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The City of Mobile is nationally recognized for its rich collection of historic resources. These are enjoyed by residents, business owners and visitors as links to the City’s heritage while also setting the stage for a vibrant future. Preserving these assets is essential to Mobile’s well being. The Design Review Guidelines for Mobile’s Historic Districts promote the community’s vision for preservation by guiding appropriate stewardship (or guidelines) of historic resources and compatible redevelopment in locally-designated historic districts.

The Design Review Guidelines guide rehabilitation, alteration, expansion, new construction, demolition and building relocation involving properties in locally-designated historic districts. The Design Review Guidelines also guide the Architectural Review Board’s (ARB) review of projects to determine whether the project in locally designated historic district would or would not materially impair a historic resource or the district as a whole. Please consult MHDC staff regarding any questions or clarifications associated with this chapter.
Why Preserve Mobile’s Historic Resources?

Many factors contribute to maintaining the historic nature of the districts and their buildings, including scale, materials, color, massing, form, proportions, spatial relationships and supporting site features. A consistent and coherent architectural character fosters a sense of order and a sense of place within Mobile’s historic districts. By preserving existing buildings and guiding compatible redevelopment, the Design Guidelines promote three key elements for Mobile:

» Economic Sustainability. The economic benefits of protecting historic resources include higher property values, job creation in rehabilitation industries and increased heritage tourism.

» Environmental Sustainability. Rehabilitation of historic resources directly supports environmental sustainability through conservation of embodied energy, adaptability, and maintenance of sustainable development patterns.

» Cultural/Social Sustainability. Preserving historic places and patterns promotes cultural and social sustainability by supporting everyday connections between residents and the cultural heritage of the community.

Adoption of the Guidelines

These guidelines are the combined efforts of many individuals working over a period of years. Mobile Historic Development Commission (MHDC) staff began preparing an update to the previous version of the Design Review Guidelines in 2000. This effort was ongoing for many years. In 2015, the City of Mobile initiated a public process to finalize these updates and adopt the updated document as a replacement for the previous version.

Who is the Architectural Review Board (ARB)?

Mobile’s Architectural Review Board (ARB) was established in 1962. All members are appointed by the Mobile City Council and serve on a volunteer basis. Employees of the MHDC, a City Department, serve as staff for the ARB. For more information about the ARB, please access the MHDC website at http://www.mobilehd.org/ARB.html.

What Does the ARB Do?

The ARB is charged by law with the “protection, enhancement, perpetuation and use of places, districts, sites, buildings, structures, objects, landscape features and works of art having a special historical, cultural or aesthetic interest or value...” In order to meet this charge, property owners (and/or lessees or occupants) within Mobile’s locally designated historic districts must submit an application to the ARB prior to making any material change to the exterior of a property located within a locally designated historic district. In addition, any owner wishing to construct a new building within one of Mobile’s locally designated historic districts must submit an application to the ARB.

When reviewing projects, the ARB must analyze two factors:

» Does the proposed change materially impair the historic integrity of a historic structure?

» Does the proposed change materially impair the historic integrity of the district?
The ARB is also charged with evaluating properties. The ARB must consider if a property has integrity in that a sufficient percentage of the structure must date from the period of significance. To retain integrity, the majority of the building’s structural system and materials dates from the period of significance and its character-defining features should remain intact. These features may include architectural details such as storefronts, cornices, moldings and upper-story windows on commercial buildings and dormers, porches, ornamental brackets, and moldings on residential structures. The overall building form and its materials should also be intact. These elements allow a building to be recognized as a product of its own time.

Through review of proposed construction, renovation, demolition of structures and other activities within the locally designated historic districts, the ARB protects the rights and investments of property owners and residents by ensuring that any such activity does not materially impair a historic resource or district. By protecting and maintaining the historic character of the locally designated historic districts, the ARB ensures that future generations will enjoy the benefits of Mobile’s rich architectural heritage.

Where Do the Design Guidelines Apply?
These Design Guidelines are applicable to properties within Mobile’s locally designated historic districts. All of the locally designated districts are also listed in the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, Mobile also has a number of districts that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, but which are not locally designated, such as the Africatown National Register Historic District. While special incentives and benefits may be available to National Register properties, it is important to note that they are not subject to review using the Design Review Guidelines for Mobile’s Historic Districts, unless they are also located in a locally designated historic district. These districts are shown on the map on the next page. This map is subject to change.

Maps of the individual locally designated historic districts can be viewed at www.mobilehd.org and include the following:

» Ashland Place
» Church Street East
» DeTonti Square
» Leinkauf
» Lower Dauphin Street
» Oakleigh Garden
» Old Dauphin Way

The preceding list is subject to updates. Reference the link provided above to see if additional local historical districts have been adopted.

Amendments to the Guidelines
The Guidelines promulgated by the MHDC, which has the duty to amend and maintain them. It is anticipated that minor revisions to the Guidelines will occur as matter of routine. In those instances, the changes being considered will be posted on the MHDC website. The members of the MHDC should discuss the revisions with their respective organizations while the staff seeks public comment to present to the MHDC. For more details related to amendments to the Guidelines, see www.mobilehd.org/mhdc.html.
CHAPTER 1: Introduction and General Information

Design Review Guidelines for Mobile’s Historic Districts

Relationship to Other City Policies

The Guidelines reflect the City’s goal to preserve its historic resources while promoting economic development. The policy base for the Guidelines exists in several key policy documents, including the Map for Mobile, A New Plan for Mobile, the Preservation Ordinance, the Mobile Zoning Ordinance, and the Mobile Form Based Code (for the Downtown Development District). The Design Review Guidelines should be considered an additional document that helps to implement the broad policy and regulatory documents described below. Please note that the Design Review Guidelines for Mobile’s locally designated Historic Districts may require updating as other City policies and ordinances are updated to ensure internal consistency.

Map for Mobile: A Framework for Growth

Map for Mobile is the name given to the comprehensive plan for the City of Mobile. It identifies core critical needs for Mobile, describes the long-term vision of the community and serves as a guide for long-term preservation, revitalization and growth. As the broadest policy document guiding development in Mobile, the plan serves as a policy base for preservation-related initiatives and policies throughout the City, including this Design Review Guidelines document. Map for Mobile was adopted by the Mobile City Planning Commission on November 5th, 2015.


New Plan for Mobile

In 2012, the Mobile City Council adopted an amendment to the City’s Comprehensive Plan to add the New Plan for Mobile. The New Plan for Mobile is a comprehensive plan that focuses on the Downtown and its immediate surroundings. The New Plan covers the area bounded by the Mobile River to the east, Duval Street to the south, Houston Street to the west and the Three-Mile Creek and Hickory Street landfill areas to the north. The boundaries associated with the New Plan for Mobile include all of the locally designated historic districts with the exception of Ashland Place and some of the western edges of Old Dauphin Way. One of the key principles established in the New Plan is “encouraging context-sensitive redevelopment of sites within and surrounding Mobile’s Historic Districts.”
Mobile Historic Preservation Ordinance
Mobile’s Historic Preservation Ordinance is located in Chapter 44, Article IV of the Mobile City Code. Enabling legislation from the State of Alabama authorizes the City of Mobile to develop a preservation ordinance that establishes rules, procedures and regulations related to historic preservation in Mobile. The preservation ordinance covers all aspects of preservation in the City, including the establishment of locally designated historic districts, the establishment of the Architectural Review Board, required findings for issuance of Certificates of Appropriateness and standards for review of projects.

Mobile Zoning Ordinance
The Mobile Zoning Ordinance is located in Chapter 64 of the Mobile City Code. The Zoning Ordinance is intended to promote orderly and harmonious physical development in the city by setting forth the basic rules that shape development throughout the city. The Zoning Ordinance includes a special overlay that enables the Architectural Review Board review of improvement projects in locally designated historic districts.

Mobile Form Based Code
The Mobile Form Based Ordinance, a special overlay within the Mobile Zoning Ordinance, provides specialized regulations and building requirements for Downtown Development District (DDD). With respect to preservation review, the Form Based Code is only applicable to the DeTonti Square Historic District, the Lower Dauphin Historic District and the Church Street East Historic District since these are the only locally designated historic districts currently located within the DDD. The Form Based Code is intended to achieve the following:

» Implement the purposes and objectives of the Map for Mobile, including the New Plan for Mobile
» Guide the siting, form, and use of private property and buildings to support walkability, safe streets, and safe public spaces
» Guide building siting and form to vary by context and intensity in coordination with community identity and preferences
» Build on the work of the Mobile Historic Development Commission in protecting and enhancing the historic and cultural heritage of Mobile’s historic downtown

MHDC Staff can provide direction to all of the documents described above.

The Regulating Plan for Mobile’s Form Based Code.
Design Guidelines Organization

The Design Guidelines are organized into chapters that apply to different types of projects. Some chapters apply to all projects, while others will be relevant only to specific situations. The Design Review Guidelines include the following chapters in addition to this Introduction:

Chapter 2: Document Purpose and Structure
This chapter discusses the Design Guidelines’ overall purpose and intent. This chapter also provides an overview of the structure and recommended use of the Design Guidelines.

Chapter 3: Application and Project Review Process
This chapter provides an overview of the application requirements and review processes for projects in Mobile’s locally designated historic districts that must undergo design review.

Chapter 4: Overarching Preservation Principles
This chapter provides background on historic preservation theory and general principles that are applicable to all preservation projects.

Chapter 5: Design Guidelines Applicable to All Historic Structures
This chapter provides general design guidelines for improvements to contributing properties in locally designated historic districts. The guidelines in this chapter do not apply to new construction or projects associated with non-contributing structures. Non-contributing structures are those that were found by an official architectural survey to not retain enough of their integrity to contribute to the locally designated historic district or to not be of a period that is reflective of the contributing buildings.

Chapter 6: Residential Design Guidelines
This chapter builds on the general preservation guidelines presented in Chapter 5 with specific design guidelines for residential properties, including new residential construction and projects associated with non-contributing residential structures within locally designated historic districts.

Chapter 7: Commercial Design Guidelines
This chapter builds on the general preservation guidelines presented in Chapter 5 with specific design guidelines for commercial properties, including new commercial construction and projects associated with non-contributing commercial structures within locally designated historic districts.
Chapter 8: Institutional Design Guidelines
This chapter provides guidelines for contributing and non-contributing institutional buildings within locally designated historic districts, including churches and government buildings.

Chapter 9: Accessory Structures
This chapter provides guidelines for the treatment of historic accessory structures and new accessory structures within locally designated historic districts.

Chapter 10: Site Considerations
This chapter provides guidelines for site-related elements of projects in locally designated historic districts. This includes guidelines for fences, lighting and landscaping.

Chapter 11: Commercial Signage
This chapter provides guidelines for commercial signage within locally designated historic districts.

Chapter 12: Demolition and Relocation of Historic Structures
This chapter provides guidelines for demolitions and relocations of historic structures within locally designated historic districts.

Chapter 13: Mobile’s Locally Designated Historic Districts
This chapter provides an overview of each of Mobile’s locally designated historic districts. This includes provides a brief discussion of each district’s history and character-defining physical features.

Appendices
This includes an assortment of appendices included for reader reference, including a glossary of terms and the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.
CHAPTER 2: DOCUMENT PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE

This chapter describes the purpose of the Design Review Guidelines and provides information regarding the use of the document. The ARB and owners of properties within locally designated historic districts should use this chapter to determine which guidelines sections are relevant to their particular project. Please consult MHDC staff regarding any questions or clarifications associated with this chapter.

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### Purpose of the Guidelines

The Design Review Guidelines were created to aid the property owner in meeting the objectives of Mobile’s historic preservation ordinance. The Guidelines are a tool to guide improvements to properties in locally designated historic districts. They inform the design review process that helps ensure that changes to the built environment will be sensitive to the community’s historic legacy and not result in material impairment to a historic resource or district. The Guidelines serve as a guide to the Architectural Review Board, which refers to these Guidelines and the Secretary of the Interior Standards in making decisions about the appropriateness of changes and new construction in the locally designated historic districts.

More broadly, the Guidelines are intended to do the following:

- Protect and preserve the historic and cultural heritage of Mobile’s historic districts by promoting the conservation of buildings or groups of buildings that have historic significance or contribute to the character of the districts
- Enhance the economic viability of Mobile’s historic districts by preserving property values and promoting the character of the districts
- Promote compatibility in future development to enhance the historic and aesthetic qualities of Mobile’s historic districts
- Promote and encourage craftsmanship that is compatible with historic buildings

### Who Should Consult the Guidelines?

Prior to submitting an application for work, all property owners or their representatives, tenants, design professionals and contractors working within the locally designated historic district boundaries should consult the Design Review Guidelines. All proposals for work in locally designated historic districts must be submitted to the office of the Mobile Historic Development Commission in order to obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness before a building permit can be issued by the City of Mobile.

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**The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Historic Properties**

The Secretary of the Interior has published Standards and Guidelines for the Treatment of Historic Properties, which serve as a model nationwide.

They are organized into four approaches:

- Preservation
- Rehabilitation
- Restoration
- Reconstruction

Of these, the Rehabilitation treatment provides the broadest and most flexible approach and serves as the basis for Mobile’s Design Review Guidelines. The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards can be found online at [www.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide/](http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide/).
Projects Covered by the Guidelines

As discussed above, the Design Review Guidelines are applicable to changes to building exteriors and site features of properties located within Mobile's locally designated historic districts. This includes changes to both "contributing" and "non-contributing" properties. Contributing buildings were found to be from a specific period of significance and to have enough of their original features and character intact to retain integrity. Non-contributing buildings are those buildings that were found to not contribute to the locally designated historic district because they no longer retain enough original features or have been modified to an extent that they no longer retain their integrity. A newer building may also be found to be a non-contributor because of it was not constructed during the period of significance for the district. In most cases, changes to contributing properties are held to a higher standard of review. Changes to properties in locally designated historic districts that are covered by these guidelines include the following:

- Repairs, replacements, and alterations to historic buildings
- Additions to historic buildings
- Repairs, replacements and alterations to non-contributing buildings
- New construction
- Items attached to building exteriors (satellite dishes, cell towers, security bars, etc.)
- Site planning elements (fences, free-standing lighting, paving, etc.)
- Demolition and relocation of structures located within locally designated historic districts
- Signage

Demolition and Relocation

In the case of demolition or relocation of historic structures the Historic Preservation Ordinance states that, “The Board shall not grant Certificates of Appropriateness for the demolition or relocation of any property within a historic district unless the Board finds that the removal or relocation of such building will not be detrimental to the historic or architectural character of the district.” The Ordinance provides a list of determining factors the Board must consider when reviewing requests for demolition or relocation. The demolition of historic structures is not allowed except in accordance with the ordinance. See Mobile City Code, Chapter 44, Art. IV, §10.

Interpreting the Guidelines

The design concepts discussed in this document are guidelines in that they provide direction. In many instances the requirements are straightforward. Generally, the materials and preservation requirements for historic resources are as written. However, the interaction of design elements is dynamic. Introduction of new elements, whether in conjunction with a historic property or by themselves, becomes more complicated in their effect on buildings and the neighborhood. For example, in some cases compatibility of materials may be more important than the use of similar window sizes, while in other instances the opposite may be true. Therefore, the importance of individual guidelines will be influenced by the nature of the project and the characteristics of its context. This dynamism underscores the need for design review on a case-by-case basis. However, the burden remains on the applicant to demonstrate that the proposed design would not impair the historic integrity of the structure or the district. Work on one historic structure does not necessarily create a precedent that will allow a similar treatment on another historic structure.

Banner and Shield

The Architectural Review Board examines applications for projects in Mobile's locally designated historic districts as described in this chapter. In some cases, the Mobile Historic Preservation Commission awards the "Banner and Shield." Reviewed and awarded by the Mobile Historic Development Commission’s Marking Committee, issuance of a “Banner and Shield” is an applicant driven process. While approval of a project by the Architectural Review Board does not guarantee approval of a “Banner and Shield”, Staff works with applicants to achieve that desired end.
### Design Guidelines Components

Each individual design guideline in this document follows a standard format, which has several components. All components of a guideline are used in determining appropriateness. The key components of a typical design guideline are illustrated below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Design Guideline</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rooftops</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A roof is one of the most dominant features of a building. Original or historic roof forms, materials and details should be maintained. In many 19th century buildings, the roofs used wood shingles that have long since been replaced with composite shingles. The Board encourages the use of architectural shingles on buildings built before 1950.

#### 2.1 Preserve the original form of a historic roof.

- Maintain the original pitch.
- Preserve decorative elements, including crests and chimneys.
- Preserve historic roofing material that is in good condition. Do not remove it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design Topic</th>
<th>Describes the topic area that the standard falls within.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intent Statement</td>
<td>Explains the desired outcome and provides a basis for the guidelines that follow. If no guidelines address a specific design issue, the policy statement will be used to determine appropriateness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design Guideline</td>
<td>Describes the design outcome. Guidelines are sequentially numbered within each chapter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Information</td>
<td>Provides bullet lists of appropriate and inappropriate strategies for meeting the intent of the guideline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Images</td>
<td>Clarify the intent of the guideline by illustrating appropriate and inappropriate design solutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate</td>
<td>Images marked with a check illustrate appropriate design solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inappropriate</td>
<td>Images marked with an X illustrate inappropriate design solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionable</td>
<td>Images marked with an ? illustrate questionable design solutions in which appropriateness needs to be determined on a case-by-case basis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** For some guidelines topics, lists of acceptable and unacceptable replacement materials and finishes are listed. These lists may be periodicaly updated to reflect the evolution of alternative materials and their ability to simulate the quality, character, durability and other properties of an original historic material or finish.
CHAPTER 3: APPLICATION AND PROJECT REVIEW

This chapter describes the application and review process required for projects in Mobile’s locally designated historic districts. The application and review procedures described in this chapter are intended to help avoid material impairment to individual historic resources and historic districts. Please consult MHDC staff regarding any questions or clarifications associated with this chapter.

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Application Procedure
This section outlines the application procedures required for projects in Mobile’s locally designated historic districts.

Submission
Refer to the Application Checklist for requirements for specific project types at www.mobilehd.org/arb_applications.html.

MHDC staff is available to assist with application preparation if desired. For large projects, such as new construction or substantial additions or renovations, consultation with staff is strongly encouraged prior to application submittal. It is the responsibility of the applicant to submit a complete application with all supporting materials. Unless an applicant asks the staff to review an application upon submittal, the application will not be examined until after the ARB agenda deadline. Any incomplete applications may be held until all information is submitted. Applicants that desire to meet with MHDC staff are strongly encouraged to make an appointment.

Demolition and Sign Applications
Special applications must be submitted for demolition of structures and for installation of signs. Please complete these and submit the necessary supporting materials. These specialized applications are available at www.mobilehd.org/arb_applications.html.

Supporting Documentation
Required documentation for applications can be found at www.mobilehd.org/arb_applications.html.

Staff Review
MHDC staff will review applications and generate reports to be placed with ARB agendas. Please examine the reports (which will be made available prior to the ARB meeting) and be prepared to discuss any issues at the ARB meeting. Questions before the meeting should be addressed to MHDC staff. Agendas and reports are available at www.mobilehd.org/meetings.php.

Public Notice
A posted sign will be placed in the front yard of the subject property prior to the ARB meeting to notify surrounding property owners of a pending application. Attendance at the meeting by the applicant is strongly advised in order to respond to any questions.

Approval
If a project is approved by the ARB, the project applicant will receive a Certificate of Appropriateness. Once a Certificate of Appropriateness is issued, the applicant will be eligible to receive a building permit for the project from the City of Mobile. A Certificate of Appropriateness remains valid for one year.
Late Applications
Late applications may be placed on an upcoming agenda at the discretion of MHDC staff if circumstances allow, such as an item discussed at a previous meeting or a minor application. Under no circumstances can a late application be accepted if the public notification period of seven days cannot be accommodated prior to the ARB meeting date, unless the application is informed by public safety and welfare considerations or other emergency factors.

Rejected Applications
MHDC staff may only refuse to place an application on the agenda if it is incomplete or has been heard and denied by the ARB within the previous six months.

Alterations to Approved Plans
A new application must be submitted for changes to the approved plan. Minor alterations may be approved by MHDC staff administratively.

Schedule for Review
Applications must be submitted to the office of the MHDC. If desired, applicants may make an appointment with MHDC staff to review the application for completeness. In order to get an application before the ARB for review, the application must be submitted significantly ahead (usually 16 days) of the ARB meeting at which the case will be reviewed. Early submittals are strongly encouraged. Incomplete applications will not be placed on an ARB agenda after the deadline.

Applicants submitting for large projects, such as new construction or substantial additions or renovations, should schedule a pre-design meeting with both the MHDC staff members and Urban Development staff members. The ARB may establish a Design Review Committee to work with the applicant or the formation of a committee may be requested by the applicant.

The ARB’s meeting schedule and application deadlines can be found at www.mobilehd.org. If any plans associated with an application are modified, please notify MHDC staff.

Expedited Review
MHDC staff is allowed by ordinance and the operations of the ARB to approve some requests for expedited review. The ARB has adopted a series of items the may be approved by MHDC staff administratively. If MHDC staff cannot approve a request, the applicant may request that an application be submitted to the ARB for review. Final denial of any request is reserved to the ARB.
Intercooperation Among City Departments

The Architectural Review Board examines applications solely on the basis of impairment to the historic character of a building or a locally designated historic district. Approval by other City Departments may consider other aspects of a project such as safety, setbacks, trees, right-of-way issues, etc. The requirements of all Departments must be met. When multiple regulations are in conflict, generally the most restrictive applies. Also, though MHDC Staff and the ARB try to inform applicants of possible conflicts, they may not be aware of all the implications of a request. Therefore, the property owner should clear all requests with the appropriate departments. If changes to a plan are required, it is the responsibility of the owner to inform MHDC staff and the ARB. An amended application may be required.
Preserving the integrity of properties identified as having historic significance is a fundamental goal for the City of Mobile. This means employing best practices in property stewardship that maintain the key, character-defining features of individual historic buildings, site features and other objects of historic significance, as well as maintaining the context in which they exist. These overarching principles are intended to prevent material impairment of Mobile’s individual historic resources and locally designated historic districts.

