

*Muskegon Homeowners' and Citizens' Guide for*  
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
DESIGN GUIDEBOOK

CITY OF  
MUSKEGON, MICHIGAN

2003

---

**INTRODUCTION**

---

CHAPTER ONE

**ARCHITECTURAL STYLES** ..... pg. 1

---

CHAPTER TWO

**REMODELING OR REHABILITATING AN EXISTING STRUCTURE** ..... pg. 12

- Rehabilitating Historic Buildings
- Storefront Rehabilitation
- Residential Building Rehabilitation

---

CHAPTER THREE

**REVIEWING NEW CONSTRUCTION AND/OR IN-FILL DEVELOPMENT** ..... pg. 21

- Compatibility
- Proportion of the Façade
- Composition
- Rhythm and Scale
- Directional Orientation

---

CHAPTER FOUR

**NEW ADDITIONS TO HISTORIC BUILDINGS**.... pg. 23

- Historic Materials and Features
- Historic Character
- Historic Significance
- Demolition Considerations

---

CHAPTER FIVE

**HISTORIC EMBELLISHMENTS** ..... pg. 24

- Signs and Regulations
- Fence Standards
- Pavement and Fixtures
- Painting
- Mechanical Systems
- Health and Safety Requirements
- Miscellaneous

---

APPENDIX

- Glossary of Terms
- Sign Graphic and Regulations
- References
- Helpful Addresses / Resources
- Incentives for Historic Preservation
- Procedures for Rehabilitation Projects
- HDC Work Permit Application Form

Prepared by:  
Planning Department  
City of Muskegon, MI  
<http://www.Shorelinecity.com>

## *Preface*

*This guidebook is provided to assist homeowners, builders, as well as citizens interested in acquiring an historic resource for rehabilitation or construction within the city's Historic Districts. Many of these guidelines, which are applicable to the City of Muskegon, are copied from the Federal Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. It should be recognized that this guidebook might not cover all rehabilitation projects extensively, so anything not mentioned herein will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by staff and the City Historic District Commission.*

*This guidebook is not intended to replace or supercede existing ordinances relating to historic preservation. The guidebook is a tool for the Historic District Commission to review applications for approval. In addition, the guidebook provides technical assistance to property owners, City staff, and other discretionary bodies such as the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Planning Commission, and the City Commission when reviewing the appropriateness of proposed changes to historic buildings as well as to the historic districts.*

*Improvements to historic structures should be compatible with a neighborhood's unique character. Hence, a major portion of the guidebook describes the kind of changes and improvements that can be made to historic resources while protecting and enhancing their historic and architectural character. This will help assure property owners that decisions made by the Historic District Commission are unbiased, uniform and consistent.*

---

## INTRODUCTION

In general, the purpose of historic preservation is to safeguard the historical or architectural legacy; to enrich the cultural identity of a community; to stabilize and strengthen property values; to attract businesses, residents and tourists; and to maintain a sense of place and character.

The City of Muskegon, like many other communities, has made efforts toward preservation by safeguarding its remarkable history. Historic Preservation will help to rebuild the core neighborhoods and to assist in strengthening the economic, social and natural environment. It also insures that historic properties are restored to a contemporary use without compromising architectural characteristics.

Operational tools and procedures are essential for the Historic District Commission (HDC). They allow them to better understand the intent of applications for new construction or rehabilitation within an Historic District. Thorough, fair and functional reviews result when commissioners have the necessary knowledge of what presently exists in the Historic District. This guidebook will help citizens and commissioners know how to respond to situations that can affect the integrity of the district.

The following guidelines are set forth to provide technical insights to staff, building owners, in addition to the HDC as to what criteria to look for in a proposed project.

When remodeling or building an addition, being familiar with its particular architectural style and features will help ensure a quality effort ensues. For new construction, getting to know the architectural style of the adjacent structures will help designers fit it into the surrounding area. For

this reason, various architectural examples consistent with the Muskegon historic structures are included in this booklet.

---

## CHAPTER ONE

### ARCHITECTURAL STYLES

The City of Muskegon has a wealth of historic architecture in residential and commercial structures. The types and styles are identified and distinguished from one another in this booklet. Although a blending of styles may also be seen.

The history of Muskegon has been divided into four periods: Pioneer Stage (1838-53), Lumber Stage (1853-88), Readjustment Stage (1888-1905), and Diversified Manufacturing Stage (Post 1905). It is understandable from the historical context that many outstanding structures were built during the wealthy lumbering era. Few used stone as a primary construction material. Many structures did not fall into a specific category, but are still considered historic.

The identification of these historic structures involved a lengthy process of surveys and evaluations that included analysis of architectural significance, integrity, style, workmanship and materials of the buildings (*Historic Preservation Survey and Planning Program, 1973*). Of the 718 structures identified, 349 were significant in terms of style. The primary style exhibited was the Italianate followed by Prairie style.

## VICTORIAN STICK

This style is known for its complicated ornate designs. Victorian architecture has very distinctive features that vary greatly from other styles. Victorian stick was a popular design in the late 1800's and early 1900's with prominent figures from the community in the early days of Muskegon.

Key features of a Victorian building:

- Overall complexity of detailed designs in cornices, windows, brackets, etc;
- Asymmetrical and complex in floor plan, roof plan, and elevation design;
- Use of round and/or semicircular turrets, porches, and gables;
- Accent on verticality, but has horizontal "banding" effect;
- Interesting cornice, gable, portico, and window detailing;
- Porches show diagonal or curved braces.



Shown here are the Hackley House (left) and the Hume House (right), located on Webster Avenue where the complexity of roof designs is demonstrated and where intricate details in the windows and cornices, are its main features.

Located in one of the pristine historic districts in Muskegon, this house is one of a few remaining Victorian era homes that has most of its features in place.



## QUEEN ANNE

This style is not very common in Muskegon. These buildings are usually a mixture of other “ornate” styles such as the Victorian and/or Georgian. Generally they were constructed between the late 1800’s and early 1900’s.

Key features of a Queen Anne building:

- Steeply pitched roof; often of irregular form with cross gables and dormers;
- Dominant front gable with a great deal of overall detailing;
- Shingles, spindle work, “gingerbread”, columns and brackets;
- Round or semicircular turrets (usually found at a corner);
- Asymmetrical plan and elevation, with irregular shaped porch (often with pediment over entry);
- Large windows bordered with small panes (often with colored or stained glass accents);
- Bay windows (most often under the turrets);
- Huge “medieval” chimneys.



*Noted for “gingerbread” details, these buildings have retained some of the architectural characteristics of the Queen Anne including the dominant front gables, spindles, turrets, and bay windows. Featured above is the Hovey House (top) and two other examples (below).*



## GEORGIAN REVIVAL

This style reflects Renaissance architectural forms; however, it was based on Italian architecture of the 1500's and popular in Muskegon during the late 1800's and early 1900's.

Key Features of a Georgian Revival building:

- Symmetrical and axial composition enriched with classical detail;
- Symmetry in plan and exterior design;
- Follows geometrical proportions;
- Main entrances are emphasized with columns, pillars, and a broken pediment;
- Palladian windows, mostly sash, and curved brackets;
- Classical decorative details;
- Low hipped roof and interesting cornice details.

*Now being used as a Bed and Breakfast, this Georgian style building has intricate details of the dormer windows, Ionic porch columns arranged symmetrically, and an overly emphasized main entrance. 446 W. Webster Avenue.*



## GOTHIC-REVIVAL

This style is very common with churches and other institutional buildings during the mid to late 1800's. Although, these examples below were built later. Gothic Revival was not continued as other styles became popular in the community. These photographs show surviving Gothic-Revival residential structures that are characterized by their steep roof pitch.

Key features of a Gothic Revival building:

- Round windows (usually above entrance doorways) with detailed designs using stained glass;
- Pointed arch for doors (usually recessed) and windows (usually heavily bordered);
- Very steep gabled roof, sometimes with steeples at each end of the gables;
- Dominant front gable without ornate details on cornices;
- Lack of symmetry.



## ITALIANATE REVIVAL

This style is most often a simplified version of the Italianate architecture, which could be as picturesque as Gothic or as simple as the Classical. Often these were built between the mid to late 1800's.

Key features of an Italianate Revival building

- Usually a series of three round arches;
- Hood moldings over windows;
- Front door arches are usually recessed;
- Series of brackets under the eaves.

*Many Italianate Revival style buildings can be found in Muskegon. The crowns over the windows, as seen in these pictures, are the predominant identifying feature of an Italianate Revival.*



## ECLECTIC/COLONIAL REVIVAL

This style lacks a clear-cut distinction of architectural styles often popular in the early and mid-1900's. Some structures were built with whatever materials were available, melding popular styles of the era.

Key features of an Eclectic/Colonial Revival building:

- Hipped roofline with interesting cornice and gable details;
- Relative simplicity, accent of horizontal, many-direction one story additions;
- General massiveness associated with Prairie style;
- Victorian window treatment;
- Use of large porch supported by Ionic columns.



*Located at 1604 Peck Street, (Left) the distinctive features of this building include its detailed cornices, large porch supported by Ionic columns, and a horizontal appearance imposed by porch roof and over-imposed eaves lines. Many of the same characteristics can be seen on the home below.*



## COLONIAL REVIVAL

This style was in vogue between the 1920s and the 1950s in most American cities. In many cases, older structures were recycled into this new style.

