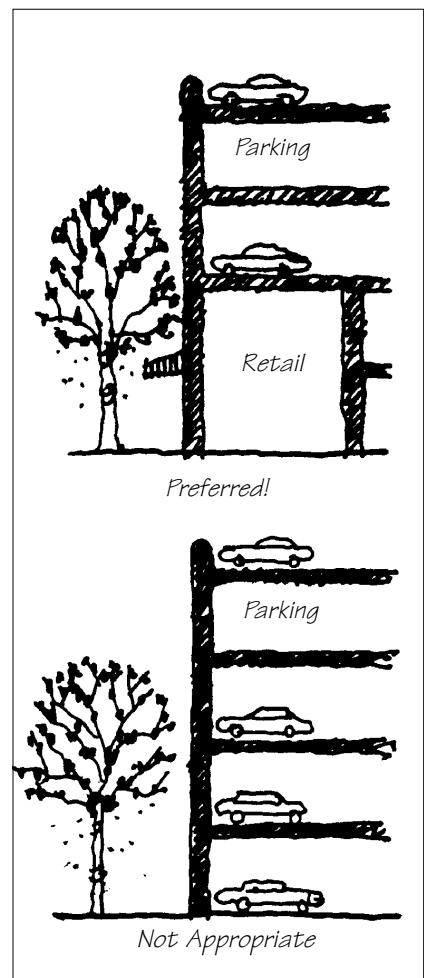
## Security and Pedestrian Circulation in Parking Facilities

### 5.7 Design parking facilities to be accessible to pedestrians.

- Clearly define walkways with graphics, lighting or landscaping.
- Provide a direct connection between parking structures and supporting businesses.
- Plan interior and exterior lighting to assure user safety.



*This parking structure has retail at the ground level and architectural ornamentation above to provide visual interest. (Louisville, KY)*



*The ground level of a parking structure should be wrapped by retail, office or some other active use along the street edge.*



# Chapter 6

## Public Streetscape

Athens-Clarke County has the opportunity to have an enhanced downtown where pedestrians share streets with buses, automobiles and bicycles. This mix of traffic can provide a sense of excitement and enhance the pedestrian experience if all the elements are kept in balance.

### Design Concept for the Public Streetscape

Streetscape designs for the historic district will help establish a sense of visual continuity while still expressing the unique qualities of the area. A consistent set of street furniture elements expressing an image contemporary and historical Athens should be used whenever feasible.



*Streetscape designs should express an image of Downtown Athens as it is today while being respectful of its heritage.*



*Street furniture should express an image of Downtown Athens while being respectful of its heritage.*



*The dining area should not encroach upon the storefront, this is an inappropriate approach to accommodating outdoor dining or merchandise display. This treatment undermines the integrity of the historic building as well as the street wall.*



*An appropriate dining area should be in front of the street wall. It is only appropriate to have outdoor dining when there is sufficient sidewalk width to allow for furniture and a comfortable walking path.*

## Street Furniture

Several areas of the Downtown Athens already have amenities in place that enhance the pedestrian experience. New furnishings should continue to enhance the area while working with existing features. Where feasible, benches, planters, lighting, newspaper racks and waste receptacles should be located in a “furnishings zone” which maintains a clearly defined pedestrian travel lane.

### **6.1 All street furniture in the public right-of-way should have similar materials and finishes.**

- Draw upon local character and materials for street furniture design. For example, a simple black metal strap bench would be appropriate.



*Street furniture should express local character in terms of materials and design.*

# Chapter 7

## General Design Guidelines

The Downtown Historic District Design Guidelines apply to all improvement projects in the historic district, including new buildings and alterations to all existing structures. The historic district conveys a sense of a time and place which is expressed through its numerous historic and traditional buildings. When new building occurs or an existing structure is altered, it should be in a manner that reinforces the basic character-defining features of the area.



*Historically, awnings and canopies are noteworthy features of buildings in the historic district and their continued use is encouraged.*

### Awnings and Canopies

Awnings and canopies are noteworthy features of buildings in the historic district and their continued use is encouraged. Awnings and canopies should **not** obscure character defining features, damage the historic fabric of the building, or be irreversible.

#### 7.1 An operable or fixed fabric awning is encouraged.

- Use simple shed shapes for rectangular openings.
- Do not use odd shapes, bullnose awnings and bubble awnings as they are inappropriate on most historic structures.
- Do not use internal illumination in awnings.
- Use colors that are compatible with the overall color scheme of the facade. Solid colors or simple, muted-stripe patterns are appropriate.