This chapter presents an overview of historic preservation principles that apply to any historic property, including basic maintenance and repair, replacement and reconstruction and compatible additions. It also provides guidance on how to plan a preservation project and outlines different treatment categories for historic properties. These principles provide a framework and guidance when planning a project in a historic district. Please consult MHDC staff regarding any questions or clarifications associated with this chapter.
General Preservation Principles
Many general principles apply to the preservation of all types of historic properties. These principles are briefly summarized below.

Respect the Historic Character of a Property

» The basic form and materials of a building, as well as its architectural details, are a part of the historic character.
» Do not try to change the style of a historic resource or make it look older than its actual age.
» Confusing the character by mixing elements of different styles or periods can materially impair the historical significance of the property.

Seek Uses that are Compatible with the Historic Character of the Property

» Converting a building to a new use different from the original use is considered to be an “adaptive reuse,” and is a sound strategy for keeping a building in service. Converting a gas station to a coffee shop is an example of adaptive use. A good adaptive use project retains the historic character of the building while accommodating a new function.
» Every reasonable effort should be made to provide a compatible use for the building that will require minimal alteration to the building and its site.
» Changes in use requiring the least alteration to significant elements are preferred. In most cases, designs can be developed that respect the historic integrity of the building while also accommodating new functions.

Historic Mobile Homes
Maintain Significant Features and Stylistic Elements

» Distinctive stylistic features and other examples of skilled craftsmanship should be preserved. The best preservation practice is to maintain historic features from the outset to prevent the need for repair later. Appropriate maintenance includes rust removal, caulking and repainting.
» Significant features and stylistic elements should not be removed to the extent possible.

Repair Deteriorated Historic Features and Replace Only Those Elements That Cannot Be Repaired

» Upgrade existing materials using recognized preservation methods whenever possible.
» If disassembly is necessary for repair or restoration, use methods that minimize damage to original materials and facilitate reassembly.
» If replacement of a historic element is required, replace the historic element in kind, or with a product that is similar in visual character and durability to the original.

When applying these basic preservation principles, some questions may arise about how they relate to conditions in which properties are badly deteriorated, and that may be unsafe. Some may argue that, in an urgent situation, they should not be held to these standards. In other cases, they may contend that complying with them is not feasible. Fortunately, many products and trades have responded to the preservation market, and now offer products and services that are compatible with historic preservation principles. The City seeks to provide assistance to property owners in meeting their individual needs while also upholding formally adopted policies for preservation. MHDC Staff can assist property owners with locating materials and craftsmen to serve projects.
Preservation Project Planning Steps

When planning a preservation project, it is important to determine historic significance, assess integrity and determine program requirements prior to outlining an appropriate treatment strategy that will inform the overall project scope. Follow the steps below when planning a preservation project.

**Step 1: Why is the building significant?**

Historic Significance. Understanding the historic significance of a building and identifying its key features will help determine to what degree the property should be preserved or where opportunities for compatible alterations may exist. A property is considered to have historic significance if it meets a defined age threshold, and meets adopted criteria for determining significance.

**Step 2: What is the condition of the building and its key features?**

Integrity. The condition of the building and its features contribute to the overall significance of the property. A building with historic integrity has a sufficient percentage of key character-defining features and characteristics from its period of significance that remain intact. These key elements allow a building to be recognized as a product of its time.

**Step 3: What is the desired project?**

Program Requirements. Are functional improvements needed? Or is the preservation of key features the objective? If restoring features is the focus, then other alternatives may not be necessary, but if some functional improvements are needed then compatible alterations and/or additions may be indicated.

**Step 4: What is the treatment strategy?**

Treatment Strategy. An appropriate treatment strategy may be devised once historic significance, integrity and program requirements have been determined. A preservation project may include a range of activities, such as maintenance of existing historic elements, repair of deteriorated materials, the replacement of missing features and construction of a new addition. Note, that while an overall treatment for the building may be used, a different treatment may be applied to a specific building element or component. Additional information on treatment strategies is provided on the next page.

**Treatment Strategies**

- Preserve
- Restore
- Rehabilitate
- Reconstruct

**The Project Scope**
Treatment of Historic Resources

This section describes accepted treatments to historic properties and addresses combining treatments and discouraged treatments. The guidance in this section is intended to avoid impairment to historic resources and districts.

Accepted Treatments

This following is a list of four approaches that are appropriate for treating historic properties.

» **Preservation.** This 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 preserve properties in good condition.

» **Restoration.** This is the act or process of accurately depicting the form, features and character of a property as it appeared in a particular time period. It may require the removal of features from outside the period.

» **Rehabilitation.** This 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. This term is the broadest of the appropriate treatments and is often used in the standards with the understanding that it may also involve other appropriate treatments.

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

Combining Treatments

While the terms above are used interchangeably in informal conversation, the more precise meanings are used when describing the overall strategy for a contributing property. For many improvement projects in Mobile, a rehabilitation approach will be the overall strategy. Within that, however, there may be a combination of these approaches as they relate to specific building components. For example, a surviving cornice may be preserved, a storefront base that has been altered may be restored, and a missing bulkhead may be reconstructed.

Discouraged Treatments

The following approaches are not appropriate for historically significant properties.

» **Remodeling.** This is the process of changing the historic design of a building. The appearance is altered by removing original details and by adding new features that are out of character with the original. Remodeling of the exterior of a historic structure is inappropriate.

» **Deconstruction.** This is the process of dismantling a building such that the individual material components and architectural details remain intact. This may be employed when a building is relocated or when the materials are to be reused in other building projects. Deconstruction may be a more environmentally responsible alternative to conventional demolition. However, it is an inappropriate treatment for a building of historic significance. It should be noted that a significant number of historic buildings within Mobile’s locally designated historic districts do not survive on their original sites. If relocation is the only alternative by which to save a structure, it is encouraged.
**Preferred Sequence of Improvements**

This section provides the preferred treatment strategies relative to one another. Maintaining a high degree of integrity for a property is important, so it is usually best to repair a feature rather than replace it. Of course, the first step should be to simply keep it in good condition, using accepted maintenance procedures. However, if the feature is in disrepair, then repair is preferred over replacement as it will help to retain a higher degree of integrity. The chart below lists the preferred sequence of improvement actions in order of preference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Preserve</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If a feature is intact and in good condition, maintain it as such.</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Repair</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If the feature is deteriorated or damaged, repair it to its original condition.</td>
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</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>3. Reconstruct</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If the feature is missing entirely, reconstruct it from appropriate evidence. If a portion of a feature is missing, it can also be reconstructed.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. Replace</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If it is not feasible to repair the feature, then replace the feature to match the existing. Replace only that portion that is beyond repair.</td>
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<tr>
<th>5. Compatible Alteration</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Locating Façade Improvements

For most historic resources, the front façade is the most important to preserve intact. Alterations are rarely appropriate. Many side walls are also important to preserve where they are highly visible from public streets. By contrast, portions of a side wall that are not as visible may be less sensitive to change. The rear wall is usually the least sensitive, and alterations can occur more easily without causing negative effects to the historic significance of the property. An illustrated evaluation of appropriate improvement or alteration locations for a sample residential and sample commercial building is provided below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location A: Primary Facade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preservation and repair of features in place is the priority. This is especially important at the street level and in locations where the feature is highly visible.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location B: Highly Visible Secondary Wall</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preservation and repair of features in place is the priority. This is especially important at the street level and in locations where the feature is highly visible.</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location C: Less Visible Secondary Wall</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preservation is still preferred but additional flexibility exists for compatible replacement or alteration.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location D: Not Typically Visible Rear Facade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More flexibility in treatment may be considered, especially for compatible replacement or alteration that is not visible from the street.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residential Building</th>
<th>Commercial Building</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>![Residential Building Diagram]</td>
<td>![Commercial Building Diagram]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* A

* B

* C

* D
Using Alternative Materials on a Historic Structure

The Design Review Guidelines sometimes refer to the use of alternative materials when describing the appropriate treatment of building features and components, such as moldings, windows, siding and other architectural details.

Alternative materials may be considered on a case-by-case basis as replacement materials or for use on a new addition or new building in a historic district. The ARB will consider factors as described below.

Potential Impact on Historic Significance
Removing original material diminishes the integrity of a historic property by reducing the percentage of building fabric that remains from the period of historic significance. Retaining the original material is always preferred. If this is not feasible, alternative materials may be considered. When used, an alternative material should convey the character, including detail and finish, of the original to the greatest extent feasible.

Durability
An alternative material should have proven durability in similar applications. While some new materials are very durable, others may degrade quickly and can be difficult to repair (i.e. vinyl windows).

Appearance
An alternative material should have a similar profile, texture and finish as the original material. Some synthetic siding has an exaggerated, rusticated finish that is an inaccurate representation of original clapboard, and many vinyl products have a sheen that is out of character with that of painted wood and metal.
Location
Up close, it is easier to identify some alternative materials due to differences in texture, finish and feel. Tapping on a hollow plastic column or fence does not convey the same experience as the original. For this reason, locations that are more remote are better. Similarly, use of alternative materials is more appropriate on non-primary façades. See “Locating Façade Improvements” on the previous page for more information.

Cost
Some alternative materials are promoted because their initial costs appear to be less than repairing or replacing the original. When the other qualities of appearance and durability are proven, then the less expensive option may be appropriate. However, long-term, “life cycle” costs should also be weighed. Sometimes, the up-front saving is deceptive.

Environmental Impacts
The potential environmental impacts of alternative materials should also be considered including impacts associated with manufacture, transport, installation and ability to recycle.

Interaction with Historic Building Materials
Some alternative materials may interact negatively with historic materials. For example, some metals may corrode and stain original materials and some window and siding materials may expand and contract with temperature changes in ways that degrade weather-protection properties.
CHAPTER 4: Overarching Preservation Principles

Design Review Guidelines for Mobile’s Historic Districts

General Principles for Specific Project Types

As discussed in Chapter 2, projects subject to the Design Review Guidelines include the items mentioned below. These actions should not materially impair historic buildings or locally designated historic districts.

Repairs, Replacements, and Alterations to Historic Buildings

This category includes any physical change to the exterior of an existing historic (contributing) building. Changes should avoid material impairment to the historic building and the district. This category is covered in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

Additions to Historic Buildings

This category covers additions to existing historic buildings that add square footage to an existing historic structure. An addition should avoid material impairment to the existing historic structure by clearly differentiating the addition so that the original historic building can be easily distinguished. An addition should also remain subordinate to the original building. Impairment to the historic district should be avoided by minimizing the visual impact of an addition as viewed from the public street. This category is covered in Chapter 6 and 7.

Repairs, Replacements and Alterations to Non-Contributing Buildings

This category covers changes to existing, non-contributing buildings located in locally designated historic districts. This could include alterations to exteriors or additions that add square footage. Changes to non-contributing buildings in locally designated historic districts should avoid material impairment to the historic district by ensuring that the change results in a structure that is compatible in mass, scale and materials with surrounding properties in the district. This category is covered in Chapters 6 and 7.

New Construction

This category covers new buildings constructed in locally designated historic districts. While new construction is encouraged to differentiate itself from existing historic structures in a locally designated historic district, a new building should avoid impairment to the district by drawing on the historic context. This includes 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. This category is covered in Chapters 6 and 7.

Items Attached to Building Exteriors

This category covers physical attachments to a historic building or site within a locally designated historic district, such as satellite dishes, cell towers, energy generating equipment and security bars. The addition of such features should avoid impairment to the historic building and the district by screening them or locating them in areas that are not highly visible from the public street. This category is covered in Chapter 5.
Site Planning Elements
This category covers the alteration or addition of site planning elements on any property in locally designated historic districts, such as fences, free-standing lighting and paving. Site planning features include any element that exists on a property but that is not permanently affixed to the primary structure. The design and location of these features should avoid impairment to historic buildings and districts. Site planning features should be designed to be compatible with historic context in their placement, design and materials. This category is covered in Chapter 10.

Signage
This category includes the treatment of existing signs and the placement of new signs in a locally designated historic district. Historic signage should be maintained to avoid impairment to a historic resource. New signage should exhibit physical character that is compatible with signage in the historic context. This category is covered in Chapter 11 and additional signage requirements are provided in the City’s Zoning Ordinance.

Demolition and Relocation of Historic Structures
This category covers the demolition of existing historic buildings and the relocation of historic buildings in locally designated historic districts. The demolition of a historic building should be employed only as a last resort. Relocation of an existing historic structure is more acceptable, but should still only be used when maintaining the building in place is not an option. The relocation of a historic building should avoid impairment to the historic district by employing a placement that is compatible with the placement of historic buildings in the district. This category is covered in Chapter 12 and additional details are provided in the City’s Historic Preservation Ordinance.
Accommodating Contemporary Design in Historic Districts

The Architectural Review Board encourages the construction of contemporary buildings and additions that do not impair the integrity of Mobile’s historic neighborhoods or historic buildings. Designing a building to fit within the historic character of a neighborhood requires careful thought. Preservation in a historic district context does not mean that the area must be “frozen” in time, but it does mean that, when new building occurs, it should occur in a manner that reinforces the basic visual characteristics of the district. This does not imply, however, that a new building must look old.

Rather than imitating older buildings, a new design should relate to the fundamental characteristics of the historic structures on a block while also conveying the stylistic trends of today. It may do so by drawing upon basic physical elements and features of nearby older properties. Such features include 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. When these design variables are arranged in a new building to be similar to those seen traditionally, visual compatibility results.

These basic design relationships are more fundamental than the details of individual architectural styles and, therefore, it is possible to be compatible with the historic context while also producing a design that is contemporary.

Non-Contributing Structures in Historic Districts

Non-contributing structures are addressed separately in the Design Review Guidelines document from contributing structures. Contributing structures are identified based on historic surveys conducted by professionals in accordance with the guidelines and standards adopted by the National Park Service. These surveys are updated from time to time, at which point the classifications of contributors and non-contributors may change within a given locally designated historic district. In order to ensure efficient administration of the guidelines and predictability for property owners, only properties classified as contributing should be reviewed as such in Mobile’s design review process. Consult the City of Mobile’s website to determine if a property falls in a locally designated historic district and whether the building is contributing or non-contributing.
CHAPTER 5:  
DESIGN GUIDELINES APPLICABLE 
TO ALL HISTORIC STRUCTURES

The guidelines in this chapter are applicable to all projects involving work on historic (contributing) properties in Mobile’s locally designated historic districts. This chapter does not apply to non-contributing structures or new construction in locally designated historic districts. The guidelines in this chapter are intended to prevent material impairment to historic buildings and locally designated historic districts. Setbacks, lot coverage and other requirements from the Zoning Ordinance may also apply.

This chapter includes guidance related to replacement materials for historic materials that are unable to be repaired. The ongoing evolution of processes and materials that are used as replacement should be considered in the interpretation of these guidelines. As processes and materials evolve, there may be a need to update these guidelines. Historic structures are typically constructed of materials with notable longevity and potential for restoration. These timeless qualities should be prioritized when conducting work on historic structures, including the selection of replacement materials. Please consult MHDC staff regarding any questions or clarifications associated with this chapter.

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Additional Guidelines for Historic Buildings....................................................45
Guidelines for the Treatment of Historic Properties

This section provides guidelines for the treatment of historic properties in Mobile’s locally designated historic districts.

General Guidelines

The following guidelines are general in nature and should be considered for any work on a historic resource. These guidelines are based on the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and set the foundation for the more detailed guidelines that follow.

» The distinguishing original qualities or character of a historic building, structure, or site and its environment shall not be destroyed. Historic materials are significant and shall not be removed. The removal or alteration of any historic landscaping features, materials, or distinctive architectural features should be avoided.

» All buildings, structures and sites shall be recognized as products of their own time. Changes that have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history and development of a building, structure, site or its environment. These changes may have acquired significance in their own right, and this significance should be recognized and respected. Alterations that have no historic basis and which seek to create an earlier or later appearance are discouraged. The removal of substandard alterations which are not compatible to the original building may be allowed.

» Deteriorated architectural features shall be repaired rather than replaced, wherever possible. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should match the material being replaced in physical character and durability. Composition, design, color, texture, and other visual qualities should appear similar to the original material. Repair or replacement of missing architectural features should be based on accurate duplications of features, substantiated by historic, physical or pictorial evidence.

» Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship which characterize a building, structure or site should be treated with sensitivity with particular emphasis on preservation of the features.

» The surface cleaning of structures shall be undertaken with the gentlest means possible. Sandblasting and other cleaning methods that may damage the historic building’s materials shall not be undertaken.

» Every reasonable effort should be made to protect and preserve archaeological resources affected by, or adjacent to, any project.

» Every reasonable effort should be made to protect and preserve the existing historic landscape features referenced in the various district nominations. Topography, landscape features and other historic features should not be destroyed or impaired.
Building Placement and Orientation

Placement and orientation are important elements relative to the historic significance of a structure. Its traditional face or orientation is almost always associated with its relationship to a public street or streets. The historic placement and orientation of a building should be preserved.

5.1 Preserve the building’s original placement and orientation.

- Maintain the original orientation of a building to the street and neighborhood.
- Maintain a property such that the historic setting of a building remains intact.
- Retain the pattern of front setbacks and building spacing that reflect those of adjacent historic structures.
- Design alterations so that the resulting building placement does not alter these established patterns.

Maintain the placement of a historic building. To the left, the building in grey maintains the pattern of front setbacks. To the right, the building is inappropriately moved back on the lot to create a larger front yard, which is not compatible with the prevailing front setbacks in the district.

Building placement and orientation can be dictated by the entry, so it is critical to maintain the historical location of the entry. In the photo, a prominent historic corner entry is maintained.

Retain a historic building’s original placement on a site to preserve its original design and maintain compatibility with other historic buildings in the district. Consistent building placement is maintained by the structures in this image.
Massing and Scale

Massing and scale are important factors in a property’s historic significance. Original massing and scale should be retained on a contributing property.

5.2 Preserve the original massing and scale of a historic structure.

Building Elements and Materials

Individual historic building elements should be repaired and preserved wherever possible. Primary historic building materials also should be preserved. If the material is damaged, then limited replacement, which matches the original, should be considered. These materials should never be covered or subjected to harsh cleaning treatments. Preserving original building materials and limiting replacement to only portions that are deteriorated beyond repair reduces the demand for, and environmental impacts from, the production of new materials and thus is sound sustainability policy as well.

Exterior Building Walls

A building generally presents four elevations. These often are key character-defining elements of a property, but the degree of significance may vary from wall to wall. The front is the most important aspect of a building, but the Architectural Review Board has purview over all exterior surfaces of a property. Historic walls that are key to defining the significance of a property should be preserved.

5.3 Preserve the key historic walls of a building.

» Maintain significant historic façades in their original form.
» Maintain historic façade elements.
» Pay special attention to maintaining the historic appearance of building walls of corner buildings.
Exterior Materials and Finishes
The exterior materials of a building help define its style, quality and historic period. Original materials should be preserved in place whenever feasible. If the material is damaged, then limited replacement that matches the original should be considered. These materials should never be covered or subjected to harsh cleaning treatments. This policy reduces the demand for, and environmental impacts from, the production of new materials and thus is sound sustainability policy.

5.4 Preserve original building materials.

- Repair deteriorated building materials by patching, piecing-in, consolidating or otherwise reinforcing the material.
- Remove only those materials which are deteriorated, and beyond reasonable repair.
- Do not remove original materials that are in good condition.

5.5 Preserve and restore the visibility of original historic materials.

- Consider removing later covering materials that have not achieved historic significance.
- Once a non-historic siding is removed, repair the original, underlying material.
- Carefully remove a later stucco finish if the process does not damage the underlying original building material if possible.
- Do not remove a later stucco covering if the process may damage the underlying original building material. Test the stucco to assure that the original material underneath will not be damaged.
- Do not cover or obscure original building materials.

5.6 Use original materials to replace damaged materials on primary surfaces where possible.

- Use original materials to replace damaged building materials on a primary façade if possible. If the original material is wood clapboard, for example, then the replacement material should be a material that matches the original in finish, size and the amount of exposed lap. If the original material is not available from the site, use a replacement material that is visually comparable with the original material.
- Replace only the amount of material required. If a few boards are damaged beyond repair, for example, then only they should be replaced, rather than the entire wall.
- Do not replace building materials on the primary façade, such as wood siding and masonry, with alternative or imitation materials unless it cannot be avoided.
- Wholesale replacement of exterior finishes is generally not allowed.
5.7 When replacing materials on a non-primary façade or elevation, match the original material in composition, scale and finish.

- Use original materials to replace damaged materials on a non-primary façade when possible.
- The ARB will consider the use of green building materials, such as those made with renewable and local resources to replace damaged materials on a non-primary façade if they do not impact the integrity of the building or its key features.
- Use alternative or imitation materials that match the style and detail of the original material to replace damaged non-primary building materials.
- Replace exterior finishes to match original in profile, dimension and materials.

**Replacement Siding**

**Appropriate replacement siding:**
- Original depth of trim is maintained and shadow line is preserved.
- Taper of lap siding remains at original wall thickness.
- Original trim board is preserved.

**Inappropriate replacement siding:**
- New trim element changes the depth and provides no shadow line.
- Square section siding projects further than original materials.
- Extra block is needed to trim out the wall.

**Cleaning a Historic Façade**

If cleaning is appropriate, a low pressure water wash is preferred. Whitewashing is preferred for historic stucco or concrete. Chemical cleaning may be considered if a test patch is first reviewed and negative effects are not found. Perform a test patch to determine that the cleaning method will cause no damage to the material surface. Do not use harsh cleaning methods, such as sandblasting, which can damage historic materials, changing their appearance.