Key features of a Colonial Revival building:

- Gambrel roof or hipped roof with dormer;
- Relative simplicity and symmetrical elevation design, dominated by central entrance with columns;
- Fixed window shutters are common, but not always the case;
- Dominant front gables with classical details on cornices;
- Sun porch or screened porch often added to the side.



*Located in the Clinton-Peck Historic District, the house at 36 E. Grand Street (top) is not strictly Colonial Revival style, but its prominent entrance with Ionic columns, gambrel roof (fictitious), and fixed window shutters are all characteristics of the style. The house at 1641 Clinton Street (lower right) is a typical Colonial Revival style as manifested by fixed window shutters and again by its symmetry and dominant entranceway.*

## TUDOR

This style of home, which was generally built in the late 1800's to early 1900's, is scarce in Muskegon. Only nine structures were counted, which is roughly 1.25% of the total historic structures in the City.

Key features of a Tudor building:

- Flat arches on doors and windows, often topped with a cornice;
- Tall narrow windows with small windowpanes;
- Prominent cross gables, with steeply pitched roof.



## BUNGALOW-CRAFTSMAN

This style was popular from the turn of the century until about 1925. This style was very popular with the “common” folks, and designed to fit into the landscape rather than overpower it.

Key features of a Bungalow/Craftsman building:

- Modest in scale, using wood and shingles (often exposed beams and rafters) to blend in with natural surroundings;
- Low pitched gable roof with wide overhangs and exposed rafters;
- Front porch with tapered columns;
- Windows in bands of three, often with multiple panes of glass in the upper sash;
- Asymmetrical in plan and elevation (sometimes with entry at the center);
- Use of clapboards (some stucco), installed either horizontally or vertically.



*Known for their battered front porch columns, the houses at 1206 Terrace Street (above) and 11 Diana Street (right) have probably undergone many exterior renovations, change of ownership, and change of use, but have kept their original styles.*



## PRAIRIE

This style was popularized by Frank Lloyd Wright circa 1900. He sought to create buildings that harmonized with the mid-western prairie.

Key features of a Prairie style building:

- Strong horizontal appearance;
- Porches, walls, and terraces extend from the main structure;
- Wide overhanging eaves;
- Broad low-pitched roof;
- Walls at right angles (no curves);
- Windows are arranged in horizontal ribbons and often feature stained glass in stylized floral or geometric patterns;
- Walls of light-colored brick or stucco and wood;
- Large, low, plain rectangular chimney.



*The strong horizontal feature of 1532 Peck Street building (above left), the stucco exterior finish with “ribbon” band of windows at 407 W. Muskegon Avenue (middle left), and the low pitch roof of the building, also on Peck Street (top left) all have characteristics of a Prairie style. While the wide overhang eaves and wide windows are features that describe the house at 130 Washington Street (above right).*

## What are design guidelines?

Design guidelines come from State and National preservation standards. They are meant to provide a common basis for making decisions about any work that can affect the appearance of individual properties or the overall character of an historic district. In addition, they provide consistency in design review, serve as a tool for education, protect and enhance property values, and provide incentives for investments. Generally, design guidelines address the following categories:

- Rehabilitation and alteration. These include both contributing and non-contributing resources.
- New Construction. These can either be freestanding structures, or additions to existing historic structures which are subject to Commission review.
- Site Work. This includes landscape design that incorporate objects and other features (i.e., signs, fountains, lampposts, arbors, trellis, etc.)

## Why is design review important and necessary?

Design guidelines are not supposed to dictate design, instead, they help identify key features of the historic resources which should be preserved when planning any repairs, alterations, or new construction takes place. It is with design guidelines that the HDC can provide an unbiased, consistent, and fair evaluation of any work within an historic district. In this way, residents are assured that property values in their neighborhood will be reinforced with the preservation goals of the City. Decisions made by the Commission will also ensure that new construction is compatible with the existing historic fabric.

---

## CHAPTER TWO

### REMODELING OR REHABILITATING AN EXISTING STRUCTURE

Whether a project involves rehabilitation, restoration, an addition, reconstruction, or merely replacing materials, it is important (and helpful) to identify the architectural style of the existing building. Building features and details create the character of that building. This includes the roof, overhangs, doors, porches, windows, railings, decorative work, trim, etc. As buildings change over time with new uses and ownership, these features need to be evaluated because they may be an integral part of the building's historic character.

Each building has its own unique attributes, which are commonly referred to as its "style". These are the components that make it appear aesthetically harmonious with surrounding architecture. These attributes should be looked at carefully when evaluating an historic

building. Engaging in work that lacks forethought will have an adverse effect on the historic resource as well as the value of the building. Changes may also affect the entire neighborhood.

### Rehabilitating Historic Buildings

The primary aim of historic rehabilitation is to bring a property to a state of utility through repair or alteration while retaining the features that are significant to its historic, architectural, and cultural values. This can be accomplished through careful consideration of the following:

- Minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building;
- Differentiating the new from the old, but making it compatible in order to preserve the architectural integrity, and;
- Retaining the essential character of the historic building even if new additions are removed in the future.

Rehabilitating older historic buildings, especially within the urban core, carries with it a very important role for the City's development. While safeguarding historic features of the building, rehabilitation helps to save structures and continues to help the city develop its unique character. Members of the HDC and city staff can provide technical assistance on architectural design, character, compatibility, proportion, and other elements that affect the character a district.

With the responsibility of owning an historic structure comes financial incentives which are available to the owners of historic structures. (See appendix for a description of these programs.)

Before contemplating change to an historic structure, the homeowner or the builder should perform an architectural assessment. Things to consider include:

- The architectural integrity and physical condition, such as the structural system, material damage, material quality, design quality, and presence of ornamentation, etc.
- The rehabilitation plan. This insures that protective measures are taken and distinctive historic features are preserved. It also helps to know if replacement materials are available.
- Local codes and other legal requirements such as easements, overlay zones, and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access requirements.

**Storefront Rehabilitation**

Storefronts are most often the part of the building facade where changes have occurred over time. This is due to various factors including change of ownership/business type, new styles, or even because of weather related issues. Eventually, this has a cumulative effect on the building's physical appearance. The sensitive rehabilitation of historic storefronts can recreate historic streetscapes, long since lost from several iterations of remodeling. This

is beneficial because recreating a "Mainstreet" results in a rebirth of economic activity because Mainstreets are vibrant and unique places where people want to be.

When carrying out a storefront restoration (or other work), care and attention must be paid to construction techniques, materials, and building composition. This will insure that the architectural character of the structure will be properly maintained or restored. Those who plan to rehabilitate historic storefronts should ask questions and research the structure prior to making any decisions. The following are some ideas to consider:

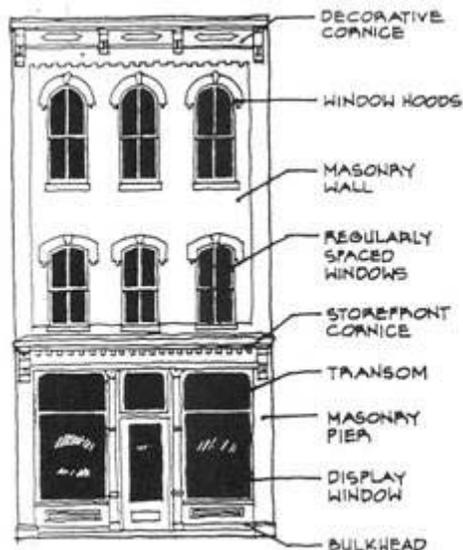
- Have the construction materials, architectural features, and the relationship of these features evaluated by a professional to determine their ability to withstand rehabilitation. Are building material replacements and professional knowledge available to complete the job? If replicas of architectural features cannot be found, a close substitute may be acceptable.



- Will the proposed rehabilitation improve or adversely change the building's original architectural style, character, and composition? Also, will it change the relationship in scale, proportion, size, height, color, etc. with adjacent buildings? Sensitive change will result in the harmonious blending of new design elements and qualities of the original building. Consideration should be given to a design that does not overpower the character of the building.

- Is the proposed rehabilitation a course of action because of a change of ownership and function? Will such alteration change, obscure, or destroy the character-defining aspects of the building? Examples of alteration include building new entrances or windows, installing new mechanical systems, or adding extra floors.

If major alterations are deemed necessary, they should not radically change, obscure, damage, or destroy character-defining features. Creativity and flexibility can produce a functional use without sacrificing the historic features of the building.



**Façade Change.** The appearance of a building may change over time because of different ownership and use. New design elements should be compatible with the historical features. Items to be cautious on façade renovation include:

- Ensure that original design elements are not blocked or removed;
- New building materials should be consistent and/or compatible with the original building finish;

- Ensure that window patterns, window hoods, shutters and other decorative moldings are not altered or covered;
- Do not use hanging signs (bracket, wall, projecting) if they cover original windows, and change the character of the building, and;
- Ensure that the design of functional features such as lighting fixtures conform to the historic character of the building.