*A fixed metal canopy may be considered on a case-by-case basis. They are appropriate on a limited range of historic styles.*

#### 7.2 A fixed metal canopy may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

- Metal canopies are appropriate on a limited range of historic styles, including Classical Revival, Art Deco, Moderne and International styles. They may be appropriate for new construction, depending on the building.



*On an historic building, mount an awning or canopy to accentuate character-defining features of window or door openings.*

- All building lighting must comply with all applicable Athens-Clarke County Codes.



*Lighting is appropriately used on these building facades to highlight the retail sign.*

#### **7.4 Appropriate support systems should be used.**

- Fit the awning and support system into its historic location on the building facade.
- Use existing documentation to ensure that awning and canopy support systems are similar to those seen historically.
- Use wall-mounted brackets and chains as supporting mechanisms for metal canopies.
- Use small or hidden components.
- Minimize the visibility of awning support systems as large, visible frames can have an adverse effect on a building facade.
- Do not use large metal frames or heavy timber members.

### **Building Lighting**

The character and level of lighting that is used on a building is of special concern. Traditionally, exterior lights were simple in character and were used to highlight signs, entrances and first floor details. Most fixtures had incandescent lamps that cast a color similar to daylight, were relatively low in intensity and were shielded with simple shade devices. Although new lamp types may be considered, the overall effect of modest, focused building light should be continued.

When installing architectural lighting on a historic building, use existing documentation as a basis for the new lighting design. If no documentation exists, use a contemporary lighting fixture. Building lighting should be installed in a manner so as not to damage the historic fabric of the building and should be reversible. Most historic lighting was subdued and directed at signs, entrances and building features.

#### **7.5 Use lighting to accent:**

- Architectural details
- Building entrances
- Signs

#### **7.6 Minimize the visual impacts of site and architectural lighting.**

- Use exterior light sources with a low level of luminescence.
- Use white lights that cast a similar color to daylight.
- Do not wash an entire building facade in light.
- Use lighting fixtures that are appropriate to the building and its surroundings in terms of style, scale and intensity of illumination.

#### **7.7 Use shielded and focused light sources to prevent glare.**

- Provide shielded and focused light sources that direct light downward.
- Do not use high intensity light sources or cast light directly upward.
- Shield lighting associated with service areas, parking lots and parking structures.

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## Mechanical Equipment and Service Utilities

Utility service boxes, telecommunication devices, cables, conduits, trash and recycling storage may affect the character of an area. These devices should be screened from public view to avoid negative effects on historic resources.

### 7.8 Minimize the visual impact of mechanical equipment on the public way.

- Screen equipment from view.
- Do not locate window air conditioning units on a primary façade.
- Use low-profile or recessed mechanical units on rooftops.
- Locate satellite dishes out of public view.



*Minimize the visual impact of roof-top equipment on the public way.*

### 7.9 Minimize the visual impacts of utility connections and service boxes.

- Locate utility connections and service boxes on secondary walls when feasible.

### 7.10 Locate and install standpipes and other service equipment such that they will not damage historic facade materials.

- Do not cut channels into historic facade materials as it may damage historic building fabric.

### 7.11 Minimize the visual impacts of trash storage and service areas.

- Locate service areas away from major pedestrian routes; locate them at the rear of a building, off an alley, when possible.
- Screen dumpsters from view.
- Ensure that all screens meet applicable Athens-Clarke County Codes.

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## Protect and Maintain Property

All properties in the Downtown Historic District should be maintained to prevent the need for more radical repairs or replacement of building features in the future.

A prolonged lack of significant maintenance results in demolition by neglect which is the preventable demise of a historic building due to willful lack of maintenance. In Athens-Clarke County, demolition by neglect issues are typically addressed through compliance with codes for existing buildings as adopted by Athens-Clarke County and Chapter 3-13 of the Athens-Clarke County Code, entitled 'Nuisance Abatement'.

### **7.12 Minimize the deterioration of a property.**

- Provide regular maintenance to a historic building and its site features in order to minimize the need to replace historic materials.
- Maintain material through appropriate treatments such as caulking, limited paint removal and re-application of paint.
- Maintain photographic documentation of the property for use in future preservation efforts.