**Durability of Replacement Materials**

When substitute materials are required because an original historic material cannot be restored or replaced in kind, durability should be prioritized. Replacement materials with proven durability in the Mobile climate should be sought. While some substitute materials are very sturdy, others may degrade quickly and may be difficult to repair. Choosing a substitute material with proven durability will help to avoid material impairment to a historic building and district by ensuring that substitute materials are generally indistinguishable from original historic materials as viewed from the public areas.
CHAPTER 5: Design Guidelines Applicable to All Historic Districts

5.8 Preserve and repair original masonry materials.

» Preserve masonry features that define the overall historic character, such as walls, cornices, pediments, steps and foundations.
» Take particular care with historic masonry. Consult Staff for guidance when repairing and replacing mortar joints and masonry.
» Unpainted 19th Century imported Philadelphia and locally manufactured brick may not be painted. In cases where historic brick has been previously painted, the paint color should be of a suitable color to match the age and architectural style of the structure.

PAINT

Historically, most wood surfaces on the exteriors of buildings were painted to protect them from weathering. Concrete and stucco structures were mostly scored and painted. Use of color and color schemes that reflect a building’s predominant historic period are encouraged. A painting project should reflect the historic character of the property and of the district. Paint colors and schemes will generally be approved if it is in keeping with the historic style and period of the building and the neighborhood.

5.9 Plan repainting carefully.

» The utilization of period color and paint schemes that reflect the historic character of the property is encouraged.
» Always prepare a good substrate.
» Prior to painting, remove damaged or deteriorated paint only to the next intact layer, using the gentlest means possible.
» Use compatible paints. Some latex paints will not bond well to earlier oil-based paints without a primer coat.

ACCEPTABLE REPLACEMENT MATERIALS (FOR HISTORIC MATERIALS)

Materials that are the same as the original, or that appear similar in finish, scale, style, and detail are acceptable. These often include:

» Stucco
» Wood
» Brick
» Stone
» Cast stone
» Wood: lap siding, shingles, board and batten
» Other materials original to the building, which are not listed above

UNACCEPTABLE REPLACEMENT MATERIALS (FOR HISTORIC MATERIAL)

Materials that do not appear similar to the original in finish, scale, style, and detail are unacceptable. These often include:

» Mineral fiber shingle (unless original to the building)
» Imitation brick or stone (unless original to the building)
» Metal siding
» Vinyl siding
» Exposed/raw concrete block
» Plywood or mineral fiber siding or panels
» Vinyl or elastomeric paint (such as Rhinoshield)
» Ceramic paint
» Exterior Insulation Finish System (EIFS)
Roofs
A roof is one of the most dominant features of a building. Original or historic roof forms, materials and details should be maintained. In many 19th century buildings, the roofs used wood shingles that have long since been replaced with composite shingles. The Architectural Review Board encourages the use of architectural shingles on buildings built before 1950.

5.10 Preserve the original form of a historic roof.
- Maintain the original pitch.
- Preserve decorative elements, including crests and chimneys.

5.11 Preserve the original eave depth of a roof.
- Maintain traditional overhangs because they contribute to the perception of a building’s historic scale.

5.12 Repair and maintain original roof materials rather than replace them, wherever possible.
- Patch and replace damaged areas of an existing roof.
- Retain and repair roof detailing, including gutters and downspouts. Boxed gutters will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.
5.13 Use new roof materials that convey a scale and texture similar to those used traditionally.

- Use materials that are consistent with the architectural style of the structure.
- Use materials with a similar texture, pattern and finish to the original.

**SHINGLED ROOFS**
- Use a composition shingle where a wood shingle would have been used originally.
- Muted grays and black are generally acceptable shingle colors.
- Do not use rolled roofing materials except on flat roofs.
- Do not use brightly colored roofing materials (such as blue or red).

**METAL ROOFS**
- If installing a new metal roof, apply and detail it in a manner that is compatible with the historic character of the roof, period and style.
  - Use standing seam metal, metal shingles or five v-crimp.
  - Use metal with a matte, non-reflective finish.
  - Install the roof to have low profile seams.
  - Finish roof edges in a similar fashion to those seen traditionally.

**TILE ROOFS**
- Use an original replacement material if possible.
- Use cement tiles when replacing clay tile roofs on larger buildings if clay is not available.
- If repairing specialty roof materials such as glazed clay tile or barrel tile, use a matching replacement material.

**ACCEPTABLE ROOF REPLACEMENT MATERIALS**
Materials that are the same as the original, or that appear similar in texture, pattern, finish and color range to the original are acceptable. These often include:

- Slate
- Tile
- Metal when consistent with the period and style of the building.
- Dimensional shingles (asphalt, fiberglass, cement fiber, wood)
- Built-up or membrane roof on gently sloping roofs (less than 3:12) where hidden from view
- Lead
- Copper
- Other materials original to the building

**UNACCEPTABLE ROOF REPLACEMENT MATERIALS**
Materials that do not appear similar to the original in texture, pattern, finish and color range to the original are unacceptable. These often include:

- Corrugated fiberglass
- Asphalt roll roofing (unless obscured by parapet walls)
- Built-up membrane roof on steep sloping roofs (greater than 3:12)
- Panel and batten
- Brightly colored metal
Doors and Doorways
Often one of the most important decorative features of a house, a
doorway reflects the age and style of a building. The character-defining
features of a historic door and its distinct materials and placement should
be preserved. When a new door is needed, it should be in character with
the building, especially when it is located on a primary wall. As such, the
style and type of door will be reviewed based on the style of the house.

5.14 Preserve the decorative and functional features of a primary door.
» Original doors and openings, including their dimensions, should be retained
along with any moldings, transoms or sidelights.
» Maintain the original position and proportions of a historically significant door.

5.15 Repair or replace a damaged historic door to maintain its general
historic appearance.
» Replacements should reflect the age and style of the building.
» Use materials that are visually comparable to that of the original.
» Do not use solid core or flush doors.

5.16 Use a screen door that is visually compatible with the period and
style of the building.
» Use wood screen doors that are backed with screening.
» Metal storm or metal screen doors should have an appearance similar to
painted wood (not unfinished metal).

ACCEPTABLE DOOR MATERIALS
Materials that are the same as the original, or that appear similar in tex-
ture and finish to the original are acceptable. These often include:
» Wood panel
» Wood panel with glass lights
» Leaded glass with lead came
» Metal with a painted finish
» Other materials original to the building

UNACCEPTABLE DOOR MATERIALS
Materials that do not appear similar to the original in texture and finish
are unacceptable. These often include:
» Unfinished Metal
» Fiberglass or synthetic
» Wood flush doors

Materials, colors, and details on a door or
doorway portray specific historical features
of a residence, and therefore should be
preserved.
Details and Ornamentation

Historic details and ornamentation are often character defining features of a building. They should be preserved.

5.17 Preserve historic stylistic and architectural details and ornamentation.

- Preserve storefronts, cornices, turned columns, brackets, exposed rafter tails, jigsaw ornaments and other key architectural features that are in good condition.
- Retain historic details and ornamentation intact.
- Retain and treat exterior stylistic features and examples of skilled craftsmanship with sensitivity.
- Repair historic details and ornamentation that are deteriorated.
- Employ preventive maintenance measures such as rust removal, caulking and repainting.
- Minimize damage to historic architectural details when repairs are necessary.
- Document the location of a historic feature that must be removed and repaired so it may be repositioned accurately.
- Patch, piece-in, splice, consolidate or otherwise upgrade deteriorated features using recognized preservation methods.
- Stabilize or fix isolated areas of damage using consolidants. Epoxies and resins may be considered for wood repair.
- Protect significant features that are adjacent to the area being worked on.

5.18 Use technical procedures for cleaning, refinishing and repairing an architectural detail that will maintain the original finish.

- Use the gentlest means possible that will achieve the desired results.
- Employ treatments such as rust removal, caulking, limited paint removal and reapplication of paint or stain where appropriate.

5.19 Where repair is impossible, replace details and ornamentation accurately.

- When replacing historic details, match the original in profile, dimension, and material.
- A substitute material may be considered if it appears similar in character and finish to the original. A measured drawing may be required in these instances to recreate missing historic details from photographs.
- Do not apply architectural details that were not part of the original structure. For example, decorative millwork should not be added to a building if it was not an original feature. Doing so would convey a false history.
CHAPTER 5: Design Guidelines Applicable to All Historic Districts

Design Review Guidelines for Mobile’s Historic Districts

Windows
The type, size, framing, and dividing lights of windows, as well as their location and configuration (rhythm), help establish the historic character of a building. Original window components should be retained to the extent possible. The character-defining features of a window should be preserved. Historic windows can be repaired through re-glazing and patching and splicing wood elements such as muntins, frame sill and casing. Repair and weatherization is generally more energy efficient and less expensive than replacement. Windows should be in character with the historic building.

For most contributing properties in historic districts, the windows that are on the front elevation and those on the sidewalls that are visible from the street will be the most important to preserve. Windows in other locations that have distinctive designs and that represent fine craftsmanship may also be important to preserve.

5.20 Preserve the functional historic and decorative features of a historic window.

» Where historic (wooden or metal) windows are intact and in repairable condition, retain and repair them to match the existing as per location, light configuration, detail and material.

» Preserve historic window features, including the frame, sash, muntins, mullions, glazing, sills, heads, jambs, moldings, operation, and groupings of windows.

» Repair, rather than replace, frames and sashes, wherever possible.

» For repair of window components, epoxies and related products may serve as effective solutions to material deterioration and operational malfunction.

5.21 When historic windows are not in a repairable condition, match the replacement window design to the original.

» In instances where there is a request to replace a building’s windows, the new windows shall match the existing as per location, framing, and light configuration.

» Use any salvageable window components on a primary elevation.

Staff Assistance
MHDC staff can provide applicants and/or contractors with literature that can guide them as to the repair of windows.

After-the-Fact Approvals
An alteration that is made without an approval may be required to be removed. Any after-the-fact approval, if it is granted, will be handled on a case-by-case basis. The replacement window used after the fact shall match the original window as per location, installation, framing, light configuration, and material.

Identify the architectural window patterns and styles of the historic home. When repairing, preserving, or replacing, it is critical to match the window features to display an accurate sense of history.

Preserve historic window features, including the frame, sash, muntins, mullions, glazing, sills, heads, jambs, moldings, operation, and groupings of windows.

Where historic windows are intact and in repairable condition, retain and repair them to match the existing context. This includes location, light configuration, detail, and material.
5.22 When a historic window is missing on a key character-defining wall, use a historically accurate replacement.

» Historically accurate light patterns shall be employed. Use photographic, physical, and/or documentary evidence for the design.
» A new window shall be installed in such a manner as to fit within the original window opening and match in depth and filling of the reveal. A reveal is the part of the side of a window opening that is between the outer surface of the wall and the window.
» A doubled-paned or clad wood window may be considered as a replacement alternative only if the replacement matches the configuration, dimensions, and profiles of original windows.
» For increased efficiency, storm windows can be installed. A storm window shall fit within the window reveal and avoid damaging window casings. Operable storm windows are encouraged.

ACCEPTABLE WINDOW MATERIALS
Materials that are the same as the original, or that appear similar in texture, profile and finish to the original are acceptable. These often include:

» Wood sash
» Steel, if original to structure
» Custom extruded aluminum
» Aluminum clad wood
» Windows approved by the National Park Service

UNACCEPTABLE WINDOW MATERIALS
Materials that do not appear similar to the original in texture, profile and finish are unacceptable. These often include:

» Vinyl
» Mill-finished aluminum
» Interior snap-in muntins (except when used in concert with exterior muntins and intervening dividers)

A new window shall be installed in such a manner as to fit within the original window opening and match in depth and filling of the reveal.
Shutters and Awnings
Shutters are integral, functional components of many historic buildings. They provide protection from heat and some protection from storms. Louvered or slatted shutters were placed on most window openings and door openings. The louvers were usually operable. Historic shutters should be preserved.

Awnings are appropriate for traditional locations such as over windows and doors or attached to porches. Historic awnings should be preserved or replaced if evidence suggests they existed previously.

SHUTTERS

5.23 Preserve and repair existing wood shutters.
» Do not remove original shutters. The shutters serve as accents, provide security and offer protection against the climate.

5.24 Replace shutters where they previously existed when possible.
» Replacement shutters should be visually compatible with those existing on the house.
» Size new shutters to precisely fit the window opening.
» Use operable shutters where feasible.
» Where shutters are fixed, use shutters that are hung on the window in a fashion that appears similar to operable shutters.
» An alternative material must match the appearance of historic shutters in texture, depth, and design.

ACCEPTABLE SHUTTER MATERIALS
Materials that are the same as the original, or that appear similar in texture, depth and design to the original are acceptable. These often include:

» Wood
» Synthetic or composite shutters (with similar character to that of a wood shutter)

UNACCEPTABLE SHUTTER MATERIALS
Materials that do not appear similar to the original in texture, depth and design are unacceptable. These often include:

» Lightweight plastic
AWNINGS
Awning styles and placement will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

5.25 Preserve and repair an original awning.

> Do not remove an original historic awning.

5.26 Use a material for an awning that is durable and weather resistant.

> Use canvas or a similar woven, fabric material.
> Use awning colors that blend with the colors of the structure.
> Use wood or metal slat awnings if there is evidence that this awning type was used historically.
> Do not use awning materials without proven durability or that have a gloss finish unless such materials are original to the building.

5.27 Install an awning to fit the opening.

> Use a shed type awning for a rectangular window or door opening.
> Use curved or rounded awning forms over arched windows to match the curve of the opening.
> Do not install a bubble or curved form awning on a rectangular opening.
> Do not install awnings that cover or conceal significant architectural details such as the window or hood molding.
> Do not install awnings so that they cover transom lights or decorative mill work.
> If a new awning is installed where the original building did not have an awning, install the awning in a reversible manner that will not negatively impact the structure and appearance of the building.

Awnings with a high degree of significance, such as marquees, should be repaired and maintained whenever possible.

Historic awnings should be repaired and restored when possible. The awning in this photograph has not been maintained.

Do not install a bubble or curved form awning on a rectangular opening, or use colors that are not compatible with the original structure.

Use a material for an awning that is durable and weather resistant.

Install an awning to fit the opening.
Storm Safety Features
In some cases it may be necessary or desirable to install storm safety features, such as hurricane shutters, storm windows or storm doors on a historic structure. Such features should be selected and installed to minimize visual impacts and damage to historic fabric. Often it will be most appropriate to install temporary features, such as removable storm screens, rather than relying on strategies that may require repeated, and damaging, installation, such as boarding windows with plywood. Impacts from storm safety features on the exteriors of historic structures should be minimized to the greatest extent possible.

STORM WINDOWS

5.28 Minimize the visual impact of storm windows on historic buildings.

- When feasible, place a storm window internally to avoid visual impacts. Interior storm windows do not require ARB approval.
- If a storm window is installed externally, use window inserts designed to match the original frame.
- Paint an existing storm window frame to match the historic window. If a storm window is aluminum, it should have a baked-on enamel color.

HURRICANE SHUTTERS

5.29 Minimize the visual impact of hurricane shutters on historic buildings.

- Place impact-resistant hurricane shutters so as not to be substantially visible from public areas.
- Place hurricane shutters on a visible façade if they conform to storm shutter guidelines in the previous section.
- Ensure that the scale, durability and finish of hurricane shutters are substantially similar to historic wooden shutters of the architectural style and/or time period of the building.
- Ensure that the shutters fit the size of the window opening.
- Consider installing impact-resistant window films that are transparent and not visible from the street.

STORM DOORS

5.30 Minimize the visual impact of a storm door on a historic building.

- Use a transparent storm door in order to retain visibility to a historic door.
- Do not use a storm door with an ornamental design, color, or material that conflicts with the character of the historic structure.
Additional Guidelines for Historic Buildings

This section addresses the addition of new technological features to the exteriors of historic structures, including communications equipment, rooftop appurtenances and security bars.

Communications Equipment and Rooftop Appurtenances

Communications equipment includes antennae, satellite dishes, telecommunications dishes, television antennae, and cell phone equipment. Most of this equipment has diminished significantly in size in recent years. Cell towers or other federally licensed activity that may impact a district must have a Certificate of Appropriateness as well as clearance from the Alabama Historical Commission. The visual impacts of this equipment should be minimized.

5.31 Minimize the visual impacts of communications equipment and mechanical equipment.

» Position communications equipment to be hidden or minimally visible from public streets (including both streets on corner lots).
» Remove communications equipment that is no longer functional.
» Combine multiple antennae into one array wherever possible. Install satellite and telecommunications dishes that are minimal in size.
» Do not damage exterior woodwork or trim detail during installation of communications equipment.
» Screen freestanding communications equipment from public view.

Security Bars

It may sometimes be necessary to provide a security device on a building. It shall be designed to be as inconspicuous as possible, and must not alter significant architectural features of the building. The use of interior, operable, and transparent devices is preferred.

5.32 Minimize the visual impact of security bars and devices.

» Locate a security device inside the structure if at all possible.
» Decorative security bars are allowed when they compliment the architectural style.
» Security bars and devices are discouraged on upper floors.

5.33 Do not damage the character of the historic building when installing security bars or devices.

» Do not damage or obscure a significant architectural feature of a historic building.
» Installation should be reversible. Once removed, a historic building must remain intact and the integrity of historic materials shall not be compromised.
CHAPTER 6: RESIDENTIAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

Mobile includes a diverse range of historic residential properties and districts. The traditional character-defining features of historic buildings and districts should be preserved. It is also important for new additions to historic residential structures, work on non-contributing structures and new construction in historic residential districts to reinforce Mobile’s preservation objectives. All the guidelines in this chapter are intended to prevent material impairment to individual historic resources and districts.

This chapter builds on the general preservation standards presented in Chapter 5, with specific design guidelines for the following projects:

- **Contributing Structures.** Rehabilitation and alteration of locally-designated individual historic residential landmarks and contributing residential structures in locally-designated historic districts, including houses and multi-family buildings.
- **Additions to Contributing Structures.** Additions to contributing residential structures in locally-designated historic districts.
- **Non-Contributing Structures.** Rehabilitation, alteration and additions to non-contributing residential structures in locally-designated historic districts.
- **New Residential Construction.** New residential infill projects in locally-designated historic districts.

The guidelines in this chapter are in addition to those presented in Chapter 5 and will apply to all projects related to residential structures. Please consult MHDC staff regarding any questions or clarifications associated with this chapter.
Historic Residential Buildings
This section includes design guidelines for preservation, repairs, replacements and alterations related to historic residential structures in Mobile’s locally-designated historic districts.

Traditional House Features
Big or little, fancy or plain, buildings in the older neighborhoods share many of the same basic features. The repetition of these features also contributes to the pattern of the neighborhoods.

A great variety of building types and styles appear in the older neighborhoods in Mobile. It is this variety that gives the city its remarkable architectural richness. Individually, each of these buildings contributes to the street; collectively, they give a unique character to the city.
Building Elements and Materials
This section provides guidelines for work on historic structures in locally-designated historic districts.

Roofs
Roof shape and materials are key character-defining features of a historic roof. Many roofs on older residential buildings have one of the following shapes: gable, hipped, pyramidal or a combination of a gable and hipped roof. Typical 19th and early 20th century roofing materials were slate, metal, wood shingles, asbestos tiles or composition materials. Flat roofs are also typical in Mid-century residential buildings.

When replacing a roof on a residential structure, select a material and a pattern that is historically appropriate to the house. If documentation of the original roof exists or an early roof on the house, use a comparable roofing material, similar in size, shape, texture and color. If documentation is not available, precedents on similar buildings may be considered. Look at the roofing on building types similar to the subject structure. See Chapter 5 for additional guidelines related to historic roofs.

6.1 Preserve the original roof form of a historic residential structure.

» Preserve the angle of a historic roof.
» Maintain and repair the original size and shape of a dormer.
» When possible, locate a new dormer so it is not visible from the street.
» When possible, locate a skylight, vent or attic ventilator so it is not visible from the street.
» Avoid a new roofing system that permanently damages or alters an existing roof.

Preserve the original roof form of a historic residential structure.
Garage Doors

This section provides guidelines for residential garage doors on historic ancillary buildings. The primary concern is for those garage doors that are visible from the street. See Chapter 5 for guidelines related to historic doors and doorways. Note that most historic garage doors are no longer in place.

### 6.2 Preserve, maintain and repair a historically significant garage door.

- Paint a wooden garage door to help maintain its condition.

### 6.3 If a garage door requires replacement, use a door that appears similar to an original wood one, to match the historic architectural style where possible.

- Design a garage door to be simple and compatible with the primary building.
- If a wood garage door is infeasible, choose a door with a look and finish that is appropriate to the style of the house.
Porches
Porches and galleries are important elements of traditional Mobile residential architecture. They frame and protect primary entrances. They also display a concentration of decorative details. In many neighborhoods, they continue to serve as outdoor living rooms.

Preserving a front porch is a high priority. A rear or side porch also may be important to preserve, especially for a building located on a corner lot, and their preservation is encouraged.

6.4 Preserve an original porch or gallery on a house.

» Maintain the height and pitch of a porch roof.
» Do not enclose a front porch if feasible.
» If a porch is to be screened, do so in a manner that preserves the existing porch elements and does not damage them.
» Where a rear or side porch is enclosed, preserve the original configuration of columns, handrails and other important architectural features.

6.5 Repair a porch in a way that maintains the original character.

6.6 If replacement is required, design it to reflect the time period of the historic structure.

» Replace a historic porch element to match the original.
» Use replacement materials and elements that are appropriate to the style, texture, finish, composition and proportion of the historic structure.
» Where an original porch is missing entirely, base a replacement porch on physical or photographic evidence. If no evidence exists, draw from similar structures in the neighborhood.
» Match the balustrade of a historic porch to the design and materials of the porch.
» When reconstructing a porch, pay particular attention to matching the handrails, lower rails, balusters, decking, posts/columns, proportions and decorative details.
» Do not completely replace an entire porch or element unless absolutely necessary. Only replace the element or portion of an element that requires replacement.
» Do not use cast-iron columns or railing where no evidence exists that these elements were used historically.
» Do not use a brick base for a wood column (exception is Craftsman styles).
» Do not use a railing that is too elaborate for the building (of a different style).
» Do not relocate an original front stairway or steps.