**Doors.** Traditionally, the entrance doors of historic buildings were made of wood containing a large glass panel. Every effort should be made to maintain and repair these doors, if possible. These are a few guidelines to follow if door replacement is necessary:

- Where possible, have the new door built with the same design and proportions of the original;
- Use anodized aluminum or baked enamel finish frames for glass doors, and;
- Where appropriate, keep the location of the original door as it reflects the style of the building.

**Windows.** Windows are an important part of a building that need to be looked at carefully. The pattern and quality of the windows will enhance or degrade the visual appearance of the streetscape. Here are some guidelines dealing with windows:

- Repair should be the first option for deteriorated windows and frames;
- If replacement is necessary, the new window should match the original in material, style, size, and proportion;
- If choosing aluminum frame windows, they should duplicate the design of the original window and should be dark anodized or baked enamel finish rather than a light metallic color, and;

- It is inappropriate to change the size of a window to accommodate a new window or to lower interior ceiling height. The street presence or inviting nature of a well windowed storefront is a critical element of an historic structure.

**Awnings.** Canvas awnings are traditional features of historic storefronts. Aside from adding color, they provide a transition between the storefront and the upper façade of the building. Because the placement and design of awnings may affect the visual appearance of the building, the following guidelines should be observed:



- Features between the second story windowsills and storefront cornices should not be covered;
- Aluminum or metal awnings and “shrink wraps” are inappropriate on historic buildings;
- Awnings may be able to effectively cover previous non-historic storefront renovations, and;
- Off-sized awnings may alter the historic scale of the building and unsuitable locations may destroy its integrity.

**Signage.** Signs give a wealth of information about a particular time and place. Because historic signs often lack uniformity, they create a sense of vigor, spirit, and diversity. However, sign regulations are important within historic districts. Sign types need to integrate well with the historic character of the building and district. Here are some questions to ask when thinking about signs:

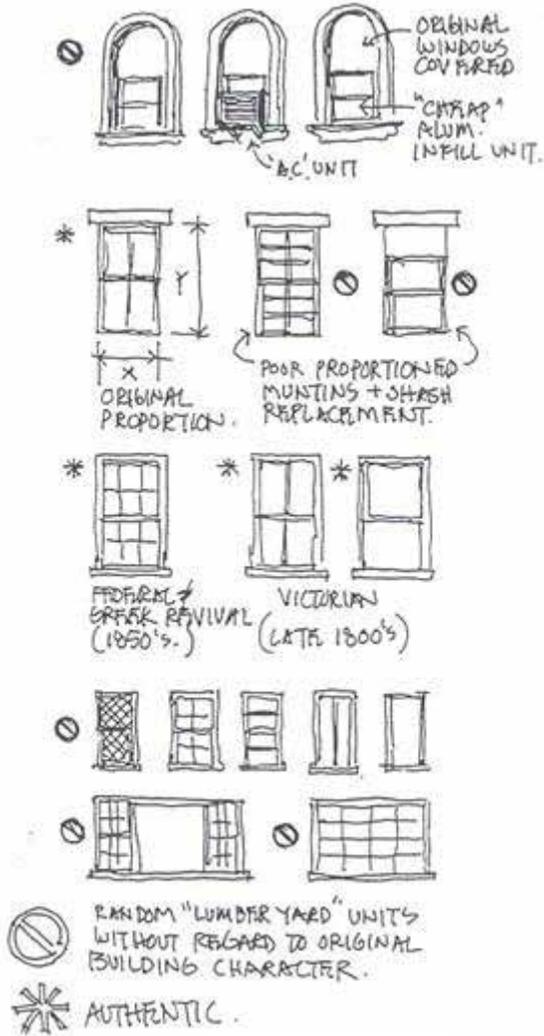
- If the business is changing hands, how can historic signs be reused or replicated? The scale of the structure will dictate the size of the sign. The placement of the sign should not cover important architectural features or elements.
- How can corporate logos and signs be adapted to blend with the historic character of the structure or neighborhood? In an age of uniform franchise and generic plastic signs, matching or blending them with the historic character of the building is nearly impossible. Modification of color, content, design, and size is needed. A first choice sign would be made of wood preferably engraved or embossed with creative decorative elements (i.e., gold leaf, carvings, etc.). Two choices to secure signs to the wall include mounting the sign perpendicularly with brackets, or mounting it flat to the wall or fascia.

### **Residential Building Rehabilitation**

Historic buildings often have elaborately detailed features that create character. The features help to identify and distinguish them from one style to another.

**Windows.** The functional and decorative features of windows are of historic significance. Such features include window sashes, glazings, muntins, sills, paneled/decorative jambs, moldings, interior or exterior shutters, and blinds. Very often windows in historic buildings are no longer energy-efficient and need to be replaced. Replacement of window parts in order to improve thermal efficiency is

important, however, it is imperative to look at how the new windows characteristics affect the rest of the historic resource.



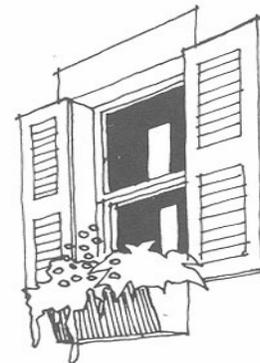
Replacements with good insulation values are important. However, owners are encouraged to use good quality wooden framed windows that closely match the original style. Windows should not be replaced with different styles. For example, casement windows or picture windows would be inappropriate to replace double hung windows.

Scale is another important factor when replacing windows. Replacements should come as close as possible to the dimensions of the old windows. In no case shall window openings be

“blocked” to fit smaller standard-sized window units. Problems may arise when new window dimensions do not match the originals. Instead of altering the size of the opening, installation of jamb liners or other materials will fix many compatibility issues. Some historic buildings may not have well-proportioned windows, therefore it might be a good idea to alter the openings. Research, sketches, and professional guidance can help accomplish this goal.

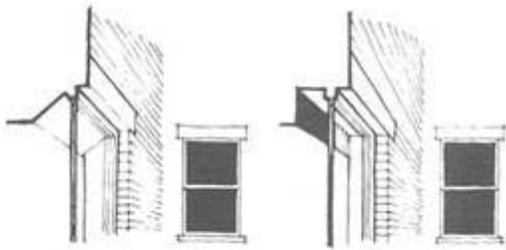
Insects, moisture, vandalism, and poor maintenance contribute to window deterioration. Preserving original windows is generally less expensive and more desirable rather than replacing them.

The application of paints, protective coatings or sealers, and the processes of cleaning, rust removal, caulking, and glazing are considered routine maintenance. Also, epoxies, putties, and resins can be used to stabilize the wood for repair and painting. This will help make the windows last for a long time. These techniques will protect wooden windows from moisture and ultraviolet light, and make metal-framed windows more energy-efficient.



*Here is an example of a treatment to enhance the windows appearance.*

Although the HDC does not review interior rehabilitation, any interior work that affects the exterior appearance can be reviewed by the HDC. Dropped ceilings, for example, if visible from the exterior, should be sloped to retain full window height.

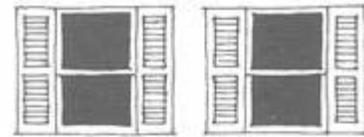


*Two options to lower interior ceiling heights while keeping the original window openings commonly found in historic resources.*

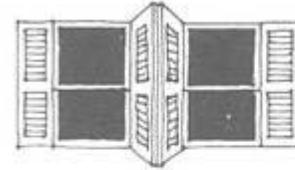
To maintain the overall historic character, the following should never be allowed:

- Changing the number, location, size, or glazing pattern of windows.
- Changing the historic appearance of windows by using inappropriate design, materials, finishes, or colors.
- Changing the sash, depth of reveal, mullion configuration, reflectivity and color of the glazing, or the appearance of the frame.
- Using a substitute material for the replacement part that does not convey the same visual appearance of the remaining parts.
- Removing a character-defining window without replacing it, or replacing it with an inappropriate feature is not advisable.

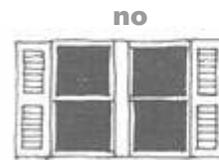
Alteration of windows because of mechanical fixtures (i.e. window air conditioners) is not advisable. If it is unavoidable, the window frame should remain unaltered and the rest of the window should not be boarded up. If an alternative location cannot be found, screening is recommended when the A/C is visible from the street level.



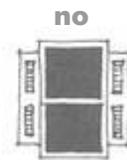
yes



no  
Figure 1



no  
Figure 2



no  
Figure 3



no  
Figure 4

**Concrete and Masonry.** Concrete is a porous material made up from a variety of products. Its strength and longevity may vary because of inferior materials, poor workmanship, inadequate maintenance, and environmental factors. Because it wicks water, the Michigan freeze/thaw cycle can severely damage it. Materials used in early concrete making commonly were crushed bricks and cinders from burned coal. These materials are inherently absorbent and produce a weak and very porous material. Sealants can be used to stop moisture infiltration in these absorbent materials. As much as possible, new masonry should match the original in color and texture. Simulated concrete products (i.e. dryvit) are strongly discouraged because they tend not to blend well.