## Demolition

It is vital that all historic properties be preserved, wherever feasible, so that the integrity of the historic district will be sustained. Demolition of historic buildings is therefore strongly discouraged.

### **7.12 Demolition of a historic structure should only be considered after all other possibilities for preservation have been ruled out.**

- Consider mothballing a historic structure as an alternative to demolition, making sure to protect it from the weather and secure it from vandalism.

# Chapter 8

## Sign Design Guidelines

Commercial signs are a part of the character of Downtown Athens. Early photographs reveal five primary sign types:

1. Medium-sized, square or rectangularly-shaped signs that project from the building above the awnings or canopies; printed on both sides
2. Small, horizontally-oriented rectangular signs that protrude from the building below the awnings or canopies but above pedestrians; printed on both sides
3. Medium- to large-sized, horizontally-oriented rectangular signs that attach flat against the building, above and/or below the awnings; printed on one side only
4. Large “blade” signs (i.e., vertically-oriented, tall signs) that project from the second or third/fourth floors of a building, above awnings or canopies; printed on both sides
5. Window signs painted on glass; used at the street level and on upper floors.

Historically, street level signs mounted on the exterior of the primary facade advertised the primary business of a building. Upper story businesses used window signs. In the case of a large structure that included several businesses on upper floors, the name of the building itself was displayed on an exterior sign with individual tenants listed on a directory at street level.

Although most signs were a few square feet in area, larger signs were used for cultural or institutional facilities such as theaters or office blocks. In a few instances, major retailers also used large signs, although they were limited in number.

The earliest signs had no lights but a variety of lighting methods eventually came to be used. Many signs in the early twentieth century had incandescent lamps focused on the sign panel. By the 1930s, some signs were outlined in lights and by the 1950s, neon was used.

Signs were historically mounted to fit within architectural features without obscuring building design. In many cases, signs were mounted flush above the storefront, just above moldings. Other signs were located between columns or centered in “panels” on a building face.

Signage should meet the Athens-Clarke County Sign Ordinance in regard to placement, size and location. In some cases the size and location of an allowed sign in the Athens-Clarke County Sign Ordinance would be inappropriate in the Downtown Historic District. Therefore when considering a sign for a building within this district the following guidelines should be met.



*This early bookstore sign was located to fit within the transom and would be appropriate today. The temporary signs hanging from the windows would be inappropriate today. Photo courtesy of Georgia Department of Archives and History.*

## The Sign Context

- All signage must comply with all applicable Athens-Clarke County Codes.



*A sign should be in scale with the facade.*

A sign typically serves two functions: to attract attention and to convey information. All new signs should be developed with the overall context of the building and of the area in mind. Signs should be constructed in reversible manner that does **not** damage the historic fabric of the building.

### **8.1 Signs should be subordinate to the overall building composition.**

- Scale signs to the facade if the building.
- Locate a signs to emphasize design elements of the facade itself.
- Do not obscure architectural details or features with signage.
- Mount signage to fit within existing architectural features using the shape of the sign to help reinforce the horizontal lines of moldings and transoms seen along the street.



*A sign should not obstruct character defining features of a building.  
(Windsor, VT)*

## Appropriate Sign Types

### 8.2 Consider a flush-mounted wall signs.

- Place wall signs to align with others on the block.
- Determine if decorative moldings exist that could define a “sign panel. If so, locate a flush-mounted wall sign to fit within a panel formed by moldings or transom panels.
- Do not obstruct character defining features of a building with signage.



*A small projecting sign should be located near the business entrance, just above the door or to the side of it.*

### 8.3 Projecting signage may be considered.

- Locate small projecting signs near the business entrance, just above the door or to the side of it.
- Mount large projecting signs higher on the building, centered on the facade or positioned at the corner.
- Review all pertinent regulation when planning signage that will overhang the public right-of-way.

### 8.4 A window sign may:

- Be painted on a window.
- Cover no more than approximately 25 percent of the total window area.
- Be painted on the glass or hung inside a window.



*Painted wood and metal are appropriate materials for signs. (Asheville, NC)*

### 8.5 Consider a directory sign.

- Consolidate small, individual signs onto a single panel as a directory to make them easier to locate.

### 8.6 Do not use permanent free-standing signs.

## Sign Materials

### 8.7 Use signage materials that are compatible with the building facade.

- Use painted wood and metal for signage.
- Do not use unpainted materials because they are out of character with the context of the Downtown Historic District.
- Do not use highly reflective materials that are difficult to read.
- Consider painted signs on blank walls as they were used historically.