Piers, Foundations and Foundation Infill

Replace a historic porch element to match the original.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repairing Porch Railings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avoid removing original materials that are in good condition or that can be repaired in place.</td>
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</table>

Before: A deteriorated railing should be repaired when feasible.

After: Railing has been repaired and the base of the post has been replaced in-kind.

Consider restoring a porch or stoop to its original condition. For example, this porch was not originally enclosed and could be re-opened.
A building’s base, or foundation, gives the building a sense of strength and solidity, and visually ties the structure to the ground. Traditionally, residential buildings in Mobile were raised on piers. Occasionally, certain early styles and mid-twentieth century styles used continuous masonry foundations. The historic character of these features should be preserved.

6.7 Preserve the original piers, foundations, and foundation infill wherever possible.

» Retain original materials where possible.
» Place plantings far enough from the home to avoid future maintenance problems.

6.8 Repair and, when necessary, replace piers, foundations and foundation infill to reflect historic character.

» Maintain the original rhythm of a foundation.
» Do not secure lattice to the face of the building.
» If used, hang lattice below the skirts board or siding between piers and frame with trim.
» Recess foundation screening from the front of the foundation piers.
» Use a construction that results in screening that respects the historic character of the building.

ACCEPTABLE REPLACEMENT MATERIALS
Materials that are the same as the original, or that appear similar in character are acceptable. These often include:

» Stucco piers or infill
» Brick piers or infill
» Stuccoed concrete block
» Wood lattice or vertical picket infill
» Vinyl (if appropriately cased)

UNACCEPTABLE REPLACEMENT MATERIALS
Materials that do not appear similar to the original in character are unacceptable. These often include:

» Metal infill
» Plywood panels
» Mineral board panels
» Plastic or vinyl sheeting
» Unfinished concrete block
» Imitation brick or stone
Historic Residential Buildings: Additions

This section presents design guidelines for the construction of additions to locally designated historic residential structures. The Architectural Review Board recognizes that for buildings to remain useful, additions are sometimes necessary. Any addition to a historic residential landmark and to a contributing residential structures in a locally designated historic district should be compatible with the existing structure and surrounding context.

Note that treatment of an existing addition that has achieved historic significance in its own right should follow the guidelines above and the guidelines presented in Chapter 5.

General Guidelines

The size of a building is determined by its dimensions—height, width, and depth—which also dictate the building’s square footage. Building mass is established by the arrangement and proportion of its basic geometric components—the main building, wings and porches, the roof and the foundation. Similarity of massing helps create a rhythm along a street, which is one of the appealing aspects of historic districts. Scale refers to a building’s size in relationship to other buildings—large, medium, or small. To preserve the continuity of a historic district, additions to existing buildings should be in scale with the original building as well as adjacent properties.

- Design an addition so there is the least possible loss of historic fabric and so the character-defining features of the historic building are not destroyed, damaged or obscured.
- Design an addition so that the overall characteristics of the site (site topography, character-defining site features, trees, and significant district vistas and public views) are retained.
- Wherever possible, construct an addition in such a manner that, if the addition were to be removed, the essential form and integrity of the historic structure would be unimpaired.
- Design an addition to be compatible with the color, material and character of the property, neighborhood and environment.
- Design the building components (roof, foundation, doors and windows) of the addition to be compatible with the historic architecture.
- Maintain the relationship of solids to voids (windows and doors) in an exterior wall as is established by the historic building.
- Differentiate an addition from a historic structure using changes in material, color and/or wall plane. Alternative materials, such as cement fiberboard, are allowed when the addition is properly differentiated from the original structure.
- If the style of an addition is different than the original, use a style that is compatible with the historic context.
Building Placement and Orientation
This section addresses the placement and orientation of an addition relative to the existing historic structure and its site. An addition should be located in a manner that minimally impacts the existing historic structure.

6.9 Place an addition so that it is subordinate to the historic residential structure.
» Place and design an addition to the rear or side of the historic building wherever possible.
» Place a vertical addition in the rear so it is not visible from the street.

Massing and Scale
This section addresses the massing and scale of additions relative to the existing historic structure. The massing and scale of additions should minimize visual impacts to the historic structure and remain subordinate to the original structure.

6.10 Design an addition to be compatible in massing and scale with the original historic structure.
» Design the massing of an addition to appear subordinate to the historic building.
» Where feasible, use a lower-scale connecting element to join an addition to a historic structure.
» Where possible, match the foundation and floor heights of an addition to those of the historic building.
Locating and Designing an Addition to a Historic Structure

An addition to a locally-designated individual historic residential landmark or contributing residential structure in a locally-designated historic district should be clearly differentiated from the original structure and be subordinately scaled as illustrated below.

Original Structure

The one-and-a-half story bungalow illustrated at the right is a contributing structure in a locally-designated historic district.

One-Story Attached Addition

The one-story addition illustrated at the right is appropriate because it is clearly differentiated from the original structure with a change in roof plane and is nearly invisible from the street.

One-and-a-Half Story Addition with Connector

The one-and-a-half story addition illustrated at right is appropriate because it is set back and clearly differentiated from the original structure with a connector.

“Camelback” Style Roof-Top Addition

The roof-top addition illustrated at right is appropriate because it is substantially set back from the street.

Inappropriate Two-Story Roof-Top Addition

The roof-top addition illustrated at right is inappropriate because it substantially alters the primary façade of the historic structure.
Building Elements and Materials
This section addresses building elements and materials on an addition to an existing historic residential structure. Building elements and materials on an addition should be compatible with, yet visually differentiated from, the existing historic residential structure.

Exterior Building Walls
The exterior building walls of a new addition should be designed to be compatible with the original historic structure. Exterior building walls of a new addition should be clearly differentiated from the original structure.

6.11 Design the exterior walls of an addition to be compatible in scale and rhythm with the original historic structure.

» Design the height of an addition to be proportionate with the historic building, paying particular attention to the foundation and other horizontal elements.
» Design the addition to express floor heights on the exterior of the addition in a fashion that reflects floor heights of the original historic building.

6.12 Clearly differentiate the exterior walls of an addition from the original historic structure.

» Use a physical break or setback from the original exterior wall to visually separate the old from new.
» Use an alteration in the roofline to create a visual break between the original and new, but ensure that the pitches generally match.

Exterior Materials and Finishes
Exterior materials of additions should be compatible with the exterior materials existing on the historic structure in size, composition and arrangement.

6.13 Use exterior materials and finishes that are comparable to those of the original historic residential structure in profile, dimension, and composition. Modern building materials will be evaluated for appropriateness or compatibility with the original historic structure on an individual basis, with the objective of ensuring the materials are similar in their profile, dimension, and composition to those of the original historic structure.

» Utilize an alternative material for siding as necessary, such as cement-based fiber board, provided that it matches the siding of the historic building in profile, character and finish.
» Use a material with proven durability.
» Use a material with a similar appearance in profile, texture and composition to those on the original building.
» Choose a color and finish that matches or blends with those of the historic building.
» Do not use a material with a composition that will impair the structural integrity and visual character of the building.
» Do not use a faux stucco application.
Roofs

The roof of a new addition should be compatible with the existing historic building. The roof of a new addition should also promote the addition as subordinate in comparison to the historic building.

6.14 Design a roof of an addition to be compatible with the existing historic building.

» Design a roof shape, pitch, material and level of complexity to be similar to those of the existing historic building.
» Incorporate overhanging exposed rafters, soffits, cornices, fascias, frieze boards, moldings or other elements into an addition that are generally similar to those of the historic building.
» Use a roofing material for an addition that matches or is compatible with the original historic building and the district.

6.15 Design roofs such that the addition remains subordinate to the existing historic buildings in the district.

» Where possible, locate a dormer or skylight on a new addition in an inconspicuous location.
» In most cases, match a roof and window on a dormer to those of the original building.

Design the roof pitch on an addition to be similar to those of the existing historic building. The addition shown here on the right side of the building inappropriately employs a flat roof while the roof features of the historic building are pitched.

The roof form of the second story addition in the back matches the slope of the primary roof form.

Design a rooftop addition to minimize impacts on the residential structure and context of the historic district. The rooftop addition illustrated above is incompatible because it overwhelms the original structure and has a high visual impact.
Doors and Doorways
The number and placement of doors can impact the compatibility of an addition with the existing historic building. A door for additions should be designed to be compatible with the existing building.

6.16 Design doors and doorways to an addition to be compatible with the existing historic building.

» If a historic door is removed to accommodate the addition, consider reusing it on the addition.
» Design a door and doorway to be compatible with the historic building.
» Use a door material that is compatible with those of the historic building and the district.
» Use a material with a dimensionality (thickness) and appearance similar to doors on the original historic building.
» Design the scale of a doorway on an addition to be in keeping with the overall mass, scale and design of the addition as a whole.

Design doors and doorways to an addition to be compatible with the existing historic building. As shown on the rear addition in the photo above.
Porch Additions
This section provides guidelines for adding a porch in a new location to an existing historic residential structure. Porches may be appropriate to add at certain locations. A new porch addition should remain subordinate to any original historic porches. In general, a new porch is best located to the side or rear.

6.17 Design and place a new porch to maintain the visibility to and integrity of an original historic porch, as well as the overall historic building.

» Do not expand an original historic front porch. Additions of new front porches or expansion of existing front porches are generally not appropriate.
» Limit the height of a porch addition roofline so it does not interfere with second story elevations.
» Replace a rear porch where a previously existing rear porch is lost or enclosed.
» Design a rear porch so that its height and slopes are compatible with the original historic structure.

6.18 Design a new porch to be compatible with the existing historic building.

» Design the scale, proportion and character of a porch addition element, including columns, corner brackets, railings and pickets, to be compatible with the existing historic residential structure.
» Match the foundation height of a porch addition to that of the existing historic structure.
» Design a porch addition roofline to be compatible with the existing historic structure. However, a porch addition roofline need not match exactly that of the existing historic building. For example, a porch addition may have a shed roof.
» Use materials for a porch addition that are appropriate to the building.
» Do not use a contemporary deck railing for a porch addition placed at a location visible from the public street.
» Do not use cast concrete steps on façades or primary elevations.

Design and place a new porch to maintain the visibility to and integrity of an original historic porch, as well as the overall historic building.
Design a new porch to be compatible with the existing historic building.
When there is no evidence that a front porch existed, consider adding a sensitive and appropriately scaled patio as an outdoor seating area.
Use materials for a porch addition that are appropriate to the building.
Piers, Foundations and Foundation Infill
This section provides guidelines for foundations on new additions to historic buildings. The foundation, the platform on which a building rests, is a structural and massing component of a building. In most historic residential areas, buildings are usually elevated above a crawl space on a pier foundation. Diminished foundation proportions have a negative impact on massing and visual character. Piers, foundations and foundation infill associated with a new addition should be designed to blend with these elements on the existing historic structure.

6.19 Design piers, foundations and foundation infill on a new addition to be compatible with those on the historic building.

» Match the foundation of an addition to that of the original.
» Use a material that is similar to that of the historic foundation.
» Match foundation height to that of the original historic building.
» Use pier foundations if feasible and if consistent with the original building.
» Do not use raw concrete block or wood posts on a foundation.

Details and Ornamentation
Historic details and ornamentation are often character-defining features of a building. Details and ornamentation on a new addition should be compatible with the details and ornamentation on the existing historic structure.

6.20 Use details that are similar in character to those on the historic structure.

» Match a detail on an addition to match the original historic structure in profile, dimension and material.
» Use ornamentation on an addition that is less elaborate than that on the original structure.
» Use a material for details on an addition that match those of the original in quality and feel.
» Match the proportions of details on an addition to match the proportions used on the original historic structure.
Windows
A window in a new addition should be compatible with the size, placement and rhythm of those on the historic building.

6.21 Design a window on an addition to be compatible with the original historic building.

- Size, place and space a window for an addition to be in character with the original historic building.
- If an aluminum window is used, use dimensions that are similar to the original windows of the house. An extruded custom aluminum window approved by the NPS or an aluminum clad wood window may be used, provided it has a profile, dimension and durability similar to a window in the historic building.

Shutters and Awnings
This section provides guidelines for shutters and awnings on additions to historic residential structures. Shutters and awnings should be compatible with the existing historic building.

6.22 Choose shutters for additions that are compatible with those on the existing historic building.

- Match a shutter on an addition to those on the original historic building.
- Use an operable shutter wherever possible.
- If a shutter is fixed, place it on a window casing in a manner to replicate an operable shutter.
- Use a decorative shutter only if they are used on the original historic building.

6.23 Choose an awning that is compatible with the original historic building, the addition and the neighborhood.

- Fabric awnings are appropriate.

Storm Safety Features
This section provides design guidelines for storm safety features on additions to historic residential buildings.

6.24 Minimize the visual impacts of a storm safety feature on an addition.

- Choose and install a storm window to be as unobtrusive as possible to the window.

ACCEPTABLE STORM SAFETY FEATURE MATERIALS FOR AN ADDITION
Materials that are compatible with the original structure and the district in finish and texture are acceptable. These often include:

- Aluminum (with finish to match sash color)
- Wood
- Vinyl
- Metal with baked enamel or anodized of appropriate color

UNACCEPTABLE STORM SAFETY FEATURE MATERIALS FOR AN ADDITION
Materials that are not compatible with the original structure and district in finish and texture are unacceptable. These often include:

- Mill finish aluminum
Non-historic Residential Buildings
This section provides guidelines for rehabilitation, alteration and additions to non-historic (non-contributing) residential buildings in locally-designated historic districts. Preserving the integrity of a non-contributor is not a consideration. Instead, compatibility with the character of the district is the focus, as it is with a new building in a historic district. Where there is a question about materials or compatibility that is not covered below, refer to the previous section on additions for historic buildings for guidance.

General Guidelines
This section provides general design guidelines for changes to non-historic buildings within a locally-designated historic district. Changes to non-historic residential buildings should maintain the integrity of the context and district.

» Design an addition to a non-historic building to be compatible in mass and materials with surrounding properties and the district.
» Retain an overall proportion of building mass to open space that is not significantly different than that of the surrounding historic neighborhood.
» Design an alteration or addition that retains a size and scale that is similar to nearby historic buildings.

Placement and Orientation
This section provides design guidelines for changes to non-historic buildings related to placement and orientation. The design of additions and alterations to a non-historic structure should result in building orientation and placement that respects the character of a historic district.

6.25 Design additions and alterations to non-historic structures to be compatible with the placement, massing and scale of surrounding historic structures.

» Design an addition to respect the original orientation of the building and maintain the typical orientation of adjacent historic buildings.
» Design an addition to a non-historic building to preserve setback distances and spacing between buildings to maintain setbacks and spacing typical of surrounding historic structures.

Massing and Scale
This section provides design guidelines for changes to non-historic buildings related to massing and scale. The design of additions and alterations to a non-historic structure should result in an overall massing and scale that respects the character of the historic district.

6.26 Design alterations and additions to non-historic structures to be compatible in massing and scale with surrounding historic structures.

» Design the massing of an addition to be consistent with the massing of historic structures in the district.
» Design a roofline, bay, porch or other element associated with an addition to a non-historic building to be in keeping with the scale of surrounding historic structures.
Building Elements
New elements and materials associated with alterations and additions to non-historic structures should generally blend with those of the existing building. Changes should also respect the character of the historic district.

Exterior Building Walls
Exterior building walls are highly visible and therefore can have a strong influence on the overall character of a historic district. The visual impact of an alteration to exterior building wall of a non-historic structure on the character of the overall district should be minimized.

6.27 Design exterior building walls associated with additions and alterations to non-historic structures to respect the character of the historic district.

- Design a cornice line, foundation line, window and door height, and floor and ceiling height of an addition to a non-historic building to be similar to those of the original building provided these elements on the original building blend harmoniously with the historic district.
- Use the alteration or addition to a non-historic building to improve the overall structure’s appropriateness within the historic district.

Exterior Materials and Finishes
This section provides guidelines for exterior materials and finishes of alterations or additions to non-historic residential structures in locally-designated historic districts.

6.28 Design exterior materials and finishes associated with additions and alterations to non-historic structures to be compatible with the historic district.

- Use materials with a character compatible to those used historically and with proven durability.
- Maintain original material wherever possible provided the material is durable and compatible with the surrounding historic district.
Roofs
This section provides guidelines for roofs related to alterations or additions to non-historic residential structures in locally-designated historic districts.

6.29 Design replacement roofs and roofs of additions to be compatible with the district.

» Use a roof material that is in keeping with the historic district.

Porches
This section provides guidelines for porches related to alterations or additions to non-historic residential structures in locally-designated historic districts. Porches are found on most historic residences throughout historic districts in Mobile.

6.30 Design a new porch or an alteration to an existing porch to respect the character of the district.

» Locate and orient a new porch on a non-historic residential building similarly to those seen in the district.
» Size a front porch element to be at a similar proportion to the original structure as those seen in the district.
Piers, Foundations and Foundation Infill
This section provides guidelines for piers, foundations and foundation infill related to alterations or additions to non-historic residential structures in locally-designated historic districts. These features should be compatible with surrounding structures and the district.

6.31 Design a foundation to be consistent with those in the district and use a durable foundation material on all sides of a building.

Details and Ornamentation
This section provides guidelines for details and ornamentation related to alterations or additions to non-historic residential structures in locally-designated historic districts. Details and ornamentation should not adversely impact the surrounding structures or the district.

6.32 Design details and ornamentation to minimize impacts to the historic district.

» Design details and ornamentation at a scale that is consistent with details and ornamentation on historic buildings in the district.

Windows
This section provides guidelines for windows related to alterations or additions to non-historic residential structures in locally-designated historic districts. The number and placement of windows is usually a major design element for residential structures, including additions. Windows should also be compatible with the neighborhood.

6.33 Design window alterations and windows on new additions to non-historic structures to be compatible with the neighborhood.

» Use a material and window type that is similar to those seen historically in the neighborhood. Tempered glass will be considered when required by the Mobile Code of Ordinances.
New Residential Construction
This section presents design guidelines for the construction of new residential structures in locally-designated historic districts. These guidelines relate to the fundamental relationships of a building to its context, such as mass, scale and form.

Designing a building to fit within the historic character of a neighborhood requires careful thought. Preservation in a historic district context does not mean that the area must be “frozen” in time, but it does mean that, when new building occurs, it should reinforce the basic visual characteristics of the district. This does not imply, however, that a new building must look old. In fact, imitating historic styles is generally discouraged.

General Guidelines
New designs should relate to the fundamental characteristics of the historic houses on a block while also conveying the stylistic trends of today. It may do so by drawing upon the basic elements of a building that make up a part of the character of the property. Such features include 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. When these design variables are arranged in a new building to be similar to those seen traditionally, visual compatibility results.

These basic design relationships are more fundamental than the details of individual architectural styles and, therefore, it is possible to be compatible with the historic context while also producing a design that is contemporary. The two guidelines below are:

» Maintain alignment of front setbacks.
» Maintain the rhythm of buildings and side yards.

The sections below discuss considerations for new residential construction in historic districts in greater detail.
Contemporary Design
As discussed in Chapter 4, contemporary design is encouraged, but not required, by the Architectural Review Board provided it is compatible with the historic district. The Architectural Review Board will pay particular attention to mass, scale, siting and overall design, but all elements will be considered. The design professional or owner must demonstrate that a contemporary structure will not materially impact the historic integrity of the surrounding district. In some cases, a model may be required to exhibit compatibility.

Compatibility
New residential construction should be compatible with adjacent historic buildings in scale, massing, materials, color and overall design. Elements of compatibility include siting, orientation, spacing, landscaping and distance among adjacent buildings. A successful compatible design will also consider the distinctive architectural character of the street, the neighborhood and the district. A new structure will also demonstrate compatibility with the district based on the similarity of the ratio of landscaping to hard surfaces for portions of a site visible from the public right-of-way.

Differentiation
New construction should respect the historic character of the neighborhood through the considerations described above. Replication of a historic building is generally not appropriate, but will be considered.

Preservation
In most cases, new construction is being placed on a vacant lot within a historic district. While the lot may be vacant in that it does not currently have any structures, the site alone may retain historic character. The historic character of a site itself should be considered for new construction projects. New residential structures should retain the overall historic character of the site, site topography, site features, trees and significant district vistas and views.
CHAPTER 6: Residential Design Guidelines

Design Review Guidelines for Mobile’s Historic Districts

Building Placement and Orientation

Where and how a new residential structure is sited on a vacant lot plays a significant role in its being compatible with the historic neighborhood. The two primary components of siting that should be considered are setbacks and spacing. Setbacks refer to the distance between the street and a building. Spacing refers to the distance between the building and property lines and the building and adjacent structures. Setbacks and spacing associated with new construction should be consistent with setbacks and spacing of adjacent historic structures.

6.34 Maintain the visual line created by the fronts of buildings along a street.

» Where front yard setbacks are uniform, place a new structure in general alignment with its neighbors.
» Where front yard setbacks vary, place a new structure within the established range of front yard setbacks on a block.

6.35 Maintain the side yard spacing pattern on the block.

» Locate a structure to preserve the side yard spacing pattern on the block as seen from the street.
» Provide sufficient side setbacks for property maintenance.
» Provide sufficient side setbacks to allow needed parking to occur behind the front wall of the house.

Appropriate Front Yard Setbacks

The placement of a new structure should be compatible with the pattern of front yard setbacks along the block as illustrated below. New structures are shown in the diagram in yellow.

Consistent Setback Context

On some blocks, front facades are in general alignment, and front yards have consistent depths. In this context, a new structure should be built at the same front yard setback as the existing structures on the block as illustrated at the right.

Varied Setback Context

On some blocks, the historic front yard setback pattern is varied, and additional flexibility is appropriate in the placement of a new structure. In this context, a new structure should be built within the established range of front yard setbacks on the block as illustrated at the right.
Massing and Scale
Mass is established by the arrangement and proportion of a building’s basic geometric components. These include the main building, wings and porches, roof and foundation. A building’s form or shape can be simple or complex. The main body of a building may be one or more stories. Secondary elements, usually porches or wings, extend from the main building. These elements create the massing of a building.