Here are some considerations to look at when repairing or replacing masonry work:

- It is not recommended to radically change masonry features (i.e. brackets, cornices, architraves, capitals, etc.). Masonry features are delicate, therefore, replacing or rebuilding a major portion of it needs to be carefully undertaken to protect the detail and character.
- Don't use chemicals or sandblasting techniques as they will erode the surface of the material and accelerate deterioration. Cleaning methods need to be thoroughly researched before any work proceeds.
- Painting over or removing paint from historic masonry is not advisable. New paint may hold excessive moisture in the masonry causing problems and successive coats may cover details. Also, removing paint may damage delicate masonry pieces. Consult a professional architect to discuss your situation.
- Removing deteriorated masonry features without replacing them, or replacing them with inappropriate new material is not appropriate.



*Intricate stone works are rare in Muskegon. Extra care is needed when restoration or repair work will be performed on them.*

**Cast or Wrought Iron.** Common problems seen today with ironwork include rusted/missing pieces, impact damage, loss of masonry anchorage, and broken joints. Since

many ironwork problems are complex, preservationists, architects or other professionals should do an assessment of the condition. Corrosion often causes failure of the ironwork. There are numerous techniques to aid in the repair of the work including; steel brushing, grit blasting, flame cleaning and using chemicals. The techniques used depend on the severity of the corrosion.

Character defining metal elements, such as columns, porch railings, window hoods, stairways, fences, and even business signs require careful evaluation before performing repairs or replacements. Removing or changing these features finishes, colors, or accent schemes may diminish its character.

The following are a few things to consider:

- Over time, metals such as bronze and copper will acquire a patina, which is a protective coating and a significant historic finish, that should not be removed.
- The preferred restoration method is to patch, splice or reinforce the metal. If replacement is necessary or using the same kind of material is not technically or economically feasible, then a compatible substitute material may be considered.

**Ornaments.** Very often, decorative ornaments are no longer made of carved wood or stone but of molded plaster, putty or resins. These are called 'composition' or 'compo'. They are often adhered to wood or other substrates. Repairing compositions requires knowledge of the pieces history. Layers of paint and deterioration may distort fine details. When ornaments show signs of severe deterioration, it is often better to replicate the piece rather than restore it.

**Stained Glass.** Colored, painted or enameled glass pieces are frequent parts of historic buildings. The words "stained glass" and "leaded glass" are used interchangeably; however, leaded glass uses lead, copper or zinc in the assembly. These glass features do not deteriorate like wood and plaster, however they

are fragile and susceptible to breakage from carelessness. Much like other materials, professionals should perform the repair of glass. Stained glass should never be removed or replaced with materials of a lesser design quality in order to create a uniform or “improved” appearance.

**Entrances and Porches.** Porches are often found on historic structures. When they occur in the front of the structure they are a particularly important focal point. Together with their functional and decorative features such as doors, steps, balustrades, pilasters and entablatures, they can be extremely important in defining the overall character of the resource. Therefore, it is important to carefully consider them if repair or construction must occur.

In some cases when porches are missing, designing and constructing a new one should be based on historical, pictorial, and physical documentation and be compatible with the historic character of the resource.

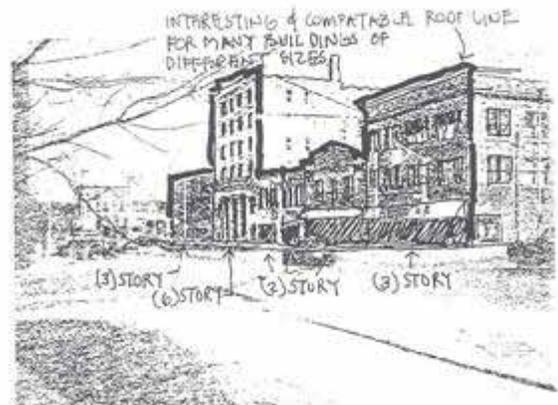


*This front porch alteration has diminished the historic character of the house. The gable roof on the porch and the enclosed entryway are not compatible with the style of the rest of the home*

Some of the pitfalls that must be avoided are:

- Removing an irreparable entrance or porch without replacing it, or replacing it with a new one that is not compatible.
- Removing or changing historic materials such as wood, iron, terra cotta, tile and brick.
- Cutting a new entrance on a front elevation, or altering service entrances so they appear to be formal by adding paneled doors, fanlights, and sidelights.
- Introducing a new porch that is incompatible in size, scale, material, and color or one that obscures, damages, or destroys character-defining features.

**Roofs.** Roofs are critical because they are a major character-defining element of a structure. They are important in a couple ways. First, they serve as covers that are essential to the preservation of the entire resource. Second, their size, shape, color and patterns create an interesting roofline with form and scale for the entire street or neighborhood.



*Interesting rooflines may not necessarily happen in Muskegon until infill development occurs. However, it should be a condition for new construction to be consistent with the historic character of adjacent buildings.*

Protection and maintenance of roofs is very important. Gutters and downspouts should be

regularly inspected and cleaned. Roof sheeting should be checked for proper ventilation, moisture infiltration, and insect damage. In addition, adequate anchorage should be provided to guard against wind damage.

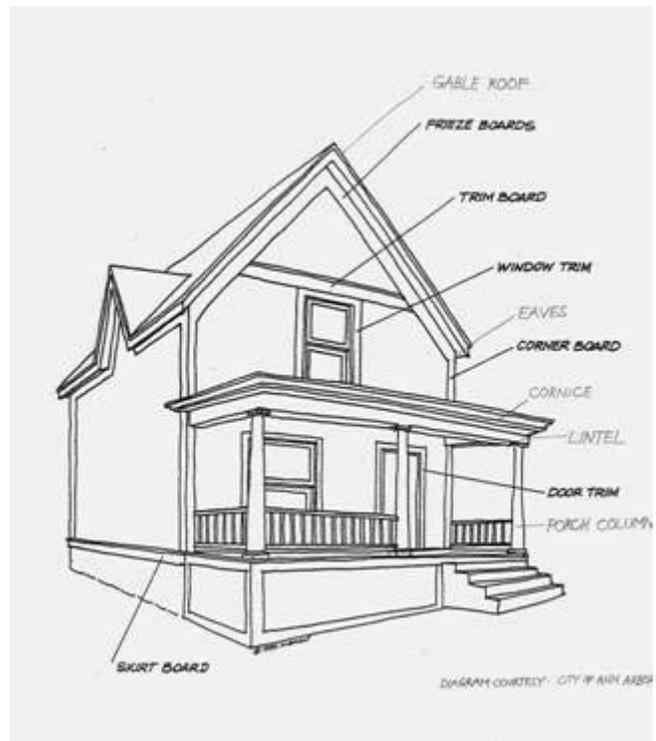
Here are some things to avoid:

- Changing the configuration of the roof by adding new features such as vents, skylights, and dormer windows.
- Changing, destroying, or removing repairable portions of the roof or roofing material and reconstructing it with inappropriate material. Removing an irreparable feature of a roof without replacing it, or replacing it with a new feature that does not convey the same visual appearance. These features can include; decorative trim, frieze boards, crown moldings, vent windows, eyebrow windows and dormers.
- Stripping the roof of sound historic material such as slate, clay tile, wood, and architectural metal. In addition, applying paint or other coatings to roofing material, which have been historically uncoated, is not advisable.

**Wood and other Features.** Historic residential buildings in most cases feature wooden siding. However, some used stones or stucco. Over time, the harsh Michigan weather decays wood used in construction. Many buildings have had their siding replaced with new wooden siding or substitute materials. Often, homeowners would immediately choose vinyl or aluminum sidings for maintenance reasons. However, aluminum and vinyl siding tends to have less insulation capacity, be more difficult to repair, and can be dented by impact. In addition, the impact of these materials over wood siding can be devastating as these materials often keep moisture within the old wood siding and accelerate rot and growth of mold or mildew.

Other important features include cornices, brackets, shutters, entablatures, columns and

balustrades. These features should be protected from standing water. This can be achieved by applying chemical preservatives or by hand scraping and repainting with the appropriate protective coating. In cases where these features have deteriorated beyond repair, replacement with the same kind of material is acceptable. However, if using the same kind of material is not technically or economically feasible, compatible substitutions may be considered if there is physical evidence to guide the new work. Before work commences, the condition of the wood needs to be evaluated. Usually a good cleaning to remove the loose paint and varnish is all that is needed to start the repair process. Certain resins also work wonders with rotted wood.



The following actions are discouraged:

- Stripping paint, varnish, or other coatings to reveal bare wood, thereby exposing surfaces to the weather.
- Using destructive paint removal methods such as torching, sandblasting or water blasting.

- Radically changing the type of finish or its color or accent scheme so that the historic character is diminished.

This guidebook may not cover every part or feature of an historic resource. It is anticipated that certain situations should be taken on a case-by-case basis. Careful evaluation should also be performed on the following before any work is to start or approved:

- Porch columns, balustrade, railings, deck floor, and steps are items often neglected. However, they are character-defining features most often found on building fronts. Materials, size, proportion, scale, balance, and color can create or change the historic character. The porch as a whole should not “over power” or “dominate” the character of an historic resource but should be compatible with the style of the house.
- The architectural style of a resource should dictate what type of feature fits with the resource. For example, false historical substitutes, such as a pseudo-colonial entrance door, pediment, or under-size shutters, will destroy the appearance of historic and structural continuity.
- In extreme cases where architectural details are unsaveable or cost prohibitive, replication or replacements are options that may convey the same visual appearance.

Often historic materials are difficult to find and difficult to restore because of age, fragility, and deterioration. It is important to select compatible materials because others may change the historical appearance of the building.