*A symbol sign adds interest to the street, can be read quickly and is remembered better than written words. (Durango, CO)*

## Sign Design

**8.8 Using a symbol for a sign is encouraged.**

- A symbol sign adds interest to the street, can be read quickly and is remembered better than written words.

**8.9 A simple sign design is preferred.**

- Typefaces that are in keeping with those seen in the area traditionally are encouraged.
- Avoid hard-to-read or overly intricate typeface styles.

**8.10 Preserve historic painted signs where they exist.**

## Sign Lighting

**8.11 Use indirect lighting on signage.**

- Directed lighting at signage from an external, shielded lamp.
- Use lighting that provides a warm light, similar to daylight.

**8.12 Use internal illumination designed to be subordinate to the overall building composition.**

- Do not use internal illumination for signage unless necessary.
- Do not use internal illumination for an entire sign panel. A system that backlights sign text only is preferred.
- Consider neon and other tubular illumination only in limited amounts so it does not become visually obtrusive.

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# Appendix A

## The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.



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# Appendix B

## Interpretation of Terms

These definitions apply to terms related to compliance in the preceding text.

**Appropriate.** A stated action or design choice is defined as being “appropriate” when it conforms to the design guidelines. If, in the opinion of the historic preservation commission, new construction or alterations would fail to comply with the guidelines and would be inconsistent with the character of the historic property, they would generally be considered “inappropriate.” In some cases, designs that are not expressly mentioned in the design guidelines may be deemed “appropriate.”

**Consider.** When the term “consider” is used, a design suggestion is offered to the reader as an example of one method of how a particular design guideline could be met. Applicants may elect to follow the suggestion, but may also seek alternative means of meeting it.

**Context.** In many cases, the reader is instructed to relate to the context of the project area. The “context” relates to those properties and structures adjacent to and within the same block as the proposed project.

**Contributing Property.** A building, site, structure, work of art or object that adds to the aesthetic qualities or historic values for which a historic district is significant because it possesses historic integrity reflecting the district’s character or it independently meets the designation criteria. The property should meet an age criteria of fifty years, unless the property has exceptional significance.

**Historic District.** A geographically definable area which contains structures, sites, buildings, objects, works of art, places or a combination thereof which exhibit a special historical, architectural or environmental character as designated by the Mayor and Commission.

**Human Scale.** A built environment that is designed to a human scale must be functional and comfortable for pedestrians. Appropriate human scaled environments are built from elements comparable in scale to individual human beings. Built environments that are designed primarily to facilitate automobile access and circulation, or building details that are scaled to be viewed from highways or long distances, violate human scale.

**Inappropriate.** Inappropriate means impermissible. When the term “inappropriate” is used, the relevant design approach will not be allowed. For example, one guideline states: “Enclosing a storefront with opaque materials that destroy the openness and transparency of the storefront is inappropriate.” There may be a design that is not expressly mentioned in the text that also may be deemed “inappropriate”.

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**Landmark.** An individual structure, building, object, site or work of art which exhibits a special historical, architectural or environmental character as designated by the CEO and commission.

**Non-historic.** Recent buildings and those 50 years old or older which have lost their integrity are considered “non-historic.” These buildings do not possess the significance and/or physical integrity necessary to be considered a historic resource.

**Non-contributing Property.** A building, site, structure, work of art or object that does not add to the aesthetic qualities or historic values for which a historic district is significant because it does not possess historic integrity reflecting the district’s character and it does not independently meet the designation criteria.

**Preferred.** In some cases, the reader is instructed that a certain design approach is “preferred.” In such a case, the reader is encouraged to choose the design option at hand. However, other approaches may be considered.

**Primary facade.** The primary facade is the principal elevation of a building, usually facing the street or other public way.

**Shall/Should.** If the term “should” appears in a design guideline, compliance is required. In cases where specific circumstances of a project make it impractical to do so, Athens-Clarke County may determine that compliance is not required if the applicant demonstrates how the related policy statement still will be met.