Scale refers to a building’s size in relationship to other buildings. The size of a building is determined by its dimensions, including height, width and depth, which also dictate the building’s square footage. Door and window heights and the cornice reflect interior floor and ceiling heights on the exterior of a building and should be proportional to the building. New residential construction should be compatible with adjacent historic buildings in mass, scale and relationship of solids to voids in the exterior walls. The mass and scale of new residential structures should relate to nearby historic buildings so the older buildings are not visually diminished or overpowered, nor should they be too small so as to look out of place.

6.36 Design the massing of new construction to appear similar to that of historic buildings in the district.

» Choose the massing and shape of the new structure to maintain a rhythm of massing along the street.
» Match the proportions of the front elevations of a new structure with those in the surrounding district.

6.37 Design the scale of new construction to appear similar to that of historic buildings in the district.

» Use a building height in front that is compatible with adjacent contributing properties.
» Size foundation and floor heights to appear similar to those of nearby historic buildings
» Match the scale of a porch to the main building and reflect the scale of porches of nearby historic buildings.
### Appropriate Residential Massing

While it may be larger than a traditional residential structure in the surrounding context, a new residential structure in a locally-designated historic district should appear to be similar in mass and scale to those seen historically on the block as illustrated below.

### New Structure Broken Into Modules

Although it is larger than existing structures on the block, the new residential structure illustrated at the right is broken down into modules that are similar in size to traditional buildings in the surrounding context. The two-story portion of the structure has also been set back from the street to help preserve the traditional one-story appearance of the block face.

### New Structure Inappropriately Scaled

The new structure illustrated at the right does not appear to be in scale with traditional buildings in the surrounding context. The new structure’s two-story front facade and long side walls loom over the streetscape and adjacent, smaller scale structures.
Building Elements and Materials
This section provides guidelines for building elements and materials for new construction in locally-designated historic districts.

Exterior Building Walls
Facade or exterior building wall elements such as decoration, porches, entrances and windows make up the “face” of a building. Though the front is the most important aspect of a building, every effort should be made to make all exterior building walls on new construction compatible with the surrounding historic buildings.

6.38 Design exterior building walls to reflect traditional development patterns of nearby historic buildings.

» Use a ratio of solid to void that is similar in proportion to those of nearby historic buildings.
» Reflect the rhythm of windows and doors in a similar fashion on all exterior building walls. The ARB will consider all building walls; however, building walls facing streets may face increased scrutiny.
» Use steps and balustrades in a similar fashion as nearby historic structures.
» Design building elements on exterior building walls to be compatible with those on nearby historic buildings. These elements include, but are not limited to:
  • Balconies
  • Chimneys
  • Dormers
Exterior Materials and Finishes
Exterior materials and finishes have a significant impact on the appearance of a building. It is possible for new construction to use new exterior materials and finishes and still fit appropriately within the historic district. These exterior materials and finishes should be compatible with the historic district.

6.39 Use exterior materials and finishes that complement the character of the surrounding district.

» Use material, ornamentation or a color scheme that blends with the historic district rather than making the building stand out.
» If an alternative material is used that represents an evolution of a traditional material, suggest the finish of the original historic material from which it evolved.
» Use a material with proven durability in the Mobile climate and that is similar in scale, character and finish to those used on nearby historic buildings.

ACCEPTABLE MATERIALS
Materials that are compatible in character, scale and finish to those used on nearby historic buildings are acceptable. These often include:

» Stucco
» Brick
» Stone
» Wood (lap siding, shingles, board and batten)
» Concrete siding
» Cement fiber board siding
» Skim stucco coat

UNACCEPTABLE MATERIALS
Materials that are incompatible in character, scale and finish to those used on nearby historic buildings are unacceptable. These often include:

» Metal siding
» Vinyl siding
» Unfinished concrete block
» Plywood
» Masonite
» Vinyl coatings
» Ceramic coatings
» Exterior insulation and finishing system (EIFS) wall systems
Roofs
A building’s roof contributes significantly to the character of a building and the surrounding area. The treatment of fascia, soffit and eaves are integral components of roof design that should be considered. Roofs on new construction should be designed to be similar to and compatible with those on adjacent historic buildings.

6.40 Design a roof on new construction to be compatible with those on adjacent historic buildings.

» Design the roof shape, height, pitch and overall complexity to be similar to those on nearby historic buildings.
» Use materials that appear similar in character, scale, texture and color range to those on nearby historic buildings.
» New materials that have proven durability may be used.

ACCEPTABLE ROOF MATERIALS
Materials that are similar in character, scale, texture and color range to those used on nearby historic buildings are acceptable. These often include:

» Asphalt dimensional or multi-tab shingles
» Wood shake or shingle
» Standing seam metal
» Metal shingles
» S-V crimp metal
» Clay tile
» Imitation clay tile or slate
Doors and Doorways

Entrances can be composed of several elements, including the door, transom, sidelights and moldings. Doors and doorways help to establish the character of a building and compatibility with the surrounding district. While the front walls of buildings are prioritized, doors and doorways on side and rear elevations should also be considered since they can impact the visual character of a neighborhood. Doors factor into the solid-to-void ratio of a wall, so the size and scale of doors should be considered. Doors and doorways should be designed and placed in a fashion compatible with the neighborhood.

6.41 Design a new door and doorway on new construction to be compatible with the historic district.

» Place and size a door to establish a solid-to-void ratio similar to that of nearby historic buildings.
» Place a door in a fashion that contributes to the traditional rhythm of the district as seen in nearby historic buildings.
» Incorporate a door casement and trim similar to those seen on nearby historic buildings.
» Place and size a special feature, including a transom, sidelight or decorative framing element, to complement those seen in nearby historic buildings.
» Use a door material that blends well with surrounding historic buildings. Wood is preferred. Paneled doors with or without glass are generally appropriate.
Porches
The porch is an important characteristic of Mobile residential architecture. It often contributes to a visual cadence along the street and may be important to include to ensure consistency with the historic district. Porches on new construction should be designed to be compatible with the neighborhood.

6.42 Design a porch to be compatible with the neighborhood.

» Include a front porch as part of new construction if it is contextual and feasible.
» When designing a porch, consider porch location, proportion, rhythm, roof form, supports, steps, balustrades and ornamentation relative to the main building and porches in the district.
» Design the elements of a porch to be at a scale proportional to the main building.
» Where a rhythm of porches exists on a street or block, design a porch that continues this historic rhythm.
» Design a rear or side porch that is visible from the public right-of-way to be subordinate in character to the front porch.

Appropriate Porch Proportions
A new residential structure should incorporate a properly-proportioned front porch.

Properly Proportioned Porch
As illustrated at the right, a front porch should be properly proportioned to the building style.

Improperly Proportioned Porch
As illustrated at the right, oversized or undersized porches that are not properly proportioned to the building style are not appropriate.
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Piers, Foundations and Foundation Infill
The foundation, the platform upon which a building rests, is a massing component of a building. As discussed above, the height of the new structure’s foundation shall be compatible with those of nearby historic buildings.

6.43 Design piers, a foundation and foundation infill to be compatible with those of nearby historic properties.

» Use raised, pier foundations.
» If raised foundations are not feasible, use a simulated raised foundation.
» Do not use slab-on-grade construction. This is not appropriate for Mobile’s historic neighborhoods. If a raised slab is required, use water tables, exaggerated bases, faux piers or other methods to simulate a raised foundation.
» Do not use raw concrete block or exposed slabs.
» If foundation infill must be used, ensure that it is compatible with the neighborhood.
» If solid infill is used, recess it and screen it with landscaping.
» If lattice is used, hang it below the floor framing and between the piers. Finish it with trim.
» Do not secure lattice to the face of the building or foundation.
» Do not use landscaping to disguise inappropriate foundation design.

ACCEPTABLE FOUNDATION MATERIALS
Materials that are similar in character, texture and durability to those used on nearby historic buildings are acceptable. These often include:

» Brick piers
» Brick infill
» Wood (vertical pickets)
» Framed lattice infill

UNACCEPTABLE FOUNDATION MATERIALS
Materials that are not similar in character, texture and durability to those used on nearby historic buildings are unacceptable. These often include:

» Mineral board panels
» Concrete block infill
» Metal infill
» Plywood panel infill
» Plastic sheeting infill
» Vinyl sheeting infill

Details and Ornamentation
This section provides guidelines for details and ornamentation on new construction in locally-designated historic districts. Decorative details, such as brackets, spindles and moldings, help define the style of a building. In new construction, decoration can be used to integrate with the neighborhood.

6.44 Use details and ornamentation that help new construction integrate with the historic buildings in the district.

» Use a decorative detail in a manner similar to those on nearby historic buildings. A modern interpretation of a historic detail or decoration is encouraged.
» Do not use a decorative detail that overpowers or negatively impacts nearby historic buildings.
Windows
This section provides guidelines for windows on new construction in locally-designated historic districts. The type, size and dividing lights of windows and their design, location and configuration help establish the character of a building and compatibility with adjacent structures. The number and proportion of openings (windows and entrances) on building walls factor into the solid-to-void ratio. Historically, windows made up one-third to one-half of the face of a building. Windows should be placed and designed to be compatible with the windows on historic buildings in the district.

6.45 Locate and design windows to be compatible with those in the district.

» Locate and size a window to create a solid-to-void ratio similar to the ratios seen on nearby historic buildings.
» Locate a window to create a traditional rhythm and a proportion of openings similar to that seen in nearby historic buildings.
» Use a traditional window casement and trim similar to those seen in nearby historic buildings.
» Place a window to match the height of the front doorway.
» Place a window so that there is proportionate space between the window and the floor level.
» Do not place a window to directly abut the fascia of a building.
» Use a window material that is compatible with other building materials.
» Do not use a reflective or tinted glass window.
» Use a 1/1 window instead of window with false muntins. A double pane window may be acceptable if the interior dividers and dimensional muntins are used on multi-light windows. A double pane 1/1 window is acceptable.
» Do not use false, interior muntins except as stated above.
» Recess window openings on masonry buildings.
» Use a window opening with a raised surround on a wood frame building.

ACCEPTABLE WINDOW MATERIALS
Materials that are similar in character, profile, finish and durability to those used on nearby historic buildings are acceptable. These often include:

» Wood
» Vinyl-clad wood
» Aluminum-clad customized wood
» Extruded Aluminum

UNACCEPTABLE WINDOW MATERIALS
Materials that are not similar in character, profile, finish and durability to those used on nearby historic buildings are unacceptable. These often include:

» Mill finish metal windows
» Snap-in or artificial muntins
» Vinyl
Shutters and Awnings
This section provides guidelines for shutters and awnings on new construction in locally-designated historic districts. Shutters and awnings can be integral to the design and character of new construction. Shutters and awnings should be compatible with the overall building.

6.46 Design shutters and awnings to be compatible with the building.

» Use a shutter that fits the reveal of a window opening precisely.
» Use an awning that fits proportionately over the window or door opening with an appropriate overlap at the side.
» Use an awning with a simple design and material.
» Use an awning with a color that is compatible with the overall building’s color scheme. Canvas is preferred.

6.47 Design shutters and awnings to be compatible with the district.

» Use operable blinds or shutter units hung with hinges.
» When using artificial materials, use a blind or shutter unit that has a thickness, weight and design similar to wood. An artificial material shutter will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
» Use an operable shutter where feasible.
» Where a blind or shutter is fixed, hang them on a window casing in a manner to replicate an operable shutter.
» If a synthetic awning is used, use one with a textured surface. Do not use an awning with a smooth vinyl surface.

ACCEPTABLE SHUTTER AND AWNING MATERIALS
Materials that are similar in character, texture and durability to those used on nearby historic buildings are acceptable. These often include:

» Louvered or solid panel wood (shutter)
» Louvered or solid panel composite
» Fabric (awning)

UNACCEPTABLE SHUTTER AND AWNING MATERIALS
Materials that are not similar in character, texture and durability to those used on nearby historic buildings are unacceptable. These often include:

» Lightweight plastic (shutter)
» Metal (awning)
Storm Safety Features
This section provides guidelines for storm safety features on new construction in locally-designated historic districts. The visual impact of storm safety features should be minimized. A request for storm windows should be made as part of the initial submission. Storm windows should be integral to project design.

**6.48 Minimize the visual impact of storm safety features.**

- Place a storm window to fit precisely within the window frame.
- Place a storm window so that it appears to be part of the window.
- Use a storm door that does not obscure the door or doorway.

**ACCEPTABLE STORM WINDOW MATERIALS**
Materials that are similar in finish and texture to those used on nearby historic buildings are acceptable. These often include:

- Wood
- Vinyl clad and vinyl
- Enamel painted metal

**UNACCEPTABLE STORM WINDOW MATERIALS**
Materials that are not similar in finish and texture to those used on nearby historic buildings are unacceptable. These often include:

- Mill finish metal
- Flimsy plastic

![Place a storm window so that it appears to be part of the window.](image)

![Unfinished metal storm windows such as these alter the character of window openings, and should not be used on primary elevations.](image)
Mobile and its historic districts are home to a wide variety of commercial structures. Downtown Mobile, the City’s central business district, includes several historic districts containing historic commercial properties. These districts include Lower Dauphin, Church Street East and DeTonti Square. Historic commercial properties also exist within several of the predominantly residential historic districts, including Old Dauphin Way, Oakleigh Garden and Leinkauf. These historic commercial resources require careful stewardship. This chapter provides guidelines for historic and non-historic commercial buildings to prevent material impairment to Mobile’s individual historic resources and locally designated historic districts.

Non-historic commercial properties are also found in the locally designated historic districts. In many cases, non-historic commercial properties exist along Mobile’s major east-west corridors, including Government Street, Dauphin Street, Old Shell Road and Springhill Avenue. When these commercial properties undergo alterations or additions, or new development occurs along these corridors, they have the potential to impact the integrity of the historic district in which they are located. In some districts, commercial and mixed use properties intermingle with residential.

Small neighborhood “corner stores” represent a third type of commercial structure that exists in Mobile’s historic districts. These structures are often located within the interior areas of Mobile’s historic residential districts and are often directly adjacent to historic residential buildings.

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This chapter builds on the general preservation guidelines in Chapter 5 with specific design guidelines for commercial properties, including:

- **Contributing Structures.** Rehabilitation and alteration of locally-designed individual historic commercial landmarks and contributing commercial structures in locally-designated historic districts.
- **Additions to Contributing Structures.** Additions to contributing commercial structures in locally-designated historic districts.
- **Non-Contributing Structures.** Rehabilitation, alterations and additions to non-contributing commercial structures in locally-designated historic districts.
- **New Commercial Construction.** New commercial infill projects in locally-designated historic districts.

The guidelines in this chapter are in addition to those presented in Chapter 5 and will apply to all projects related to commercial structures. Please consult MHDC staff regarding any questions or clarifications associated with this chapter.

### Historic Commercial Buildings

This section includes guidelines for the treatment of historic commercial buildings in Mobile’s locally designated historic districts.

#### General Guidelines

This section provides general guidelines that should be considered in the review of changes to historic commercial structures. The following sections provide guidance on assessing character and typical commercial building conditions.

#### Assessing the Overall Character

Historic commercial buildings sometimes have been altered significantly. Therefore, the approach to renovating a historic commercial building can be more extensive than for a historic residential structure. When considering work on a commercial structure, respecting the original design character is of the utmost importance. The following broad commercial guidelines should be considered for all projects related to historic commercial structures.

- Preserve elements, both structural and decorative, that contribute to a building’s historic character.
- Retain the original openings, building material and proportions.
- Maintain the original roof configuration.
- When restoring a building, use photographic evidence wherever possible.
- Do not alter a building to appear older or younger than it is. Alter buildings to reflect the building’s period of significance.
- Do not use theme designs that do not reflect the original character of the building or the district.
- Respect the character of buildings within the context of a subject structure.
Typical Building Conditions
This section provides an overview of the three most typical building conditions of historic commercial structures. The current state of a building must be considered first prior to planning changes.

» **Building Condition 1.** Original Design Intact. Buildings in this category have changed very little from the time they were constructed. Original ornament and detail are still intact. Some portion of the façade may require maintenance and repair, but no new design work is necessary. In this case, preservation and restoration of the original design is the objective.

» **Building Condition 2.** Original Design Slightly Altered. Buildings in this category have retained the basic character of the original design, but some elements have been removed or changed. For example, an ornamental cornice may have existed at the top of the wall, but is now missing. Another example is an upper story window that is blocked with plywood panel. If early photographs or original architectural drawings are available, it may be easier to determine the changes that have been made. In this case, restoration of the original design is the objective. However, new elements that are compatible with a given design will be considered. For example, a missing cornice may be reconstructed on a building, while at the same time a new storefront may be established that does not copy the original, but uses the typical elements found on nearby historic commercial buildings. In this case, avoid a conjectural renovation of the historic commercial building.

» **Building Condition 3.** Original Design Significantly Altered. Buildings in this category generally have a plain front with no ornamentation or detail, and fail to relate well to adjacent historic buildings. If a covering hides original detail, removal of the covering and restoration of the original design is strongly encouraged. Where detailing has been removed, the development of an entirely new design that is compatible with the older buildings or reconstruction of the original façade based on photographic evidence is strongly encouraged. If removing an applied modern storefront that was placed over the historic storefront will damage the underlying historic façade, its removal is discouraged. Some alterations may have taken on historic significance in their own right. In these cases, preservation of this alteration, or restoration to the original may both be options.
Building Elements and Materials
This section includes guidelines for the treatment of historic commercial buildings with respect to building elements and materials. Please see Chapter 5 for additional applicable guidelines.

Exterior Building Walls
This section provides guidelines for historic commercial building façades. In most historic commercial buildings, a façade includes several key character-defining features. These standard elements are found on historic commercial buildings throughout historic commercial districts, and collectively create recognizable and repetitious visual pattern. The key character-defining features of a historic commercial building façade should be preserved. See Chapter 5 for additional guidelines for exterior building walls.

7.1 Preserve the key character-defining features of a historic commercial façade.

7.2 Repair an altered storefront to its original design.

- Use historic photographs when determining the original character of a storefront design.
- Where evidence does not exist, use a contemporary interpretation of a traditional storefront.
- Consider retaining a non-original storefront where it has achieved historic importance as an option.
- Do not remove a façade veneer if it may cause serious damage to the original historic materials underneath (i.e. historic brick).
- In the Dauphin Street area of Downtown, a corner building may not require a water table on side walls.

Character-Defining Elements of a Historic Commercial Facade
The key character-defining features of a 19th Century commercial facade are illustrated below.
7.3 Retain an original bulkhead as a decorative panel.

» Retain the bulkhead below the display window.
» If the original bulkhead is covered with another material, consider exposing the original design.
» If the original bulkhead is missing, develop a sympathetic replacement design that is similar in profile, texture and durability to the original.

7.4 Preserve the character of the cornice line.

» Continue the repetition of the cornice line along the street to contribute to the visual connectivity of the block.
» Reconstruct a missing cornice when historic evidence is available.
» Use a simplified interpretation for a replacement cornice if no evidence is available.

7.5 Retain the original shape of the transom in a historic storefront.

» Preserve the historic transom shape and configuration.
» Add new glass if the original glass is missing.
» Do not remove or enclose a transom.
» If a transom must be blocked out, retain the original proportions.

7.6 Replace a historic storefront to be consistent with the historic location.

» Locate a new storefront in the same plane as it was historically.
» Do not recess or project a replacement storefront from the front façade.
» Screen service panels and trash containers that must be attached to an exterior building wall.
Exterior Materials and Finishes
This section provides guidelines for the treatment of exterior materials and finishes on historic commercial buildings in locally-designated historic districts. Exterior materials should be preserved wherever possible.

7.7 Preserve and repair original materials on a historic commercial building whenever possible.

» Do not paint over exposed brick.
» Strive to preserve materials on the sides and rear of a historic commercial building where possible.
» Brick is the most common façade material, but in some cases stucco has been applied to an original brick façade.
» If brick repair is required, match the mortar color, consistency and strike to the original as closely as possible.

7.8 If replacement of some material is required, use a material that is similar to that of the original.

» Use replacement mortar that is as soft as or softer than the original. Type O mortar is required for historic soft brick.
» Use true stucco instead of an imitation material.
» Do not use a rustic finish on masonry that will simulate aged masonry.
Roofs
This section provides guidelines for the treatment of roofs on historic commercial buildings in locally-designated historic districts.

7.9 Preserve and repair the key character-defining features of a historic commercial roof.

» If replacement is required, use a configuration similar to the existing building or nearby historic commercial buildings of the same period and style.
» Do not use a fake mansard or shed roof.
» Screen rooftop mechanical equipment.

Doors and Doorways
This section provides guidelines for the treatment of doors and doorways on historic commercial buildings in locally-designated historic districts. Doors and doorways are key character-defining features of historic commercial buildings. The location, configuration, and other key character-defining features of a historic door or doorway should be preserved.

7.10 Preserve and repair doors and doorways of a historic commercial building.

» Preserve historic doorways in their original location and configuration.
» Retain original recessed entries and other key features defining a historic entrance.
» Maintain an original doorway to emphasize the commercial entrance.

7.11 If necessary, replace a door in a fashion that is sensitive to the historic commercial character of the building.

» Use doors with high proportions of transparent glass.
» If a modern doorway is created, use metal with anodized or painted finish or varnished or painted wood.
» If a doorway was originally recessed, use a recessed doorway for the replacement.
» Consider using a transom in a replacement storefront where appropriate.
» Design a replacement doorway to emphasize the commercial entrance.
» Do not use a residential door for a commercial building.
Balconies and Galleries
This section provides guidelines for balconies and galleries on historic commercial buildings. In Mobile, balconies are typically cantilevered elements that project from upper floors, serving as private outdoor space for the building. Galleries in Mobile are defined as building elements that project from the façade to provide an outdoor deck with railings for upper floors that have supports that extend to the sidewalk. Galleries serve as important outdoor amenities for upper floors and provide shade and coverage for sidewalk areas. These elements are common on many buildings and are key features for a historic commercial building. Historic balconies and galleries should be preserved.