“Maintenance-free” replacement materials should be avoided because they often fail to provide the “flavor” original materials have, despite their simulated historic imitation. These materials should only be allowed if repair to the original material is not possible, similar materials are not available, and/or the use would enhance the character of the resource.

Examples of these materials include vinyl and aluminum that replaces wood.

---

## CHAPTER THREE

### REVIEWING NEW CONSTRUCTION AND IN-FILL DEVELOPMENTS

One of the main goals of historic preservation is to maintain the historical and architectural integrity of the districts. New construction poses challenges to continuity within a district. Here are several questions to answer when considering new or in-fill construction within an historic district:

- What is significant about the area and what needs to be preserved? Should contemporary design be allowed or discouraged?
- Will new architecture hinder or enhance the character of the district?
- What is the potential impact of new construction on the integrity of the district? Would new construction threaten or improve the district’s character if there were sensitively designed in-fill buildings?

New construction should not be discouraged in historic districts. There are numerous ways a designer or architect can relate new buildings to surrounding ones. However, it takes more than brick veneer façades, generic window reproductions, and imitation motifs for new buildings to blend with historic ones. It requires the understanding of the nature of older buildings to be able to integrate them with the functional and structural requirements of new buildings.

Evolution in an historic district is inevitable. This guidebook provides necessary insight and information for people to make informed decisions about the future of resources within the district. Long-term flexibility is important

for the overall health of the city. Here are some ideas to think about when significant changes are to be made in the district:

- If for some reason a structure has to be demolished, it is very important to have a replacement or plan for the site.
- Investigation should be conducted on historically significant sites to determine how new construction is going to affect the district.
- Construction that complements the surrounding history that avoids ‘false historicism’ should be a goal of a project. Replication of specific historic architectural styles is often confusing and may corrupt the historical character and integrity of the district.

### **Compatibility**

One of the most important features of a new building is the façade. It needs to be compatible with the adjacent buildings in scale, proportion, composition and materials. When the new building is designed, it should look new but take design cues from surrounding structures. New buildings should be distinguished, yet be compatible with the neighborhood. The City will not discourage contemporary designs as long as they relate modern technology, materials and design philosophy to the older buildings. A harmonious variation between traditional and contemporary designs is the goal, not extreme designs that are out of context with their surroundings.

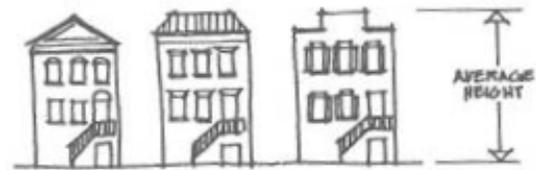
### **Proportion of the Façade**

Height and width of the surrounding buildings will dictate a general set of proportions with which the new construction should adhere. New structures should fill the entire vacant space and reflect the existing rhythm of facades along the street. If the lot is too wide for a new building, then the building’s façade and massing should be designed into smaller bays, thereby maintaining a rhythm similar to that of the surrounding buildings.

### **Composition**

Composition is referred to as the organization of a building’s parts (i.e. the fenestration style, colonnade sequence, distances between window openings, presence or absence of cornices, material texture and color, other architectural details, and roof forms). These architectural elements help to provide the design cues for compatible new construction.

A constructive dialogue between HDC staff and the architect is important to have throughout the design, development, and review process. So satisfactory solutions can be found.



### **Rhythm and Scale**

Size, style, and placement of the different elements of a resource are very important to the overall rhythm and scale of the structure. The windows, doors, facades, and the ratio of window areas to solid wall are significant when designing new in-fill buildings. By taking pictures of existing historic buildings and using creativity to visualize new structures, designers and architects can see how new buildings would fit in with their surroundings. If a designer can match materials, colors, setbacks, and character of the surrounding buildings, the rhythm and scale of the street can be preserved.



### **Directional orientation**

This is the relationship of building widths to the spaces between them and the pattern of open expanse. This can also include structural shape, placement of openings, and architectural details that give a predominantly vertical, horizontal, or a non-directional character to the building's front façade. It is important for resources to have the correct orientation to the others in the neighborhood.

### **Historic significance**

A third consideration in planning for new additions is to maintain the visual integrity of the historic surroundings. Two approaches often used by designers include repetition of historical features and using the same materials and color for new additions. However, copying an entire architectural style and design will not preserve the historical significance and integrity if there is no visual distinction between what is old and new.

---

## CHAPTER FOUR

### **NEW ADDITIONS TO HISTORIC BUILDINGS**

Change is inevitable in buildings especially when more space is needed. New additions have the potential for changing the architectural character of the building so there is a need to follow acceptable preservation approaches to make additions work with the historic resource.

#### **Historic materials and features**

A way to minimize material loss in historic buildings is to reduce the size of new additions in relation to the historic structure. Another approach is to construct a 'connector' between the buildings. This will preserve the integrity of the old building and distinguish it from the new.

#### **Historic character**

The historic character of a building is embodied in its' physical aspects (i.e. shape, form, materials, colors, size, height, window arrangement, craftsmanship, setting, and others). New additions usually change the mass of historic buildings. Therefore, it is necessary for old and new to blend and be compatible. One way to preserve historic character is to have the new addition set back from the front wall plane so the non-historic part will not be as obvious.

### **Demolition Considerations**

Demolition of an historic building is a matter that cannot be taken lightly. Once it is torn down, it is gone forever. Demolition of structures with historical and/or architectural value is discouraged. However, if inevitable, it should follow moratorium procedures. During the moratorium period, the applicant has several choices. One choice is to rehabilitate the building. Another is to sell the property to a willing rehabilitator.

If all else fails and demolition is foreseeable, the HDC will look at several factors before making any decision, which include:

- How significant is the resource by itself and to the historic fabric of a district? If a survey of the historic districts was conducted an architectural inventory is usually provided. This will help to determine if the structure is significant. It is important that all resources, whether they are large/small, plain/extravagant, or old/new need to be taken into consideration because they are all part of the historic fabric of the district.
- What type of development would occur after demolition takes place? How a new structure fits into the fabric of the district is very important. Showing what will go on the land after demolition will demonstrate that it is not being cleared for speculation. This will also give the HDC the opportunity to examine what impact the development

has on the historical and architectural environment.

- The HDC may approve demolition if the historic resource is deemed a true hazard to public health or safety and if repairs are not possible or may cause undue financial hardship to the owner. Financial hardship is a situation where more than a reasonable amount of funds would be required to repair the resource.

Economic factors play a significant role in determining whether a building will be demolished, however, this is not true in every instance. Several court cases have set the precedent that maximum profit is not a valid basis for demolition. Owners have to prove that no reasonable use or return on the property is possible. HDC will approve demolition requests only under strict guidelines.

The City has adopted a property maintenance ordinance requiring property owners to meet certain health and safety standards. These are minimum requirements that city officials believe will help keep the homes safe. It is necessary for the HDC members to work cooperatively with the building inspectors to determine whether the threats to health and safety are genuine and irreversible.

---

## CHAPTER FIVE

### HISTORIC EMBELLISHMENTS

#### SIGNS AND REGULATIONS

Signs are important for every community because they give necessary information to a passersby. They may reflect the identity and character of the area. Over time, signage types will change in accordance to architecture and technology changes. Since they can leave a lasting impression on visitors, the HDC can regulate various aspects of the sign (i.e. height, size, color, type, number, location, etc).

*Sign Types: (See Sign Graphic in appendix)*

- *Hanging or Suspended Signs.* These are signs that are either hung or suspended from a ceiling or other structure.
- *Flat Signs.* These are signs with lettering mounted flush against the building or wall surfaces of the building.
- *Fascia Signs.* These are signs placed on the fascia or horizontal band between the storefront and the second floor.
- *Projecting or Pole Signs.* These are signs that protrude from the building's surface. They include perpendicular signs that hang out over the sidewalk, marquee signs, and other variations.
- *Free-standing Signs.* These are signs that are not attached to a building.
- *Window Signs.* These are signs either painted or hung on windows visible to the public from the exterior.
- *Rooftop Signs.* These are signs placed on top of the roof. Sizes vary depending upon the viewing distance. Huge historic buildings are typically the only place where you would find this type.

These signs listed above are not inclusive. Generally, a sign is considered something that promotes, identifies, informs, or advertises. A variety of signs may include lights, logos, and symbols. Variations of signage includes posters, print on awnings, art on blank walls, display of flags, and “sandwich” boards on sidewalks. The signs form, function, placement, color, material, and lighting method are all important considerations.

While sign regulation and control is to maintain public health and safety, it is also used for aesthetics. Signs in the historic district are reviewed to maintain the areas character. Signs cannot be installed to conceal, destroy, or violate any architectural features of a building.

Here are a few considerations when creating signs within an historic district:

- Work with someone who has design background. Often, they will be able to integrate these signs with the character of the building.
- Signs should be compatible with the design qualities of the building’s façade and with the surrounding historic context.
- If a sign is oversized, incompatible, or non-conforming due to issues with public safety, visual interference, or infringement on the historic integrity, it may not be approved.
- Signs painted on display windows, or ones that hang from a ceiling may be appropriate for historic commercial buildings. They need to be compatible with the scale and design of the building.