**Traditional.** Based on or established by the history of the area.

# Appendix C

## Definitions

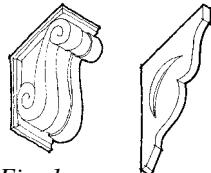


Fig. 1

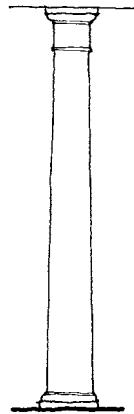


Fig. 2

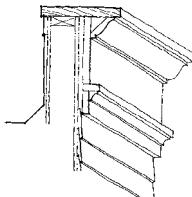


fig. 3

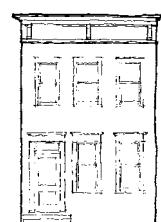


fig. 4

**Alignment.** The arrangement of objects along a straight line.

**Appurtenances.** An additional object added to a building; typically includes vents, exhausts hoods, air conditioning units, etc.

**Bracket.** A supporting member for a projecting element or shelf, sometimes in the shape of an inverted L and sometimes as a solid piece or a triangular truss. (Figure 1)

**Belt Course.** A molding or course running horizontally along the face of a building. Belt Courses may be flat or projecting.

**Building.** A resource created principally to shelter any form of human activity, such as a house.

**Bulkhead (Kickplate).** A horizontal element or assembly at the base of a storefront parallel to a public walkway. The bulkhead (or kickplate) provides a transition between the ground and storefront glazing area.

**Column.** A slender upright structure, generally consisting of a cylindrical shaft, a base and a capital; pillar: It is usually a supporting or ornamental member in a building. (Figure 2)

**Conservation Area.** Conservation areas are typically used in newer areas or older areas with less integrity where historic district designation is not feasible. Maintaining overall character is the focus.

**Coping.** The protective uppermost course of a wall or parapet. (Figure 3)

**Corbelling.** A series of projections, each stepped out further than the one below it; most often found on brick walls and chimney stacks.

**Cornice.** The continuous projection at the top of a wall. The top course or molding of a wall when it serves as a crowning member. (Figure 4)

**Course:** a continuous row or layer of stones, tile, brick, shingles, etc., in a wall.

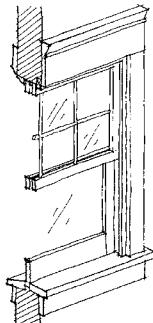


fig. 5

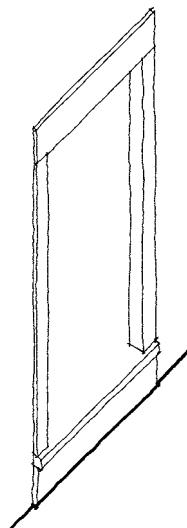


fig. 6

**Dormer.** A window set upright in a sloping roof. The term is also used to refer to the roofed projection in which this window is set.

**Door frame.** The part of a door opening to which a door is hinged. A door frame consists of two vertical members called jambs and a horizontal top member called a lintel or head.

**Double-Hung Window.** A window with two sashes (the framework in which window panes are set), each moveable by a means of cords and weights. (Figure 5)

**Elevation.** A mechanically accurate, “head-on” drawing of a face of a building or object, without any allowance for the effect of the laws of perspective. Any measurement on an elevation will be in a fixed proportion, or scale, to the corresponding measurement on the real building.

**Facade.** Front or principal face of a building, any side of a building that faces a street or other open space.

**Fenestration.** The arrangement of windows and other exterior openings on a building.

**Form.** The overall shape of a structure (i.e., most structures are rectangular in form).

**Frame.** A window component. See window parts.

**Gable.** The portion, above eave level, of an end wall of a building with a pitched or gambrel roof. In the case of a pitched roof this takes the form of a triangle. The term is also used sometimes to refer to the whole end wall.

**Gallery.** A roofed promenade extending along the wall of a building or a narrow balcony, usually having a railing or balustrade, along the outside of a building.

**Glazing.** Fitting glass into windows and doors.

**Head.** The top horizontal member over a door or window opening. (Figure 6)

**In-Kind Replacement.** To replace a feature of a building with materials of the same characteristics, such as material, texture, etc.

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**Mass or Massing.** Building mass is established by the arrangement and proportions of its basic geometric components - the main block and side blocks, the roof and the foundation. Similarity of massing helps create a rhythm along the street which is one of the appealing aspects of historic districts.

**Masonry.** Construction materials such as stone, brick, concrete block or tile.

**Material.** Material refers to the physical elements that were combined or deposited in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic resource.

**Modillion.** An ornamental bracket used in series under a cornice.

**Module.** The appearance of a single facade plane, despite being part of a larger building. One large building can incorporate several building modules.