7.12 Retain the original materials, configuration and location of a historic gallery.

7.13 Preserve and repair an existing balcony or gallery.

» Maintain an original balcony or gallery in its historic location and configuration.
» Preserve and repair original cast or wrought iron work on a balcony or gallery. These are important architectural and historical details.

7.14 Where replacement of a balcony or gallery is required, replace it in a fashion that preserves the key character-defining features of a historic building.

» Replace a historic balcony or gallery where documentation exists of its previous existence.
» Design a replacement balcony or gallery to reflect the design of the original building. The ARB will consider modern balconies.

7.15 If a cantilevered balcony is to be added to a building that did not previously have one, add the balcony in a fashion that retains the visibility of the cornice line and ensure that it will compatible with the historic building.

» Design a balcony to retain visibility of the cornice from the public right-of-way.
» Design a balcony to reflect the overall design of the building.
» New balconies will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The ARB will consider a modern balcony.

Preserve and repair original cast or wrought iron work on a balcony or gallery.
Details and Ornamentation
This section provides guidelines for details and ornamentation for historic commercial buildings. Details and ornamentation are important character-defining features of historic commercial buildings. A range of decorative motifs are used in the Lower Dauphin District. These features provide significant visual interest. Decorative brick cornices are examples of detail and ornamentation that occur frequently.

7.16 Preserve and repair an original detail or ornamentation on a historic commercial building.

- Maintain an original detail and ornamentation on a historic façade. Prioritize the front façade.
- Maintain the established spatial relationships and scale of existing details.
- Preserve and maintain a significant original detail or ornamentation element, including a pilaster, window frame, or molded wood, terra cotta or brick.
- Do not remove later historic fabric to recreate missing elements without proof of the original.

7.17 If replacement is required, design a detail or ornamentation element to be compatible with the existing historic building and the district.

- Where a detail has been removed, use photographic evidence to recreate it.
- Where exact reconstruction is not possible, use a simplified interpretation of the original design detail that maintains the scale and character of original or similar detailing used on buildings of the same period.
- Use a replacement material that is visually compatible with the original.
Windows
This section provides guidelines for windows on historic commercial buildings. Windows are a key-character defining feature of historic commercial buildings. The placement, orientation and size of windows both on the ground floor and the upper floor significantly impact the appearance of the building and the streetscape. Windows in historic commercial buildings should be preserved.

7.18 Preserve and repair an original detail or ornamentation on a historic commercial building.

» Maintain the original space patterns and location of windows. Most display windows have a bulkhead below and a transom above.
» Preserve the size and shape of an upper story window.
» Consider maintaining a Carrara glass or glass block storefront if it has attained historic significance as an alteration.

7.19 If required, replace original historic windows to be compatible with the windows on the original historic building.

» Use large panes of glass that fit the original opening for a display window. Where a display window is no longer required, the ARB will consider an alternative design.
» Do not use opaque treatments for a window, including black plexiglass. Do not paint a window.
» Do not use reflective mirror glass for a window.
» Unless evidence exists from existing buildings or historic photographs, do not use a multi-pane design that divides the storefront window into smaller components.
» Use a tempered glass window if required by the building code.
» Reopen an upper story window if it is blocked.
» If reopening an upper story window is not feasible, use a fixed shutter to define the original proportion of the window opening.
Shutters and Awnings

This section provides guidelines for shutters and awnings on historic commercial buildings in locally-designated historic districts. In many cases, historic commercial buildings feature solid, paneled shutters on a window. These features may be key character-defining features of a historic commercial building. Historic shutters and awnings on a commercial building should be preserved. In some cases, awnings also represent key character-defining features of a historic commercial building. Historic awnings should be preserved. New awnings may be added in a manner that retains the character of a historic building. The ARB will consider new awnings based on the design of the awning, the design of the building, and the location and placement on the building.

7.20 Preserve and maintain a historic shutter or awning.

» Maintain and repair an existing historic shutter or awning.
» Do not place shutters on a display window.
» Preserve and maintain a historic wood or metal awning.

7.21 If required, replace or add shutters and awnings to maintain and keep visible the key features of a historic building.

» Fit a replacement awning or shutter to the precise window or door opening.
» Use a shutter that appears to be operable.
» Use an awning with a profile similar to that of a historic awning.

Storm Safety Features

This section provides guidelines for the placement of modern storm safety features, such as storm windows, on historic commercial buildings. Storm safety features are often necessary in the Mobile climate to protect from hurricanes and flooding. In some cases, a storm shutter may even be required by code to protect a historic window. The visual impact of a storm safety features on a historic commercial building should be minimized.

7.22 Minimize the visual impact of storm safety features on a historic commercial building.

» Use a storm window that fits precisely within the window frame.
Security Features
This section provides guidelines for security features on historic commercial buildings. Security features, such as gates or grills, are sometimes desired for commercial storefronts. These devices have a potential to obscure the key historic features of a storefront and therefore should be avoided if possible. The visual impacts of security devices on historic commercial buildings should be minimized.

7.23 Minimize the visual impact of metal bars or grills on a historic building.

» Use security features that are sized properly to fit the opening.
» Use security features that are simple and do not include decorative detailing.
» If roll-down security grills are used on storefronts, use an open weave pattern that permits visibility to display items.
» Use a roll-down security grill that is located on the interior of a window or doorway.
Historic Commercial Buildings: Additions
This section provides design guidelines for additions to locally-designated historic commercial landmarks and commercial structures in locally-designated historic districts. Additions of this type should be compatible with the original structure and surrounding historic context.

General Guidelines
This section presents the two distinct types of additions to historic commercial buildings that may be considered. For all additions, the materials, window sizes and alignment of trim elements on the addition should be compatible with those of the existing structure.

Ground Level Additions
A ground-level addition involves expanding the footprint of a structure. Such an addition should be to the rear or side of a building. This will have the least impact on the character of the building.

Rooftop Additions
A rooftop addition is where additional space is added on top of the roof of an existing historic commercial structure. A rooftop addition should be designed so that it is subordinate in character (simple and modest) and set back substantially from the front of the original building so that it does not detract attention from the historic façade.

Building Placement and Orientation
This section provides guidelines for the placement and orientation of additions to historic commercial structures.

7.24 Place and orient a ground level addition to be subordinate to the main structure.
» Locate a ground level addition to the rear or side of the main building.
» Orient a ground level addition in the same direction as the main building and adjacent buildings.
» Do not place a ground floor addition at the front of a historic commercial building.

7.25 Place and orient a rooftop addition to be subordinate to the main structure.
» Where base zoning permits, locate a rooftop addition to be set back from the front exterior wall of the original building.
» Orient a rooftop addition in the same direction as the original building and adjacent buildings.
» Minimize the visibility of the rooftop addition from the street.
» Do not place a rooftop building at the front of a historic commercial building.
Massing and Scale

7.26 Design the massing and scale of an addition to be subordinate to the main structure.

» Use a compatible roof form and building volumes. An addition with a pitched roof form is inappropriate for a building with a flat roof.
» For a rooftop addition, use similar floor heights as the original building.

Building Elements and Materials
This section provides guidelines for the building elements and materials on additions to historic commercial structures.

Exterior Materials and Finishes
This section provides guidelines for exterior materials and finishes on additions to historic commercial structures. The materials and finishes of an addition should be compatible with the original historic commercial building.

7.27 Design additions with materials that are compatible with the materials on the original building.

» Use new materials on an addition that appears similar in texture and finish to those of the original building.

Roofs
This section provides guidelines for roofs on additions to historic commercial structures. The materials and finishes of a roof on an addition should be compatible with the original historic commercial building.

7.28 Design the roof of an addition to be compatible with the original historic commercial building.

» Use a roof pitch similar to that of the original.
Changes to Non-Historic Commercial Buildings

This section covers alterations to non-historic buildings in locally designated historic districts. Alterations to non-historic commercial buildings must be compatible with the historic district. Alterations of this type should follow closely the general guidelines below and the guidelines in the next section that cover new commercial construction in historic districts.

General guidelines for alterations to non-historic commercial buildings are as follows:

7.29 Design changes to a non-historic commercial building to be compatible with the district.

» Design an alteration to retain a placement and orientation that is compatible with the district.
» Design an alteration to appear similar in massing and scale with historic commercial buildings in the district.
» Use building elements that are of a similar profile and durability to those seen on historic buildings in the district.
» Maintain a solid-to-void ratio on building walls that is similar to those seen on historic buildings in the district.

Please see the next section on New Commercial Construction when considering alterations to non-historic commercial buildings in locally designated historic districts.
New Commercial Construction
This section provides guidelines for new commercial construction in locally designated historic districts.

General Guidelines
The most typical contexts for new commercial construction projects in Mobile’s locally designated historic districts are described below. As discussed briefly in the introduction to this chapter, the following contexts for new commercial construction are most typical in Mobile’s historic districts. The contexts are described below. For each design topic following this section, general guidelines are provided, as well as guidelines for each context, where applicable.

“Main Street” Context
The first context for new commercial construction is the “Main Street” context. This is most relevant for new commercial and mixed use infill projects located in locally-designated historic districts in the Downtown area, such as Lower Dauphin and portions of Church Street East and DeTonti Square. In this context, new commercial construction should respond and reflect the setbacks, scale, massing, materials and solid-to-void ratios established by historic commercial buildings in the district. Creating compatible patterns and rhythms of architectural features in new commercial construction along the street is critical. These design and building elements collectively contribute to the appearance of the streetscape. New construction should respect this established streetscape character in the district.
CHAPTER 7: Commercial Design Guidelines
Design Review Guidelines for Mobile’s Historic Districts

Commercial Corridor Context
The second context for new commercial construction is the commercial corridor. This refers to new commercial construction built along arterials at the periphery of a predominantly residential historic district. An example is a new commercial infill project on a parcel facing Government Street or Springhill Avenue that is also located within a locally designated historic district. In the case of Government Street in particular, many historic residential buildings face Government Street. In more recent years, commercial projects have begun developing alongside historic residential buildings on this corridor. In some cases, an infill site may be on a block face already completely developed with non-historic commercial properties. Each of these scenarios should be considered when designing a commercial infill project in the Commercial Corridor context. The location of new commercial infill within the block face in this context should also be considered. Corner locations may require considerations that are not relevant at mid-block locations. For this context, new commercial construction should strongly consider front setback distances, landscaped setbacks, and the transition between the commercial project and rear-adjacent historic properties to ensure compatibility with the orientation of nearby historic residential buildings in the district.

Interior Neighborhood Context
The third context is the Interior Neighborhood context. This context is more rare in Mobile’s historic districts than the two contexts discussed above. This refers to new commercial construction that develops in the interior of a predominantly residential historic district. This context refers specifically to new, small scale commercial construction for corner stores or other neighborhood-serving retail uses that are completely surrounded by residential structures. In most cases, commercial infill in this context is likely to develop on corner lots; however, interior commercial infill is also possible, and particularly in DeTonti Square the northern edge of Church Street East. For this context, new commercial construction should strongly consider massing, scale, and orientation to ensure compatibility with nearby historic residential buildings. This context is potentially relevant to DeTonti Square, Oakleigh Garden, Leinkauf, and portions of Old Dauphin Way and Church Street East.
Building Placement and Orientation
These guidelines apply to placement and orientation of new construction in locally-designated historic districts. The placement and orientation of new commercial construction should be compatible with the district. See diagrams on the following pages.

7.30 Orient a new commercial building to be similar to that of nearby historic structures.

» Place buildings in line with adjacent historic buildings in terms of relationship to the street. If a project is flanked by non-historic structures, refer to nearby historic structures.
» Design side setbacks to be similar to those in adjacent historic buildings. If a project is flanked by non-historic structures refer to nearby historic structures.
» Orient façades of new commercial buildings similarly to adjacent historic structures. In most cases, new commercial structures should be oriented to directly face the street.
» Face primary building entries toward the public street.
» Screen ancillary buildings or place them behind the primary building.

“MAIN STREET” CONTEXT
New commercial construction in the “Main Street” context should prioritize the street and establishment of a consistent street wall, similar to historic commercial buildings in the district.

7.31 Place and orient new commercial construction to engage the public street similar to historic commercial structures.

» Place buildings close to the back of the sidewalk, but in keeping with adjacent historic commercial structures.
» Minimize side setbacks to establish a consistent street wall.
» Orient façades to be parallel with the street.
» Locate primary building entries and storefronts at the street edge.
COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR CONTEXT
New commercial construction in the Commercial Corridor context should prioritize front setback distances and landscape design in front yards in order to establish compatibility with nearby historic residential structures, if any exist. New commercial construction in this context should also be sensitive to rear-adjacent historic residential structures.

7.32 Place and orient new commercial construction on commercial corridors to be compatible with that of adjacent historic residential structures and the district.

» Establish front setbacks similar to those in adjacent historic residential development or historic residential development on the same block.
» Orient façades to be parallel with the street or in the orientation of historic residential structures that are adjacent or on the same block. In some cases, the orientation should be north-south depending on the historic context.
» For corner lots, align a sidewall with historic residential structures located to the rear of project. Offset sidewalks built close to the street edge to be in line with historic residential structures at the rear of the project.

INTERIOR NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT
New commercial construction in the Interior Neighborhood context, where small scale commercial buildings are constructed on corners in a residential neighborhood, should prioritize front setback distances and landscape design in front yards in order to establish compatibility with adjacent historic residential structures.

7.33 Place and orient new commercial construction at interior neighborhood locations to be compatible with that of nearby historic residential structures.

» Establish front setbacks similar to those in adjacent historic residential development or historic residential development on the same block.
» Locate any ancillary buildings to the rear of the primary commercial building.
» If off-street parking is required, provide it behind the building where possible.
» Provide landscaping around a driveway to off-street parking to mimic a driveway for a historic residential building.
» Orient façades to be parallel with the street.
“Main Street” Context

Orient a new commercial building to be similar to that of nearby historic structures.

Existing Site

New Infill Project

» Place buildings close to the back of the sidewalk, but in keeping with adjacent historic commercial structures.
» Minimize side setbacks to establish a consistent street wall.
» Orient façades to be parallel with the street. (▶)
» Locate primary building entries and storefronts at the street edge.
Commercial Corridor Context: Type 1 (Parallel with Commercial Corridor)

Orient a new commercial building to be similar to that of nearby historic structures.

**Existing Site**

```
Commercial Corridor

Existing Site

Residential Side Street

Infill Site

New Infill Project

> Align facades of a new building with historic buildings on the commercial corridor and the side street.
> Orient a new building similarly to surrounding historic buildings (▶)
> Minimize the visual impact of a parking entry by adding landscaping.

New Building

Aligned Facades

Landscaped Parking Entry and Buffer between Parking and Residential
```
**Commercial Corridor Context: Type 2 (At an Angle with Commercial Corridor)**

Orient a new commercial building to be similar to that of nearby historic structures.

### Existing Site

### New Infill Project

- Align facades of a new building with historic buildings on the commercial corridor and the side street.
- Orient a new building similarly to surrounding historic buildings.
- Minimize the visual impact of a parking entry by adding landscaping.
**Neighborhood Context:**

Orient a new commercial building to be similar to that of nearby historic structures.

**Existing Site**

» Align facades of a new building with those of adjacent residential structures. An extension at the corner may be appropriate.

» Orient a new building similarly to surrounding historic buildings.

» Minimize the visual impact of a parking entry by adding landscaping.

**New Infill Project**

» Align facades of a new building with those of adjacent residential structures. An extension at the corner may be appropriate.

» Orient a new building similarly to surrounding historic buildings.

» Minimize the visual impact of a parking entry by adding landscaping.
Massing and Scale
These guidelines apply to massing and scale of new commercial construction in locally-designated historic districts. The massing and scale of new commercial construction should be compatible with the district.

7.34 Design a building to be compatible with massing and scale with historic structures in the district.

» Design building massing to reflect massing of nearby historic structures.
» Where the volume of new construction is larger than historic structures in the district, break down the massing into smaller components to increase compatibility.
» Limit the height or the perceived height of buildings to be similar to heights of nearby historic structures.

» Use vertical and horizontal articulation design techniques to reduce the apparent scale of a larger building mass.
» Incorporate changes in color, texture and materials.
» Use architectural details to create visual interest.
» Use materials that help to convey scale in their proportion, detail and form.

7.35 Design building massing and scale to maintain the visual continuity of the district.

» Incorporate floor-to-floor heights that appear similar to those of traditional commercial buildings in Mobile.
» Design a new structure to incorporate a traditional base, middle and cap.

7.36 Maintain traditional spacing patterns created by the repetition of building widths along the street.

» Proportion a new façade to reflect the established range of traditional building widths seen in Mobile.
» Where a structure must exceed a traditional building width, use changes in building configuration, articulation or design features such as materials, window design, façade height or decorative details to break the façade into modules that suggest traditional building widths.
“MAIN STREET” CONTEXT
New commercial construction in the “Main Street” context should exhibit massing and scale that is similar to adjacent and nearby historic commercial structures in the district. Massing and scale at the street level should be the priority in this context.

7.37 Design the massing and scale of new commercial construction to be compatible with historic commercial structures in the district.

» Design building massing to establish a consistent street wall similar to that of nearby or adjacent historic commercial buildings.
» Where there is an established street wall height on a block, provide additional setbacks for floors above the established street wall height in order to maintain the perceived height of buildings along the street. Ensure that this treatment is permitted by base zoning.

COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR CONTEXT
New commercial construction in the Commercial Corridor context should exhibit massing and scale that is similar to adjacent and nearby historic residential structures in the district. The design of massing and scale of buildings should also consider relationships to rear-adjacent historic residential structures.

7.38 Design the massing and scale of new commercial construction to be compatible with historic residential structures in the district.

» Break down building massing to create separate volumes that are similar to the massing of adjacent and nearby historic residential structures.
» Limit the height of a building to be similar to those of adjacent and nearby historic residential structures.
» Where the lot lines of a commercial structure and residential structure meet, step down the height of the commercial building to match that of the adjacent residential structure.

INTERIOR NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT
New commercial construction in the Interior Neighborhood context, where small scale commercial buildings are constructed on corners in a residential neighborhood, should exhibit massing similar to that of the surrounding historic residential structures.

7.39 Design the massing and scale of a new commercial building to be compatible with the district.

» Use massing that is similar to that of nearby historic residential structures.
» Where larger building volumes are desired, break down the massing near the street to present components with similar massing to that of adjacent and nearby historic residential structures.
» Limit the height of a building to be equal or less to that of historic residential structures in the district.
Building Elements and Materials

This section provides guidelines for building elements and materials for new commercial construction in locally-designated historic districts. The existing pattern of traditional commercial facades contributes to the continuity of Mobile’s historic areas (“Main Street” context). For the corridor and interior neighborhood contexts, building elements used in new commercial construction can potentially impact the historic district, but these elements are less critical than overall building placement, massing and scale described above. Although imitation is discouraged, traditional façade and material patterns used in historic structures should inform the design of new commercial structures in locally-designated historic districts.

Exterior Building Walls

Traditional multi-story commercial façade compositions in Mobile feature a clear differentiation between the street level and upper floors. The street level generally appears taller than other floors and has a high percentage of fixed plate glass with a small percentage of opaque framing materials, a bulkhead and a recessed entry. An upper floor, where it occurs, is the reverse—opaque materials dominate, and windows appear as smaller openings puncturing a more solid wall. Building walls on new commercial construction in the “Main Street” context should be designed to be compatible with these characteristics. Building walls on new commercial construction in the commercial corridor and interior neighborhood contexts should be compatible with adjacent historic residential structures.

7.40 Maintain the distinction between the street level and upper floor on multi-story structures.

» Incorporate a high percentage of transparent glass into the first floor of the primary façade.
» Design upper floors to appear more opaque than the street level.
» Express the distinction in floor heights between street levels and upper levels through detailing, materials and fenestration. The presence of a belt course is an important feature in this relationship.
» Do not use highly reflective or darkly tinted glass.

7.41 Maintain the traditional spacing pattern created by upper story windows.

» Use traditional proportions of windows, individually or in groups.
» Maintain the traditional placement of window headers and sills relative to cornices and belt courses.
"MAIN STREET" CONTEXT
New commercial construction in the “Main Street” context should treat exterior building walls to incorporate traditional elements. Creating defining features visible from the street should be prioritized.

7.42 Incorporate traditional façade elements in a new commercial structure.

» Express a bulkhead, display window and transom in a new storefront design as illustrated in “Character-Defining Elements of a Historic Commercial Façade” on page 88.
» Design storefront components and upper story windows to be similar in height, depth, profile and proportion to traditional downtown buildings.
» When portions of a storefront are folding, ensure that all of the storefront components are still visible.

7.43 Maintain traditional entry patterns along the street.

» On commercial buildings, consider setting a primary entry door back an adequate amount from the front façade to establish a distinct threshold for pedestrians. A recessed dimension of four feet is typical.
» Maintain the upper floor building line at the sidewalk edge where entries are recessed.
» Use a transom over a doorway to maintain the full vertical height of the storefront.
» Do not use oversized or undersized entry designs.
Architectural Character

This section provides guidelines for architectural character for new commercial construction in locally-designated historic districts. In order to assure that historic resources are appreciated as authentic contributing buildings, it is important that new buildings be distinguishable from them. Therefore, new construction should appear as a product of its own time, while also being compatible with the historically significant features of the area. The following guidelines are only applicable to the “Main Street” context.

“MAIN STREET” CONTEXT

7.44 Design a building to reflect its time, while respecting key features of its context.

» Reference traditional articulation patterns on the façade of a new commercial structure.
» Use high quality design and depth of detail in building features to enhance compatibility with the historic district.
» Use contemporary details, such as window moldings and door surrounds, to create interest while expressing a new, compatible style.
» Consider designing a structure in a contemporary style to avoid blurring the distinction between old and new, which makes it more difficult to visually interpret the architectural evolution of the historic district.
» Consider designing a structure using a contemporary interpretation of a historic style that is authentic to the district while ensuring that it is distinguishable as being new.
Exterior Materials and Finishes
This section provides guidelines for exterior materials and finishes for new commercial construction in locally-designated historic districts. Building materials and finishes for new structures and additions to existing commercial structures should contribute to the visual continuity of the district and appear similar to those seen traditionally. In the “Main Street” context, buildings should use masonry materials, such as brick and genuine stucco. In the Commercial Corridor and Interior Neighborhood contexts, materials that are compatible with adjacent and nearby historic residential structures should be considered, such as wood siding.