Signs that are installed on an interim basis, such as realtor and construction signs not exceeding eight square feet in sign face, are allowed. However, these signs should not cause a visual nuisance. Prohibited signs include, among others identified in the zoning ordinance, anything that obstructs historic or architectural features; misleads, interferes, or confuses the

viewers; and destroys or impairs the historic integrity of the resource or district.

*General Sign Criteria: (See also Table in Appendix)*

1. *Only on-premise business identification signs are permitted in the city.*
2. *All signs shall comply with the regulations for erection and construction of structures as contained within the City's Building Code. It shall also comply with existing zoning requirements as established within the City's Zoning Ordinance.*
3. *Uniform lettering style shall be used throughout the sign. Preferred lettering styles for historic districts include serifed (footed), Gothic (without serif), and script. They should also be compatible with the style and architecture of the building.*
4. *Letter size shall not exceed 2/3 the height of background area.*
5. *Signs must use appropriate materials and be compatible with the historic character of the building. Bright chromium effect, glossy or leatherette finished vinyl is not acceptable.*
6. *Colors per sign shall be limited to three, plus black, white or accent gilding. Fluorescent colors are prohibited.*
7. *Texture of sign must be compatible with that of the building façade.*
8. *Signs may be illuminated by a reflected light from an exterior source. Flashing, intermittent, rotating or ones that create the illusion of movement are prohibited.*
9. *Shape and form of signs shall be proportioned in massiveness and scale to the building where they are installed.*

### **FENCE STANDARDS**

Whether the purpose is for aesthetics or function (i.e., privacy, security, screening), fences contribute to the character of a building and to the neighborhood. Consideration should be given to the construction material, foundations, weatherproofing, color, and maintenance requirements. Alternative materials to wood, such as cast iron, brick, stone, split rail, and vinyl should be evaluated carefully to see whether they are compatible with the architectural and historical character of a resource.

For example, historic districts considered pristine should consider if fencing would enhance the overall character of the neighborhood. Since most of the pristine resources in the City are of Victorian style, cast iron is often the most appropriate type.



*This is an example of fencing not allowed in historic districts. It is not compatible with an urban setting and can diminish the integrity of a district.*

Industrial fencing (wire mesh, chain links) and other fences such as split rails should never be constructed in the front of an historic structure and/or be visible from the street. Appropriate vinyl fencing may be allowed depending upon the architecture style and details of the home. Vinyl fencing will be looked at on a case-by-case basis. Fence color should blend with or contrast with colors found on the historic structure.

Fence height is important for public and personal safety as well as for architectural character. Fence height is limited to four feet from the sidewalk up to the front building line by the City's Zoning Code. Fences behind the front building line cannot be higher than six feet. Barbed wire is not permitted. Please contact the Zoning Administrator for more information on fencing. Solid or opaque fencing that obscures features, the view, or character-defining elements of a resource will not be permitted in front yards. Two examples of suitable front yard fencing include picket or wrought iron. Design variations are encouraged.

As building materials change, flexible and adaptive guidelines are needed to keep up with the trends. An example of this is the introduction of vinyl building materials for construction. If these materials are considered for replacement of more traditional materials, they need to match in style, character, and color.



*The height of the fence should be compatible with that of the house. Picket fences are appropriate in front yards rather than chain-link.*

### **PAVEMENTS AND FIXTURES**

The relationship of historic resources and landscaping features help to define the historic character of a building. Landscaping should be considered an integral part of the overall evaluation for rehabilitation work. These features include, but are not limited to, sidewalks, walkways, lighting fixtures, benches, fountains, planters, markers, and landscaping elements.

Careful evaluation is needed to decide whether to repair or replace a feature so that it retains the original appearance of the site. If similar material is physically and economically unfeasible to use, then compatible substitute materials should be considered. All replacement work must conform to local code requirements.

The HDC does not have control over landscaping layout and design, but discretion should be used to ensure that significant historic features are not obscured, destroyed, or damaged.

Streetlights and outdoor lighting fixtures should be compatible with the historic character of the area. Consideration for approval should include the type, height, number, color, location, and method of installation. Outdoor lighting adds character to a neighborhood. Fixtures should work with the features of the structures in the district. It is inappropriate to have fluorescent, mercury, or halogen lights in historic districts. If used, these lights should not be visible from the street.

Other street furniture and fixtures (i.e. benches, planters, street railings, sculptures, art, markers, plaques, fountains, clocks, etc.) are integral parts of historic landscapes. As these objects age, proper maintenance or timely replacement is important to help the district stay attractive and healthy. If new objects are to be installed, they need to reflect the historic nature and fit in with the neighborhood.

### **PAINING**

While the HDC does not have purview over selection of colors, it is very important that homeowners choose colors wisely for their historic home. The character of a building is in the features and color will enhance or degrade them. Because historic buildings often use a variety of colors, it is recommended to have the color palette evaluated by a professional prior to painting.

Generally, extravagant and bright colors are not appropriate and should not be used. Primary colors, if preferred, should only be used on trims, borders, dentils, architraves, cornices, and ornamental features. It is more appropriate to paint the larger areas of the structure with subdued colors.

### **MECHANICAL SYSTEMS**

In general, many historic structures lack the convenience of modern heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC). If the structure does have an HVAC system, it may need repair or a major upgrade. An evaluation should be performed to ensure that the architectural features are not concealed, damaged, or removed in HVAC work.

The new mechanical systems should be designed in a way to minimize visual and structural impact. This includes hoses, holes, and mechanical units. An example is window air conditioning. The best place to install it is in the rear of the house or in a place not seen from the street. If it is in a visible place, it should be properly screened.

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS**

Due to age and lack of routine maintenance, many historic structures often need modifications to comply with current health, safety, and code requirements. These modifications need to be carefully undertaken to avoid the loss of character-defining features, spaces, or finishes. For example, the addition of barrier free access points may be harmful to the structure, because they are often invasive. However, with proper planning, they can be screened and placed where no damage to the structure would occur. It is important to contact a qualified architect to help design these and minimize their impact.

Homeowners with such requirements could look at other options if the work would change the historic character of the building. An access ramp, for example, could be located in a place not directly visible from the street or it can be screened with landscaping.

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

Other work not specifically identified in this guidebook will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The visual impact of how it affects the historic character of a resource or district will

be the determining factors. Consulting a professional with questions involving historic structures will aide in the decision making

process, and ultimately help to preserve our irreplaceable historic districts.

\*\*\*\*\*

## APPENDIX

### Glossary of Terms

*Alteration* means work that changes the detail of a resource but does not change its basic size or shape.

*Awnings* are movable canvas sunscreens over a window or doorway.

*Bay* is the projected or recessed portion of a building, sometimes used as a means of organizing facades and adding depth to walls.

*Balusters* are posts that hold up the railing on porches, stairs, etc.

*Balustrade* is a railing held up by balusters.

*Battered* is a gradual upward and backward slope.

*Building Bay* is the portion of a building between two structural walls or column lines.

*Canopy* is a projecting cover, usually at street level, protecting a doorway or an entrance.

*Cladding* is the covering of a wall surface. This is sometimes referred to as sheathing or veneering.

*Clapboard* is a type of wallboard covering that is overlapping horizontally.

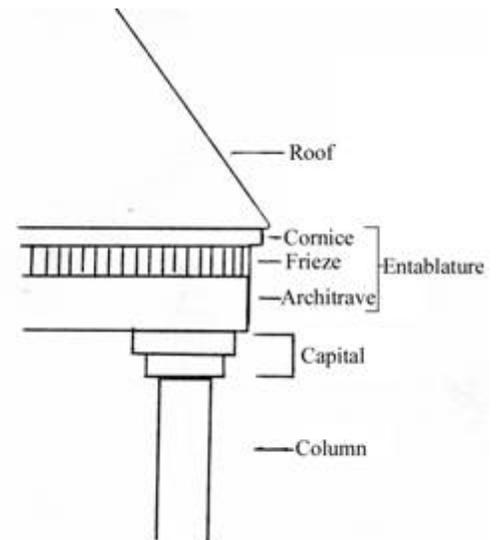
*Contributing resource* means those structures that are old but significant.

*Cornice* is the uppermost part of an entablature, often projecting ornamental moldings in most classical architecture buildings.

*Demolition* means the razing or destruction, whether entirely or in part, of a resource and includes, but is not limited to, demolition by neglect.

*Demolition by neglect* means neglect in maintaining, repairing, or securing a resource that results in deterioration of an exterior feature of the resource or the loss of structural integrity of the resource.

*Dormer* is a vertical window that projects from a sloping roof.



*Entablature* is the part of a building between the roof and the column capital, including the cornice, frieze, and architrave.

*Façade* is the exterior face of a building, also commonly known as the front elevation.

*Fenestration* is the pattern of the placement of windows and door openings on a façade.

*Historic District* means an area, or group of areas not necessarily having contiguous boundaries, that contains one resource or a group of resources that are related by history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture.

*Historic preservation* means the identification, evaluation, establishment, and protection of resources significant in history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture.

*Historic resource* means a publicly or privately owned building, structure, site, object, feature, or open space that is significant in history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture of a community within this State, or of the United States.

*Non-contributing resource* means those structures that are old and have lost some integrity and architectural significance.