**Molding.** A decorative band or strip of material with a constant profile or section designed to cast interesting shadows. It is generally used in cornices and as trim around window and door openings. (Figure 7)

**Muntin.** A bar member supporting and separating panes of glass in a window or door.

**Orientation.** Generally, orientation refers to the manner in which a building relates to the street. The entrance to the building plays a large role in the orientation of a building. It should face the street.

**Panel.** A sunken or raised portion of a door with a frame-like border.

**Parapet.** An upward extension of a building wall above the roof line, sometimes ornamented and sometimes plain, used to give a building a greater feeling of height or a better sense of proportion. (Figure 8)

**Pediment.** A triangular section framed by a horizontal molding on its base and two sloping moldings on each of its sides. Usually used as a crowning member for doors, windows and mantles. (Figure 9)

**Period of Significance.** Span of time in which a property attained significance.

**Post.** A piece of wood, metal, etc., usually long and square or cylindrical, set upright to support a building, sign, gate, etc.; pillar; pole. (Figure 10)

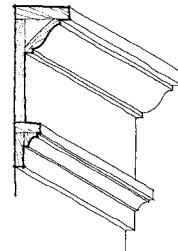


fig. 7

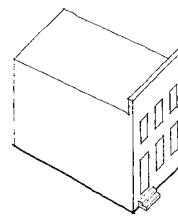


fig. 8

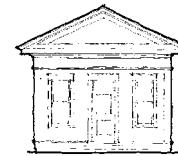


fig. 9

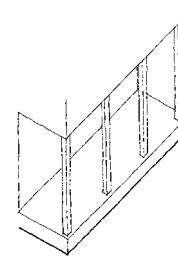


fig. 10

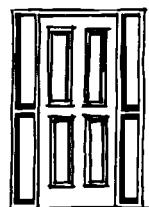


fig. 11

**Preservation.** The act or process of applying measures to sustain the existing form, integrity and materials of a building or structure and the site. It may include initial stabilization work as well as ongoing maintenance of the historic building materials.

**Protection.** The act or process of applying measures designed to affect the physical condition of a property by defending or guarding it from deterioration, or to cover or shield the property from danger or injury.

**Quoin.** An exterior masonry corner. Any of the stones used in forming the corner can also be called Quoins. They are often large and dressed or arranged so as to form a decorative contrast with the adjoining walls.

**Recessed Entry.** An entry set back from the storefront. Historically, storefronts step in, towards the interior of the building at the entry point.

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

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

**Renovation.** The act or process of returning a property to a state of utility through repair or alteration which makes possible a contemporary use.

**Restoration.** The act or process of accurately recovering the form and details of a property and its setting as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of later work or by the replacement of missing earlier work.

**Sash.** See window parts.

**Scale.** A building's size in relationship to other buildings - large, medium, small. Buildings which are similar in massing may be very different in scale.

**Shape.** The general outline of a building or its facade.

**Side Light.** A usually long fixed sash located beside a door or window; often found in pairs. (Figure 11)

**Sill.** The lowest horizontal member in a frame or opening for a window or door. Also, the lowest horizontal member in a framed wall or partition.

**Size.** The dimensions in height and width of a building's face.

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**Stile.** A vertical piece in a panel or frame, as of a door or window.

**Stabilization.** The fact or process of applying measures designed to reestablish a weather resistant enclosure and the structural stability of an unsafe or deteriorated property.

**Store Front.** The street level facade of a commercial building, usually having display windows. Typical storefront features include: kickplate, display windows, sign band, recessed entry, upper-story windows, and cornice.

**Streetscape.** Generally, the streetscape refers to the character of the street, or how elements of the street form a cohesive environment.

**Street Wall.** A wall of building facades that define the edge of a street.

**Transom Window.** A small window or series of panes above a door, casement or double hung window.

**Vernacular.** A building that does not have details associated with a specific architectural style; a simple building with modest detailing and form. Historically, factors often influencing vernacular building were things such as local building materials, local climate and building forms used by successive generations.

**Visual Continuity.** A sense of unity or belonging together that elements of the built environment exhibit because of similarities among them.

**Window Parts.** The moving units of a window are known as sashes. The sash may consist of one large pane of glass or may be subdivided into smaller panes by thin members called muntins or glazing bars. Sometimes in nineteenth-century structures windows are arranged side by side and divided by heavy vertical wood members called mullions.

**Workmanship.** The physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture, people or artisan.