“MAIN STREET” CONTEXT

7.45 Use building materials that are compatible with the surrounding context.
   » Use brick, true stucco or stone as the primary exterior building material.

7.46 When using masonry, ensure that it appears similar in character to that seen historically.
   » Use brick with modular dimension similar to that used traditionally.
   » Consider using cast concrete details that are designed to be similar to stone trim elements.

COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR CONTEXT

7.47 Where new commercial construction is located adjacent to historic residential structures, use building materials that are compatible with those materials used in nearby historic buildings.
   » Use a material that is reflective of nearby historic residential structures, including wood siding.

INTERIOR NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT

7.48 Use building materials that are compatible with the surrounding historic residential context.
   » Use a material that is compatible with the surrounding historic residential structures. Use wood siding for a commercial structure where the majority of the surrounding historic residential structures use wood siding.
CHAPTER 8: INSTITUTIONAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

This brief chapter provides design guidance for new institutional buildings in locally-designated historic districts. See Chapter 5 of this document for design guidelines for the treatment of historic institutional structures.

Institutional buildings, such as churches, schools, museums, hospitals and government buildings, are often highly recognizable landmarks. Institutional buildings are spread across the city and exist both within and outside of locally-designated historic districts. Some of the institutional buildings in Mobile are contributing properties in historic districts, while others may not have achieved historic significance. Please consult MHDC staff regarding any questions or clarifications associated with this chapter.

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General Design Characteristics of Institutional Buildings

This section describes some of the general characteristics typical of institutional properties.

Neighborhood Focal Points and Community Landmarks

Institutional buildings often serve as recognizable focal points and landmarks for communities. Whether it is Mobile’s modern Government Center building, Barton Academy or Government Street Presbyterian Church, these institutional buildings act as nodes within neighborhoods. Institutional buildings are typically designed to stand out rather than blend with other buildings.

Irregular Placement

An institutional building is often placed on a site differently than the buildings that surround it. While not always the case, many times an institutional building is set back from the street and the buildings that surround it to further reinforce its prominence. Dauphin Way United Method Church in the Old Dauphin Way Historic District is a prominent example of this design characteristic.

Greater Massing and Scale

An institutional building often has a massing and scale that is different from nearby historic structures. One reason for this differentiation is the function of an institutional building. In many cases, an institutional building must hold large numbers of people for community events, ceremonies, church services or other events. This function is reflected in the massing of some institutional structures, as well as their floor heights.
New Institutional Buildings in Historic Districts

This section provides guidelines for new institutional development in locally-designated historic districts.

8.1 Design a new institutional building or group of buildings to be compatible with the surrounding district, but differentiate it appropriately.

- Place an institutional building more flexibly than the pattern seen in surrounding historic structures.
- Where buildings are set back, use the additional setback area for a landscaped open space, public gathering area and/or pedestrian entry element.
- If the massing and scale of an institutional building is significantly larger than surrounding structures, set it back from the street to prevent a looming presence. This is particularly important for an institutional structure in a residential context.
- Orient the primary entrance to an institutional building toward the public street. A secondary entrance may be provided from a parking area or another service location as needed.
- Screen a surface parking lot from the public right-of-way wherever possible.

When placing an institutional building within the surrounding context, there is more flexibility in terms of setback, mass, and scale. The diagram above illustrates an institutional building placed in the middle of the block in an urban setting where other buildings are placed at the street edge.
This chapter provides guidelines for accessory structures in locally designated historic districts, including historic accessory structures and new accessory structures. An accessory structure is any construction other than the main building on the property. Accessory structures include, but are not limited to garages, garage apartments and sheds. Please consult MHDC staff regarding any questions or clarifications associated with this chapter.
Historic Accessory Structures

A historic accessory structure contributes to the integrity of a historic property, as well as the district. Historic accessory structures should be preserved.

When conducting work on a historic accessory structure, follow the guidelines for the treatment of all historic structures presented in Chapter 5. In most cases, a historic accessory structure is associated with a primary historic residential structure. In this case, refer to guidelines for the treatment of historic residential buildings presented in Chapter 6 in this case. For a commercial accessory structure, refer to guidelines for the treatment of historic commercial buildings in Chapter 7.

New Accessory Structures

In general, the addition of a new accessory structure to a historic property or within a historic district should refer to guidelines for new construction presented in Chapters 6 and 7. Additional specialized guidelines are provided here. A new accessory structure should be compatible with those in the district.

9.1 Design an accessory structure to be subordinate in scale to that of the primary structure.

» If a proposed accessory structure is larger than the size of typical historic accessory structures in the district, break up the mass of the larger structure into smaller modules that reflect traditional accessory structures.

9.2 Locate a new accessory structure in line with other visible accessory structures in the district.

» These are traditionally located at the rear of a lot.

ACCEPTABLE ACCESSORY STRUCTURE MATERIALS

Materials that are compatible with the historic district in scale and character are acceptable. These often include:

» Wood frame
» Masonry
» Cement-based fiber siding
» Installations (Pre-made store-bought sheds, provided they are minimally visible from public areas)

UNACCEPTABLE ACCESSORY STRUCTURE MATERIALS

Materials that are not compatible with the historic district in scale and character are unacceptable. These often include:

» Metal (except for a greenhouse)
» Plastic (except for a greenhouse)
» Fiberglass (except for a greenhouse)
This section provides site planning guidelines for all properties in locally-designated historic districts. This includes work on a locally-designated historic landmark and work on a contributing historic structure or new construction. Site planning involves any work not directly related to a primary or accessory structure on a site. Important site considerations include fences, walls, gates, walkways, parking-related features, lighting and landscaping. For some design topics, specific guidelines are provided for residential and commercial properties. Please consult MHDC staff regarding any questions or clarifications associated with this chapter.
Fences, Walls and Gates

Fences and low walls are character-defining features of many properties in Mobile’s historic districts. A historic fence, wall or gate should be preserved. A new fence, wall or gate should be compatible with the architectural style of the primary building and these same elements on other properties in the district.

10.1 Maintain a historically significant fence or masonry site wall.

» Maintain a historically significant wooden picket or cast iron fence.
» Maintain a historically significant stuccoed brick or concrete masonry site wall.

10.2 Design a fence to be compatible with the architectural style of the house and existing fences in the neighborhood.

» Install a painted wood picket fence.
» Install a simple wood or wire fence. Heights of wooden picket fences are ordinarily restricted to 36". Consideration for up to 48," depending on the location of the fence, shall be given. A variance might be required. Staff can advise and assist applicants with regard to a variance. If combined with a wall, the total vertical dimension of the wall and fence collectively should not exceed 36," or in some cases 48".

Install a simple wood-and-wire fence, provided that it is appropriate to the style of the house and does not exceed 48" in height as measured from grade. If combined with a wall, the total vertical dimension of the wall and fence collectively should not exceed 48".

Front Yard Fence Height Requirements

Install a cast-iron or other metal fence not exceeding 36" in height if located in the front yard. 48" shall be considered under certain circumstances. Coping walls located below cast-iron fencing may be appropriate in certain locations and do not count toward the total height.
» For surface parking areas associated with commercial uses, size a perimeter parking area fence to not exceed 48” in height.
» Install a cast-iron or other metal fence not exceeding 48” in height if located in the front yard.
» Install a fence that uses alternative materials that have a very similar look and feel to wood, proven durability, matte finish and an accurate scale and proportion of components.
» Face the finished side of a fence toward the public right-of-way.
» Based on the chosen fence material, use proportions, heights, elements and levels of opacity similar to those of similar material and style seen in the historic district.

REAR AND NON-CORNER SIDE FENCES (LOCATED BEHIND THE FRONT BUILDING PLANE)

» Design a fence located behind the front building plane to not exceed 72” in height. If the subject property abuts a multi-family residential or commercial property, a fence up to 96” will be considered.
» An alternative fence material with proven durability, matte finish and an accurate scale and proportion of components is acceptable. A simple wood-and-wire fence is acceptable provided it is appropriate to the style of the house.

Surface Parking Fencing Height Requirements

For surface parking areas associated with commercial uses, size a perimeter parking area fence to not exceed 48” in height.

Perimeter Fencing Height Requirements

Based on the chosen fence material, use proportions, heights, elements, and levels of opacity similar to those seen in the historic district.
WALLS

10.3 Design a wall to be compatible with the architectural style of the house and existing walls in the district.

> When building a solid wall, use a finish and material that is similar in texture, mass and durability to historic walls in the neighborhood.

ACCEPTABLE FENCE MATERIALS
Materials that have a similar character, durability and finish to those of fences of historic properties in the district are acceptable. These often include:

> Wood picket
> Wood slat
> Wood lattice
> Iron or steel
> Historically appropriate wire fences
> Aluminum that appears similar to iron

UNACCEPTABLE FENCE MATERIALS
Materials that do not have a similar character, durability and finish to those of fences of historic properties in the district are unacceptable. These often include:

> Chain link
> Stockade
> Post and rail
> Masonite
> PVC
> Plywood or asbestos paneling
> Razor wire
> Barbed wire

ACCEPTABLE WALL MATERIALS
Materials that have a similar character, durability and finish to those of fences of historic properties in the district are acceptable. These often include:

> Brick
> Stone
> Stucco over masonry

UNACCEPTABLE WALL MATERIALS
Materials that do not have a similar character, durability and finish to those of fences of historic properties in the district are unacceptable. These often include:

> Unstuccoed concrete block
Walks, Driveways and Parking

A variety of paving materials are used on Mobile’s historic residential and commercial properties. These include sidewalks, pathways, driveways and parking areas. A driveway or sidewalk placed in the city right-of-way must adhere to requirements of the Mobile City Code. In some cases, approvals from the City’s Right-of-Way Department or Traffic Engineering Department may be required. Walks, driveways and parking should be designed to minimize the impact on the historic character of a building or the district if permitted by the City Code. Consult Staff for further specification.

WALKS AND PATHWAYS

10.4 Maintain a historic sidewalk.
   » If a historic sidewalk is damaged, replace the damaged portion to match the original.
   » Maintain a historic stamped sidewalk impression.

10.5 Visually connect the street and building.
   » Maintain or install a walkway leading directly from the sidewalk to the main building entry.

10.6 Install a new sidewalk to be compatible with historic ones in the area.
   » Maintain the existing width of neighboring sidewalks.
   » Use a traditional sidewalk material as seen in the district if permitted by the City Code. Consult Staff if necessary.

DRIVEWAYS AND PARKING AREAS

10.7 Minimize the visual impact of parking.
   » Locate a parking area at the rear or to the side of a site whenever possible.
   » Use landscaping to screen a parking area.
   » Minimize the widths of a paved area or a curb cut.
   » If a curb cut is no longer in use, repair the curb. In some areas, granite curbs may be required.
   » Do not use paving in the front yard for a parking area. Paving stones might be acceptable in certain instances.
   » Do not create a new driveway or garage that opens onto a primary street.

ACCEPTABLE WALK AND PAVING MATERIALS

Materials that have a similar character, durability and level of detail to walks and paved areas associated with historic properties in the district are acceptable. These often include:

» Gravel or crushed stone
» Shell
» Brick
» Cobblestone
» Grasspave or grasscrete (mix of grass and hard surface paving material that provides a solid surface)
Lighting

Site and exterior building lighting are important considerations for both historic buildings and new construction. Lighting can be an important element in the historic districts. Therefore, where lighting impacts the exterior appearance of a building or of the district in which the building is located, it shall be reviewed for appropriateness as any other element. Lighting should be in character with the historic district.

10.8 Preserve and maintain an original lighting fixture.

» Where possible, recondition and rewire a historic fixture in order to retain it.

10.9 Design lighting that is in character with the setting.

» Use a fixture that is compatible with architectural and site design elements.
» When adding a new fixture, use one that is simple in character.
» Mount a light fixture such that it will not interfere with the opening and closing of a door or shutter.
» Mount a security light, such as a flood light, on the rear or side of a structure rather than the front.
» Design lighting to be contained within a site and to not spill over to a neighboring property.
» Use an inset ceiling light for a porch that spreads light over a porch entrance.
» Use incandescent lighting or a source that appears similar in character. Use a fluorescent or LED source provided the color is similar to that of an incandescent light. For residential projects, use an exterior light source that is in a color range at 3000 Kelvin temperature or below.
» Limit the amount of landscape lighting used on a site to the amount necessary for its purpose for safety or the illumination of important site features. Landscape lighting includes concealed low wattage landscape lighting, uplights for trees or shrubbery or bollard lighting. Use low bollard lighting to illuminate a walkway or a drive aisle.
» Softly illuminate an important architectural feature if desired.
» For commercial properties, minimize stand-alone lighting. Instead, use the ambient light from a storefront as a light source.
» Do not use an imitation historic fixture that may convey a false sense of history.
» Do not use a light source that creates a harsh glare or color.
» Do not use a blinking light.

ACCEPTABLE LIGHTING SOURCES

Lighting sources that produce a light similar in tone and brightness to original lighting used for historic properties in the district are acceptable. These often include:

» Incandescent (low wattage)
» LED lighting that appears similar to an incandescent light
» Mercury vapor
» Moon lighting
» Dark Sky (downward facing)

UNACCEPTABLE LIGHTING SOURCES

Lighting sources that produce a light incompatible in tone and brightness that is discordant with properties in the district are unacceptable. These often include:

» Low sodium
» Metal halide
Heritage Trees

The City of Mobile Tree Commission was established by State Act 61929 in 1961. This act assigned the Mobile Tree Commission with the responsibility of overseeing the protection of trees located in the City’s right-of-ways. Heritage trees are trees in Mobile that are considered to be irreplaceable. Heritage trees are typically determined based on age, rarity, size and other factors. The cutting or removal of heritage trees is strongly discouraged. When it is necessary, a permit from the Mobile Tree Commission will be required.

Vacant Lots

The appearance of a vacant lot can potentially negatively impact the character of a historic district. When a vacant lot exists or is created through demolition, property owners must properly maintain, landscape and/or screen the property. This applies to a temporarily vacant lot. Owners must landscape a vacant lot with a ground cover approved by the ARB, such as grass. The owner must maintain the ground cover and keep the property free of trash and debris, as required by the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Mobile.

10.10 Provide a landscaped front yard for a residential property in a historic district.

- Maintain a predominant appearance of a planted front yard/lawn.
- Minimize paved areas in a front yard.
- Consider using decorative modular pavers, grass and cellular paving systems in order to minimize the impact of hard surface paving where grass or other plant materials are not used.
- In commercial areas, consider using landscaping to screen and soften the appearance of surface parking areas. Use an internal and perimeter landscaping treatment to screen a fenced or walled parking area.
- Do not use landscaping to hide a design feature that is inconsistent with these Design Review Guidelines.

Landscaping

Landscaping is an important character-defining element for Mobile’s historic districts, particularly in residential areas. Where possible, existing landscape features associated with historic properties should be preserved. New landscaping should be consistent in character with landscaping seen in the historic district. In some cases, the ARB may require additional landscaping to that required by the City’s landscaping ordinance.
CHAPTER 11: COMMERCIAL SIGNAGE

This chapter provides guidelines for commercial signage in Mobile’s locally-designated historic districts. Signs are used to identify the location of a business and attract customers. A sign on a historic commercial property should be integral to the design of the building and clearly visible to customers. New signs should exhibit qualities of style, permanence and compatibility with historic signs in the district.

The City’s zoning code provides the basic requirements for signs, including specific sizing and dimensional standards. Please consult MHDC staff regarding any questions or clarifications associated with this chapter.

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Treatment of Historic Signs

This section provides guidelines for the treatment of historic signs within Mobile’s locally-designated historic districts. A historic sign can contribute significantly to the character of a historic property and a district. Historic signs should be retained whenever possible, and especially when they are a significant part of a building’s history or design.

11.1 Consider history, context and design when determining whether to retain a historic sign.

» Retain a historic sign wherever feasible. Historic signage is particularly important when the sign is:
  • Associated with a historic figure, event or place.
  • Significant to the building or historic district, or is evidence of the history of the product, business or service advertised.
  • Characteristic of a specific historic period.
  • Integral to the building’s design or physical fabric.
  • Attached such that removal could harm the integrity of a historic property’s design or damage its materials.
  • An outstanding example of the sign maker’s art because of its craftsmanship, use of materials or design.
  • Recognized as a popular focal point in the community.

11.2 Maintain a historic wall sign whenever possible.

» Leave a historic painted wall sign, or “ghost sign”, exposed whenever possible.
» Do not over-restore a historic wall sign to the point that it no longer provides evidence of a building’s age and original function.
New Signs
This section provides guidelines for new signs on historic buildings, non-contributing buildings and for new construction within Mobile’s locally-designated historic districts. As with historic signs, new signs impact the character of the district. New signs should be designed to be compatible with the associated building and the overall district. Be aware that signage located within the Downtown Development District (DDD) must also meet the DDD Code. See link below:


11.3 Design a new sign to be compatible with the character of a building and the district

11.4 When installing a new sign on a historic building, avoid damaging or obscuring the key architectural features.

» Minimize the number of sign anchor points.
» Use an existing sign bracket if possible.
» Design a sign to integrate with the architectural features of the historic building.
» Avoid penetrating brick when attaching a sign to a masonry building.

11.5 New signs are restricted to a maximum of 64 square feet.
» Directional signage is not counted toward the total square footage allotment.

SIGN PLACEMENT

11.6 Place a sign to be compatible with those in the district.

» When placing a new sign on a historic building, locate a sign to emphasize design elements of the historic building façade.
» Mount a sign to fit within existing architectural features.

SIGN MATERIALS AND CHARACTER

11.7 Use a sign material that is compatible with the materials of the building on which it is placed and the district. New materials that achieve the effect of traditional materials and lighting solutions will be considered on a case by case basis.

» Do not use highly reflective materials for a sign. All plastic faced box signs are not allowed.
» Design a sign to be subordinate to the building façade.

SIGN ILLUMINATION

11.8 Where necessary, use a compatible, shielded light source to illuminate a sign.

» Consider direct lighting toward a sign from an external, shielded lamp when possible.
» Use a warm colored light to illuminate a sign when possible.
» If halo lighting is used to accentuate a sign or building, locate the light source so that it is not visible.
» If a back-lit sign is used, illuminate each individual letter or element separately.
### Traditional Sign Types

A variety of sign types may be appropriate in Mobile if the sign contributes to a sense of visual continuity and does not overwhelm the character of the building façade.

The City’s zoning code includes location and design standards for several specific sign types. The Form Based Code, which provides specific standards for signage in the Downtown Development District, should also be consulted. The following design guidelines supplement code standards for several sign types that are potentially appropriate in Mobile.

#### Awning or Canopy Signs

An awning sign lies flat against the surface of the awning material. An under canopy sign is one that is suspended below a canopy and is usually perpendicular to the building face, but may sometimes be parallel.

Awning or under canopy signs are appropriate for areas with high pedestrian activity. They may also be used when other sign types would obscure architectural details. Under canopy signs that are parallel to the building façade should not extend beyond the building wall.

#### Wall Signs

A wall sign (also called a “flat sign”) is any sign attached to or painted on the outside face of a building. It is erected parallel to the face of the building on which it is supported and may include individual letters, cabinet signs or signs painted on the surface of a wall. Street level wall signs are located on the first floor of a building façade while upper level wall signs are located above the first floor, and may sometimes be painted onto non-primary façade faces.

Wall signs should be placed to align with signs on nearby buildings and should be relatively flush with the building façade, minimizing the depth of a sign panel or letters. They should sit within, rather than forward of, the fascia or other architectural details of a building, ideally within a panel formed by decorative moldings or transom panels where they exist.

When painting a new wall sign, use only board material (such as wood, metal or PVC composite) or a previously painted masonry surface. It is inappropriate to paint a new wall sign on historic brick that was not previously painted.
Window Signs

A window sign is any sign, picture, symbol or combination thereof, designed to communicate information about an activity, business, commodity, event, sale or service that is placed inside within one foot of the inside window pane or upon the windowpanes or glass, and which is visible from the exterior of the window.

Window signs should minimize the amount of window covered and preserve transparency at the sidewalk edge.

Note the DDD restrictions for a window sign.

Directional Signs

A tenant panel or directory sign displays tenant names and locations for a building containing multiple tenants.

Locating a consolidated tenant panel or directory sign near a primary entrance on the first floor wall of a building can help minimize the total number of signs on a building and reduce visual clutter.

Projecting or Hanging Blade Signs

A projecting sign is attached perpendicular to the wall of a building or structure.

A projecting sign should be designed and located to relate to the building façade and entries. It is appropriate to locate a small projecting sign near the business entrance, just above or to the side of the door or to mount a larger projecting sign higher on the building, centered on the façade or positioned at the corner. The bracket for a projecting sign should complement the sign composition.

Note the DDD restrictions for projecting or hanging blade signs.

Pole Mounted Signs

A pole-mounted/freestanding sign is generally mounted on one or two simple poles.

Where they are allowed, pole-mounted signs are restricted to 8 feet and should not rise above the storefront level of adjacent buildings. Pole signs should not include panels that stretch all the way to the ground.

Note the DDD restrictions for a pole mounted sign.
Murals

A mural is a painting located on the side of the building. Mural content should be compatible with the associated building and overall character of the building.

Sandwich Board or Temporary Signs

A sandwich board sign is any freestanding “A-frame type” sign supported by the ground which may or may not be attached to the ground or other objects. Temporary signs include banners, decorations or bunting which commemorate special on-premise events, grand openings on promotional sales.

Note the DDD restrictions for sandwich board or temporary signs.
MONUMENT SIGNS
Monument signs are signs that sit directly on the ground and are completely detached from the building. These signs are typically used for businesses fronting commercial corridors where buildings are set back from the street. Monument signs are typically located within a landscaped front setback area. Monument signs are particularly relevant for commercial properties on Mobile’s corridors that are also located within a locally-designated historic district, such as Government Street or Springhill Avenue. Monument signs should be designed to be compatible with the building and the district.