*Ordinary maintenance* means keeping a resource unimpaired and in good condition through ongoing minor intervention, undertaken from time to time, in its exterior condition. Ordinary maintenance does not change the external appearance of the resource except through the elimination of the usual and expected effects of weathering. Ordinary maintenance does not constitute work.

*Pilaster* is a rectangular wall support often treated as a column.

*Rehabilitation* is a 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, engineering, and cultural values.

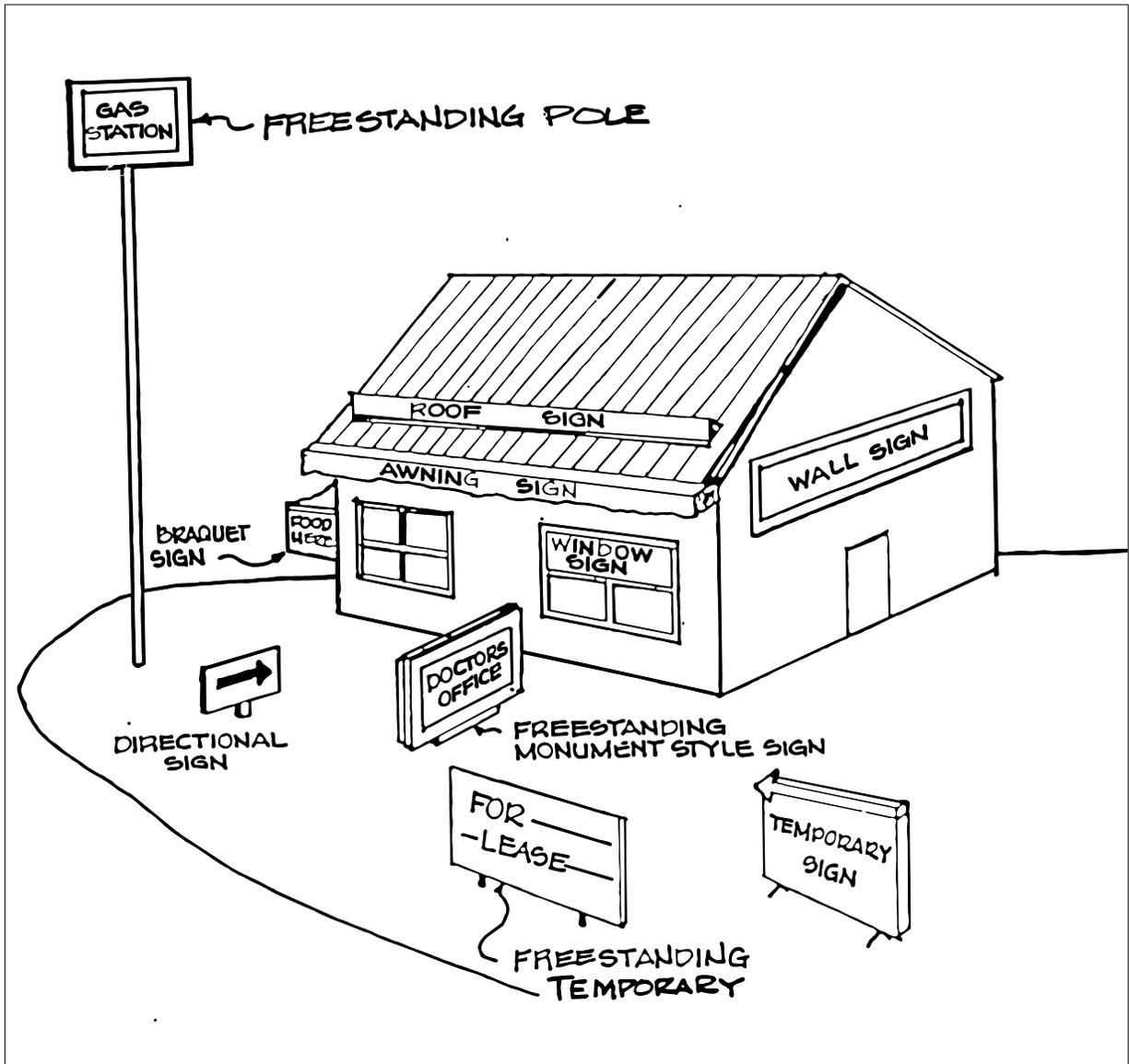
*Repair* means to restore a decayed or damaged resource to a good or sound condition by any process. A repair that changes the external appearance of a resource constitutes work.

*Restoration* is a 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.

*Resource* means 1 or more publicly or privately owned historic or non-historic buildings, structures, sites, objects, features, or open spaces located within a historic district.

*Work* means construction, addition, alteration, repair, moving, excavation, or demolition.

# Sign Graphic



The table below provides the sign requirements in general:

<b>Sign Type</b>	<b>Sign Face Area (max) and Other Restrictions</b>	<b>Height Limit and Other Restrictions</b>
<i>Flat –wall Signs or Flat signs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 10% of wall area where installed.</li> <li>▪ 24 sq. ft. per sign face.</li> <li>▪ Plastic materials discouraged.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 15 feet from sidewalk surface to top of sign or 1 inch below the second story window sill, whichever is lower</li> </ul>
<i>Projecting, Hanging or Suspended Signs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 9 sq. ft. per sign face.</li> <li>▪ 3 inches thick maximum.</li> <li>▪ Plastic materials discouraged.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ At least 8 feet above sidewalk surface and/or not to exceed 4 feet out from the building façade surface. Height limit for flat wall signs applies here, too.</li> </ul>
<i>Free- Standing Signs, Pole signs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 20 sq. ft. (see zoning restrictions based on parcel frontage widths).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 15 feet from sidewalk surface to top of sign but not over roofline of building, whichever is lower.</li> </ul>
<i>Ground Signs or Monument Signs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 20 sq. ft. per sign face</li> <li>▪ Internally illuminated, plastic and flimsy materials are discouraged.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Top of sign not to exceed 4 feet from ground level.</li> </ul>
<i>Directional Signs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 4 sq. ft. per sign face.</li> <li>▪ Spaced no closer than 15 feet apart.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Not to exceed 4 feet above ground level.</li> </ul>
<i>Portable Signs or A-frame Signs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 6 sq. ft. per sign face.</li> <li>▪ Signs not professionally fabricated and/or letters not satisfactorily printed are discouraged.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Not to exceed 4 feet from ground level.</li> <li>▪ Intended only on Clay-Western and National Register historic districts.</li> <li>▪ Cannot be placed elsewhere but on sidewalks where they do not interfere with the pedestrian path.</li> </ul>
<i>Canopy or Awning Signs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To be compatible and proportionate with awning or canopy skirt size.</li> <li>▪ Not to exceed 80% of canopy skirt area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Will follow canopy or awning height requirement. Bottom of skirt not to extend below 8 feet from sidewalk surface.</li> </ul>
<i>Window Signs; Neon signs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 20% of window surface area where applied.</li> <li>▪ Signs to apply only on ground floor windows or doors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Where appropriate, visually pleasing, and/or reflects time period of building’s architecture.</li> </ul>
<i>Logo Signs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Shall conform to applicable sign requirements.</li> <li>▪ Corporate logo signs cannot be by itself, they must be integrated with designs compatible with historic character.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Applicable sign restrictions apply.</li> </ul>
<i>Rooftop signs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Normally discouraged but may be considered depending on the size and mass of building where installed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Where appropriate and visually pleasing.</li> </ul>
<i>Electronic Message Board; TV screens</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Not encouraged but may be considered if appropriately integrated with design elements of historic nature.</li> <li>▪ Generally not permitted in zone H district.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ If allowed, cannot be higher than the second floor line.</li> <li>▪ Dimension restrictions are determined on a case-by-case basis.</li> </ul>

Note:

- Signs exempted from HDC review include commemorative plaques (max 1 sq. ft.), flags representing institutions or business, address signs, temporary signs (real estate, construction, political elections), special event signs, or signs required by federal, state, or local ordinance for purposes of traffic, public safety, and directional assistance.
- Signs prohibited at all times include portable (not attached to a building), signs that create the illusion of movement or make noise, signs attached to any natural growth, and signs that are abandoned and do not relate to existing business.
- Sum of all signage area shall not exceed 10% of building façade area.
- Sign colors, including corporate logos, shall match consistently with colors of building materials of the resource. Subdued colors, such as pastel and earth tone colors are suggested.

## REFERENCES

*“An Historic Preservation Survey and Planning Program”* City of Muskegon, June 1973.

*“City of Glendora Historic Preservation Development Handbook”* City of Glendora, Ca. 1999.

*“Design Review in Historic Districts”* Alice Meriwether Bowsher, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1978.

*“Main Street Guidelines”* National Trust for Historic Preservation, September, 1982.

*“Reviewing New Construction Projects in Historic Areas”* National Trust for Historic Preservation, Information Series No. 62, 1992.

*“Revitalizing Older Houses in Charlestown”* George Stephen. HUD-351-CD. June 1973.

*“Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Historic Buildings”* The Secretary of the Interior. Revised 1990.

*The Old House Journal.* Brooklyn, New York.

## HELPFUL ADDRESSES/RESOURCES

National Park Service  
Preservation Assistance Division  
Technical Preservation Services  
P.O. Box 37127  
Washington D.C., 20013-7127  
(202) 343-9578  
[www.nps.org](http://www.nps.org)

National Trust for Historic  
Preservation  
Midwest Office  
53 W. Jackson Blvd., Suite 350  
Chicago, IL 60604-2103  
(312) 939-5547  
[www.nationaltrust.org](http://www.nationaltrust.org)

State Historic Preservation Office  
717 W. Allegan Street  
Lansing, MI 48918-1800  
(517) 373-1630  
[www.michigan.gov](http://www.michigan.gov)

Michigan Historic Preservation  
Network  
P.O. Box 720  
Clarkston, MI 48347  
(248) 625-8181  
[www.mhpn.org](http://www.mhpn.org)

City of Muskegon Historic District  
Commission  
933 Terrace Street  
Muskegon, MI 49440  
(231) 724-6702  
[www.shorelinecity.com](http://www.shorelinecity.com)

Muskegon Heritage Association  
561 W. Western Avenue  
Muskegon, MI 49440  
(231) 722-1363

Old House Journal Magazine  
Old House Restoration Directory  
[www.Oldhousejournal.com](http://www.Oldhousejournal.com)

This Old House Magazine  
(212) 522-9465  
[www.Thisoldhouse.com](http://www.Thisoldhouse.com)

Preservation Magazine  
[www.Preservationonline.org](http://www.Preservationonline.org)

Old House Interiors  
Design Center Sourcebook  
108 East Main Street  
Gloucester, MA 01930  
(978) 283-3200  
[www.Oldhouseinteriors.com](http://www.Oldhouseinteriors.com)

Renovator's Supply  
1-800-659-2211  
[www.rensup.com](http://www.rensup.com)

Heritage Preservation Services  
(202) 513-7270  
[www2.cr.nps.gov](http://www2.cr.nps.gov)

## INCENTIVES FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

- Federal Tax Credit – this incentive allows 20% tax credit for certified rehabilitation of certified historic structures; and 10% tax credit for the rehabilitation of non-historic, non-residential buildings built before 1936. To qualify for the federal income tax credit, the historic resource must be listed in the National Register of Historic Places either individually or as part of a registered historic district. However, this incentive is not available for properties used exclusively as the owner’s private residence.
- State Tax Credit – similar to federal tax credit, this provides supplemental 5% for certified rehabilitation. Work that did not qualify for the federal tax credit may qualify for the full 25% from the State. Check with the State Historic Preservation Office at (517) 373-1630 for more details.
- Tax Relief (Mathieu-Gast Act) – this allows homeowners to seek tax relief from assessments increased because of improvements made to their homes. This can only be applicable to homestead properties; and the increase is not included in the assessment until the property is sold.
- Charitable Contributions for Historic Preservation Purposes – from the Department of Treasury, this provides for income and estate tax deductions for charitable contributions of partial interests in historic properties (principally easements). Consult your accountant or legal adviser on this matter.
- Neighborhood Enterprise Zone (NEZ) – The City initiated this program in 1993 as permitted by the State Neighborhood Enterprise Zone Act. If in a designated zone, a homeowner or developer may apply for a State issued NEZ certificate. When issued, the certificate provides that a rehabilitated **facility** is exempt from property tax increases for a maximum of 12 years. For more information, contact the Planning Department at 724-6702.
- Façade Improvement Grant – The City of Muskegon has a grant programs that has been created to improve the physical appearances of businesses. This grant requires a match of 1 to 1 with a maximum grant of \$5,000 for each application per year. This is a reimbursement-oriented program to ensure that proposed work is done appropriately and consistent with the character of the neighborhood. For more information on this grant, contact the Planning Department at 724-6702.
- Investment Tax Credit for Low Income Housing – the Tax Reform Act of 1986 established an investment tax credit for acquisition, construction, or rehabilitation of low-income rental housing. The tax credit is approximately 9% per year for 10 years for each unit (if no federal subsidies were used); and 4% for 10 years for each unit (if federal subsidies, 20% rehabilitation tax credit, or tax-exempt bonds were used). For more information contact the Michigan Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program at (517) 373-6007.

## PROCEDURES FOR REHABILITATION PROJECTS

If an owner wishes to alter, rehabilitate, repair, or demolish an historic resource, certain steps and procedures must be followed. The City of Muskegon Historic District Commission requires review for various types of new construction, renovation, or rehabilitation work before such work commences. This type of work typically includes changes in roofing materials, sidings, additions, patios and porches, decks, and others that generally affect the exterior character and/or integrity of the historic resource of the historic district where the historic resource is located. Interior changes or improvements are not subject to an HDC review unless a change in use of a structure is being requested (such as from a single-family use to a multi-unit family), or if such change in the interior affects the exterior appearance of the resource.

All requests need to be received at the Planning Department (231) 724-6702 for staff review. Generally, HDC review is not necessary for minor repairs that do not alter the historic character of the property. All repair work has to be referred to the staff for initial review; and if the staff determines that the project will affect the exterior character, appearance, and integrity of the property, the application will be referred to the HDC for review.

The HDC will review applications once every month on the first Tuesday and make a determination. If approved, staff will mail the notice (Certificate of Appropriateness or Notice to Proceed) to the applicant to secure a building permit, if necessary, before any work begins. If an application is being denied, reasons for rejection will be indicated in the notice to the applicant. He/she can either resubmit an application with remedied deficiency or file an appeal with the State Historic Preservation Office within 60 days from date of rejection.

All applications must include the facts necessary for a full understanding of the applicant's intentions. The application must provide enough specific information so that HDC can determine if the project will result in substantial change to the physical appearance of the property. Applications should include relevant supplemental materials such as a photograph of the property, accurate drawings, plans, dimensions, location of proposed work, sample materials (if feasible), graphics to simulate the actual appearance (such as sign location, handicap ramp, fire escape, etc.). Other information deemed necessary for the Commission to evaluate an application might be requested.

### **ACTIVITIES REQUIRING HDC REVIEW AND PERMITS**

- New construction, additions, or alterations.
- Demolition (partial or entirely) and site grading or excavation that alters the historic character of a property or district.
- Porches, decks, balconies, railings, fence, and related work.
- Roofing, sidings, windows, doors, and other features.
- Sidewalks, driveways, and other pavements.
- Exterior lighting fixtures, equipment, and other objects or structures.
- Signs, markers, banners, and other advertising materials.

Note: This is not a complete list of work requiring review. Some projects involving replacement with like materials may be reviewed by staff. Please check with the Planning Department before commencing work.

**APPLICATION FOR A  
CERTIFICATE OF  
APPROPRIATENESS**

Historic District Commission  
City of Muskegon  
933 Terrace Street  
Muskegon, Michigan 49440  
(231) 724-6702

DATE SUBMITTED:
APPLICATION NUMBER: 2003-

*Please type or print all information. Give complete address including zip code(s).*

NAME OF APPLICANT:	Name and phone number of person to be contacted on matters involving this application.
COMPLETE PROPERTY ADDRESS:	
COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS:	
Alternate Phone Number:	

<b>TYPE OF APPLICATION:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> New Construction <input type="checkbox"/> Rehabilitation/Restoration <input type="checkbox"/> Demolition <input type="checkbox"/> Addition <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify)	<b>PRESENT USE OF PROPERTY:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Residential <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Institutional <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify)	<b>Historic District Designation:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> A district <input type="checkbox"/> AA District <input type="checkbox"/> National Register District Name: _____ Year of Construction: _____
---	--	---

<b>DESCRIPTION OF WORK PROPOSAL</b> (be specific and describe each work separately. Use additional sheets if necessary):	<b>PROPOSED WORK START DATE:</b>
	<b>PROPOSED WORK COMPLETION:</b>
	<b>CONTRACTOR/BUILDER</b> (give name, address, and phone number):
	<b>Space below for Staff Comments:</b>

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

#### PROCEDURE AND REQUIREMENTS:

Properties within one of the eight Muskegon Historic Districts are subject to the 1973 Muskegon Historic District Ordinance (Chapter 11, Sections 1-36 of the Code of Ordinances). The purpose of the ordinance is to preserve and protect our historic resources. The Historic District Commission (HDC) is established by the Ordinance, and has the authority to review and approve all work permit applications and plans for exterior property improvements within these districts. Regular building maintenance is permitted and encouraged; however, a work permit is required for all alterations, significant repairs, new construction, demolition, moving of buildings, and all other activities affecting the exterior appearance of buildings and properties within these districts. Please consult the HDC guidelines for specific details on permissible work.

This application must be received by the Planning Department no less than 13 days prior to regularly scheduled monthly HDC meeting. The meeting is held every first Tuesday of the month at 4:00 p.m. in the Commission Chambers, City Hall. Applicants are strongly encouraged to conduct a preliminary discussion with staff and attend the meeting to explain the proposed work.

**The following information should be included with this application. Additional information may be requested.**

- Current photo of the structure as seen from the street and where proposed work is to take place.
- Sketch, drawing or plans and/or elevations of proposed work. Provide dimensions and where this work is in relation to the main structure.
- Drawings to show details and specifications of ornamental features.
- Where appropriate, plan showing property lines for fencing, projected view of structure for signs, perspective drawing for new additions, etc.

Note:

*Information contained in this application, as well as supporting documents, may be subject to review by the public if a Freedom of Information Act request is filed.*