11.9 When possible design a monument sign to be compatible with the building it serves and the historic district.

» Limit the area of a monument sign to 50 square feet (maximum of 25 square feet on each side).
» Limit the height of a monument sign to 8 feet. A monument sign should be visible, but clearly subordinate to the building.
» Where possible, design a monument sign to be compatible with the architecture of the associated building.
» Use lighting that is shielded and directed toward the sign. This lighting can be installed in the ground adjacent to a monument sign.
» Do not use an internally illuminated monument sign.

ACCEPTABLE SIGN MATERIALS
Sign materials that are similar in character, permanence and durability to historic commercial signage in the district are acceptable. These often include:

» Painted or carved wood
» Individual wood or cast metal letters or symbols
» Stone, such as slate, marble or sandstone
» Painted, gilded or sandblasted glass
» Metal, provided it is appropriate to the architectural character of the building

UNACCEPTABLE SIGN MATERIALS
Sign materials that are not similar in character, permanence and durability to historic commercial signage in the district are unacceptable. These often include:

» Whole plastic face
» Metal inappropriate for the architectural character of the building
CHAPTER 12: DEMOLITION AND RELOCATION OF HISTORIC STRUCTURES

This chapter provides overarching principles regarding the demolition and relocation of historic structures in Mobile’s locally-designated historic districts. Over the last century, many of Mobile’s historic structures have been demolished. Demolition is irreversible and once a building is gone, it also removes an integral component of a historic district in addition to the building itself. As such, property owners must fully consider alternatives to demolition in coordination with the ARB and MHDC staff. Detailed requirements for the demolition and relocation of historic structures are prescribed in Chapter 44, Article IV, Section 44-79 of the Mobile City Code. The guidelines in this section should be applied in conjunction with the criteria set forth in the code. Please consult MHDC staff regarding any questions or clarifications associated with this chapter.

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Demolition Guidelines

This section provides general guidelines for consideration of demolition of a historic structure. The demolition of historic structures is generally not allowed unless there are extraordinary circumstances. When demolition is proposed, consider the following general guidelines.

Significance

As an initial step, determine the significance of the historic structure. An analysis should be undertaken to determine if the historic structure retains its integrity. In some cases, a property previously identified as a contributing historic structure may no longer retain its integrity due to changes to the structure since the time it was originally determined to be historic.

» Consider the current significance of a structure previously determined to be historic.

In some cases, the original designation of a structure as contributing or non-contributing to the historic district in which it is located may no longer be valid either because the structure has lost its historic integrity or because the passage of time or change in appreciation of the structure has resulted in the structure contributing to the character of the district.

Condition

The physical condition of the historic structure should be considered when determining whether or not a structure may be demolished.

» Consider the condition of the structure in question. Demolition may be more appropriate when a building is deteriorated or in poor condition.

Impact on the Street and District

Consider the impact of removing the historic structure relative to its context. Demolition may be more appropriate where the removal of the historic structure does not significantly impact the perception of the block as viewed from the street.

» Consider whether the building is one of the last remaining positive examples of its kind in the neighborhood, county, or region.

Also consider the potential impact of demolition of the structure on the overall context of the structure.

» Consider the impact that demolition will have on surrounding structures, including neighboring properties, properties on the same block or across the street or properties throughout the individual historic district.

» Consider whether the building is part of an ensemble of historic buildings that create a neighborhood.

Nature of Proposed Development

When applicable, the project proposed to replace the structure proposed for demolition should be considered.

» Consider the future utilization of the site.

» If a development is proposed to replace a demolished historic structure, determine that the proposed replacement structure is consistent with the guidelines for new construction in historic districts in Chapters 6 and 7 of this document.
Relocation Guidelines
This section provides general guidelines for consideration of relocation of a historic structure. While relocation is discouraged, it may be preferable to demolition when the new location would be compatible with the character of the building. When relocation is proposed, consider the following general guidelines.

New Location
If relocation of a structure is proposed, first consider the new location that is being proposed.

- Consider whether or not a structure will be relocated within the same district and in a similar context. Relocation may be more appropriate when the receiving site is in the district. Relocated buildings shall be placed in situations that do not impair the architecture of the historical character of the surrounding buildings and district.

Building Placement
The placement of a relocated building should reflect its placement on the original site or another historic district.

- When relocating a building, maintain its general placement and orientation on the new site so as to maintain the architectural and the historical character of the streetscape and district.
- Where possible, relocate a building to a site that is similar in size as perceived from the street.
CHAPTER 13: MOBILE’S HISTORIC DISTRICTS

This chapter provides an overview of each of Mobile’s locally-designated historic districts. This chapter is intended to serve as a reference when reviewing projects in a historic district, particularly when key character-defining features of a district need to be identified. Maps of Mobile’s locally-designated historic districts can be found at:

» http://www.mobilehd.org/maps.html

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Ashland Place

Ashland Place Historic District is over two miles west of downtown, and contains some of the finest architect designed mansions in the city. The district is bounded by Spring Hill Avenue on the north, Old Shell Road to the south, and rear lot lines of properties on the east side of Ryan Avenue on the west and the west side of LeVert Avenue. The wide streets are shaded by large live oak trees, and each house is situated on a large lot. Original curbing and street furniture are intact throughout, as are entrance gates at Old Shell and Spring Hill. The district is one of the smallest in the city, containing less than 100 buildings.

Housing styles within the district reflect the range popular between 1900 and 1955. They include Georgian and Federal Revivals, Colonial and Classical Revivals, Craftsman, Mission Revival, Tudor Revival, English Period Revival and suburban Ranch. The district is significant under criteria for architecture and community planning. The statement for community planning reads in part, “The Ashland Place Historic District is … significant as Mobile’s first early 20th century suburban development geared toward the upper class.” The statement for architecture reads in part, “The district is one of Mobile’s first post-Victorian suburbs composed entirely of early 20th century stylistic trends.” Even so, these modern styles are informed by earlier traditions, including recessed or projecting porches, extensive use of doors and windows for light and ventilation, low pitched roofs and wide eaves.

Key Features of the Ashland Place Historic District

» 1 and 2 Story Single Family Residential
» Medium to Large Building Footprints
» Prevalence of Front Porches
» Deep and Uniform Front Setbacks
» Long Block Lengths
» Significant On-Site Landscaping
» Large Lots

Map located at:
http://maps.cityofmobile.org/pdf_maps/Ashland%20Place%20Historic%20District%20ARB.pdf
Church Street East

This is one of Mobile’s oldest historic districts, first recognized in 1962, and is one of three within the Henry Aaron Loop, or downtown core. It comprises approximately 50 blocks and stretches east to west from roughly Water to Broad Streets and north to south from Government to Canal Streets. Included within this district are Fort Conde Village, two National Historic Landmarks (NHL), and numerous other significant religious, commercial and residential properties.

Fort Conde Village includes a 1976 partial reconstruction of colonial French Fort Conde at 2/3 scale. This serves as an outdoor museum and the City’s official welcome center. During the American Bicentennial celebrations the surrounding streets were paved with brick and gas lamps were installed. A number of early 19th to early 20th century structures surround the fort, including Fort Conde Inn, originally the Hall-Ford House, a two story 1820s Federal/Greek Revival/Gulf Coast Cottage blend.

The NHL’s are Government Street Presbyterian Church, an 1836 Greek Revival Church designed by James and Charles Dakin and James Gallier; and the Old City Hall (the present Museum of Mobile History), an 1850s Italianate building with wide bracketed eaves and a cupola atop.

Church Street East’s busiest thoroughfare is Government, along which are several churches and the antebellum LaClede Hotel with its cast iron balcony. Church Street, one block south, is more sedate, canopied by live oaks and lined by Victorian and Creole cottages.

The district is significant under the criteria of Architecture, “for its large concentration of 19th century buildings. Numerous examples of Greek Revival, Federal, Italianate, Victorian, Neo-Classical as well as the indigenous Gulf Coast cottage are found in the district. The current uses to which buildings are put maintain a distinct link with the city’s 19th century heritage. These buildings reflect the multi-faceted nature of the area, which served governmental, religious, educational, commercial and residential needs. Although there are numerous individually outstanding buildings from an architectural point of view, it is the collective that is of the utmost importance since it is through this that the broad patterns of architectural development can be perceived.”

Key Features of the Church Street East Historic District

» Variety of Building Types and Uses
» 1-3 Story Buildings
» Variety of Building Footprint Sizes
» Prevalence of Front Porches
» Prevalence of Front Yard Fences/Walls
» Shallow, Uniform Setbacks
» Short Block Lengths
» Moderate On-Site Landscaping
» Variety of Lot Sizes

Map located at:

http://maps.cityofmobile.org/pdf_maps/Church%20Street%20East%20Historic%20District%20ARB.pdf
DeTonti Square

Along with Church Street East, De Tonti Square is one of Mobile’s oldest historic districts, with local designation dating to 1962 and National Register designation to 1972. This 9 block area is located within the Henry Aaron Loop, to the north of Dauphin Street. It is Mobile’s oldest extant neighborhood with buildings ranging from the 1830s to the early 20th century. House styles range from Gulf Coast Cottage, Federal, and Italianate townhouses to Victorian and Neo-Classical examples of residential construction. Today the district’s character is mixed residential and office. Downtown is easily walkable, making it popular with professionals. Streets are narrow and lined by large live oak trees.

De Tonti contains some of the city’s most spectacular ornamental cast iron, especially as displayed on the Richards-DAR House (1860) at 260 N. Joachim Street, today a historic house museum. Through its use on verandas and for fencing, ornamental cast iron is character defining for downtown Mobile, creating a strong Southern and coastal ambience. Several other brick townhouses in the district also display handsome ironwork, as well as side hall plans, tall windows and doors, and pressed brick facades. Their interiors feature marble mantels and fine moldings.

Key Features of the DeTonti Square Historic District

» Variety of Building Types
» Primarily 2-Story Residential Buildings
» Medium to Large Building Footprints
» Significant Use of Ornamental Cast Iron
» Variety in Front Setback Depths
» Short Block Lengths
» Moderate On-Site Landscaping

Map located at:
Leinkauf

Leinkauf Historic District was originally placed on the National Register in 1986. An attempt to considerably expand it in 2009 was not accepted by the Alabama Historical Commission because of a loss of integrity along Government Street. However, the Mobile City Council did designate the expanded district and thus it is presently under Architectural Review Board purview. This enlarged Leinkauf district stretches from Ann to Houston Street and Government to Virginia Street. There are within these 209 acres over 700 historic buildings representing nine historic subdivisions dating from the mid-nineteenth century to 1919. The period of significance is 1896-1955. Government Street is heavily commercialized and developed, but the rest of the district is overwhelmingly residential in character.

The National Register listed core of the district is distinguished by many fine Victorian and early 20th century structures, which may be admired along Dexter Avenue, Church Street, and Eslava Street. The district is significant under criteria for architecture and community planning. The statement of significance for architecture states in part, “the boundaries delineate a concentration of structures that represent local 19th century regional influences on national architectural trends of the early 20th century. Elements such as raised brick foundations, large recessed or projecting porches, low pitched roofs with wide eaves, walk-through windows and double leaf windowed doors appear in various combinations on much of the neighborhood’s housing stock.” Under community planning, the district is significant as a representation of early 20th century suburban expansion in Mobile to the west and north.

Outside the NR core but still under ARB control, the character of the district is overwhelmingly residential (except along Government) and large numbers of Bungalows, Minimal Traditional cottages, and early Ranch houses are to be found. Construction is generally one or two story, with a variety of materials (frame, brick, brick veneer) and floorplans represented. Streets are wide.

**Key Features of the Leinkauf Historic District**

- Primarily 1 to 2-Story Single Family Residential (with some commercial uses along corridors)
- Small Building Footprints (with some large buildings along Government Street)
- Uniform Front Setback Depths
- Variety in Block Lengths and Shapes
- Moderate On-Site Landscaping

Map located at:

http://maps.cityofmobile.org/pdf_maps/Leinkauf%20Historic%20District%20ARB.pdf
Lower Dauphin Street

The Lower Dauphin Street Historic District comprises approximately twenty-one blocks fronting or adjacent to Mobile’s most significant commercial street. It is distinguished by two parks—Cathedral Square (1979), and Bienville Square (1849), the latter featuring a bandstand, an 1890 cast iron fountain, and benches. Though commercial in character and feel, there are a number of historic houses in the area, representing a time when commercial and residential uses were routinely mixed. The commercial buildings are closely spaced two and three story brick in a range of late 19th and early 20th century styles, including Federal, Italianate, Classical Revival, and Art Deco. There are several early skyscrapers toward the eastern end, including the 11 story Van Antwerp Building (1906) and the twenty-three story Merchant’s National Bank Building (1929). The district also exhibits important technological innovations, especially the cast iron façade of the Elgin Building (1860). There are three historic firehouses in the district.

Prominent residential properties in this district include an Italianate style house at 8 N. Dearborn (1885), and the Bettie Hunter House at 504 St. Francis Street. The residential architecture of the district is predominantly frame.

The Lower Dauphin Street Historic District is significant for community planning – for the two squares and mix of commercial and residential architecture; commerce, for its collection of 19th and early 20th century commercial buildings including stores, warehouses, hotels, restaurants, theatres, and office buildings; and lastly architecture, “for the variety and integrity of its commercial architecture representing styles from Federal to Art Deco, and exhibiting materials such as cast iron, brick, terra cotta, and frame.”

Key Features of the Lower Dauphin Street Historic District

» Primarily 1-3 Story Commercial Buildings
» Small to Large Building Footprints
» Uniform Setbacks (typically buildings are built to the sidewalk edge)
» Variety in Building Detail and Ornamentation
» Short Block Lengths
» Highly Pedestrian Oriented
» Minimal On-site Landscaping

Map located at:
http://maps.cityofmobile.org/pdf_maps/Lower%20Dauphin%20Historic%20District%20ARB.pdf
Oakleigh Garden

Oakleigh Garden was originally placed on the National Register in 1972, expanded south in 1989, and further locally expanded south and east during the early 2000s. This expanded district stretches roughly Government down to Texas Streets, and Broad Street west to Ann Street. There are over a thousand buildings in this district, and the profusion of live oak, azalea, oleander, crepe myrtle, aspidistra, palm, and many varieties of flowers makes its name especially appropriate.

As the name implies, Oakleigh Garden is anchored by the Oakleigh House Museum. Built in 1833, this raised Greek Revival home sits on an elevated and spacious site. The surrounding blocks are lined with beautiful examples of historic architecture, primarily residential, ranging in style from the Greek Revival to the Queen Anne and Bungalow. The district is significant under criteria for Landscape Architecture as well as Architecture. Its live oak trees, planted from 1850 to 1910, and in particular Washington Square, laid out in 1850, give the district a sylvan and relaxed feel.

The Oakleigh Garden District’s architecture changes character as one proceeds north to south. The largest mansions – Queen Anne, Georgian, Neo-Classical Revival—are to be found along Government Street. Washington Square is surrounded by very fine middle class Victorian cottages, and as one drives the southern blocks along Elmira and Texas Streets, working class shotgun houses prevail.

Key Features of the Oakleigh Garden Historic District
» 1-2 Story Single Family Residential
» Primarily Small Building Footprints (with some larger along Government Street)
» Uniform Front Setbacks within Single Blocks
» Medium Block Lengths
» Moderate On-Site Landscaping

Map located at:
Old Dauphin Way

Old Dauphin Way is Mobile’s second largest National Register historic district, and the largest under Architectural Review Board protection. It consists of roughly 3,000 buildings, the majority of them contributing. The district’s dominant character is residential, with numerous live oak canopied streets.

Old Dauphin Way is significant under the criteria for architecture and community planning as Mobile’s earliest suburban neighborhood dating largely from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Its growth was driven by horsedrawn and later, electric trolleys. Significant collections of Victorian, Neo-Classic, American Four Square, Bungalow, and Period Revival (Spanish, Tudor, and American colonial revivals) are represented, superimposed on scattered mid-19th century Gulf Coast and Greek Revival cottages. The buildings are mostly single family residential, but there are notable examples of apartments, schools, and churches within the district.

Most buildings within the district are small-scaled residential structures of one to two stories, with similar setbacks, materials and scale. It is evident that buildings constructed in the neighborhood respond to local climatic conditions through the use of raised pier foundations, large window and door openings and deeply recessed porches. It is only by the 1930s when attempts were made to mechanically control interior climate, and residences from that decade take on more national stylistic characteristics.

Among Old Dauphin Way’s most attractive and distinctive areas are the early examples of city planning principals for early 20th century suburbs. These include Fearnway (1908), Blacklawn (1914), and Monterey Place (1910) with their broad landscaped central medians. Other elements of these small developments include entrance gates and street furniture.

Key Features of the Old Dauphin Way Historic District

» 1-2 Story Single Family Residential (Wide variety of uses along corridors)
» Medium to Large Building Footprints
» Uniform Front Setbacks within Single Blocks
» Long Block Lengths
» Varying Degrees of On-Site Landscaping

Map located at:
This chapter provides a series of technical appendices. This contains important reference information that may be valuable to those using the Design Review Guidelines document.

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Mobile’s Architectural Style Descriptions

This appendix describes the prominent historic architectural styles in Mobile’s locally designated historic districts.

Federal

While America might have won political independence from Great Britain, the young republic remained culturally dependent on British tastes and fashions well into the 19th Century. The Federal style was the first of the British informed American architectural expressions to impact Mobile. High style examples in Boston and Charleston featured buildings with curved bays reflecting rooms of varied size and shape. Elaborate ornamentation in plaster and composition based on Antique Roman motifs enlivened interiors and exteriors alike. In Mobile, Federal design motifs, elements, and constructions were adapted to vernacular (local or regional) building types. Mobile has few intact buildings. Of those surviving, the Bishop Portier House on Conti Street is the finest example. The Portier House’s attenuated forms, Roman orders (Tuscan columns and entablatures), delicate fanlights, and arched dormers represent quintessential attributes of the Federal Style.

Greek Revival

The craze for forms and details culled from Greecian ruins permeated the whole the Western World from the late 18th Century well into the 19th Century. Mobile was very responsive to Greek Revival, so much so that it is has been called the “Pillared City” on account of its reception to and adoption of the Greek Revival. Building types (temple form buildings like Christ Church Cathedral), constructions (“Egyptian Doors” – entrances with battered or sloped casings, eared or projected tops, and raked or peaked crowns), and details (anthemions, frets, palmettes) changed the look and feel of Mobile’s architectural landscape. Nascent aspects of the Greek Revival arrived as early as the 1820s. Fully-fledged stylistics exemplars appeared by the 1830s.

Notable Greek Revival buildings include Government Street Presbyterian Church (one of Mobile’s two National Historic Landmarks) and Barton Academy. These two institutional buildings represent high style New York translations of the Greek Revival. Both of the aforementioned buildings were designed by Gallier and Dakin. Other noteworthy instances include the Washington No. 5 Firehouse on Lawrence Street and the Beal-Hunter House on North Conception Street. As with many 19th Century styles, the motifs of the Greek Revival were adapted to local building types, such as the Staples House on Old Shell Road, a fine example of a Coastal Cottage.
Italianate
Like the Greek Revival, the Italianate style constituted an international phenomenon that impacted the built environment in Mobile. Taking two distinctive Latin forms, those modeled on the villa and the palazzo respectively, the Italianate arrived in Mobile in the 1850s. The City has some remarkable expressions of a stylist that was popular into the 1880s.

The villa variant of the Italianate was informed by country residences of Tuscany. Coupled openings, projecting bays, overhanging eaves, and decorative brackets typify the villa mode. Many Mobile Side Hall and Side Hall with Wing Dwellings adopted Italianate details and constructions of the villa mode. The most well-known of Mobile’s Italianate dwellings is the Richard’s DAR House.

The palazzo idiom of the Italianate was influenced by the facades of residences in cities such as Rome and Florence. Characterized by regularized and repetitive motifs, the palazzo variant of the Italianate largely realized itself on commercial facades. The Daniels-Elgin Building at Royal and Water Streets is an exemplary essay in the Italianate, as well as textbook example of prefabricated cast-iron construction.

The Italianate and Greek Revival often comingled. The resulting “Bracketed Greek Revival” buildings feature monumental or two-story columns and bracketed eaves. The Bragg-Mitchell Mansion constitutes an instance of the eclectic blending those two pervasive 19th Century architectural expressions on the local level.

Gothic Revival
In contrast to the classically attuned Greek Revival and Italianate, the Gothic Revival looked not to worlds of Greece and Roman, but to the so-called Middle Ages. At once a literary and architectural expression, the Gothic Revival had both British and French trains of thought, not to mention expressions. The British Gothic Revival strongly shaped Mobile. Regardless of origin, Gothic Revival buildings feature pointed arches, steep roofs, battlements, and other devices.

Interestingly, one of the most notable buildings of early American Mobile was the Protestant Church, a structure featuring Gothic informed elements. During the 1850s, several impressive Gothic Revival townhouses were constructed. Sadly those residences are no longer extant.

One of Mobile’s surviving Gothic Revival buildings is Trinity Episcopal Church on Dauphin Street. That building is one of three houses of worship in Alabama designed by Dudley and Wills of New York. This building was moved from downtown during the 1940s and has had some recent unsympathetic alterations. Several board and batten cottages of Gothic Revival persuasion are to be found on Dauphin Street and Old Shell Road. The Macy House located Dauphin Street and Macy Place is a fine example.
Romanesque
The Romanesque Revival, as with Gothic Revival, reflected an interest and investigation of architecture beyond the then Greek and Roman informed norms. Very few survivals of this style are to be found in Mobile. Arched openings, masonry construction, and solid massing define the expression. Most local expressions of the Romanesque, a distinctive subset known as the Richardson Romanesque, were indebted to the Aesthetics Movement and will be discussed below.

High Victorian / Queen Anne
The high Victorian epoch coincided with Mobile’s Postbellum era. Mobile’s late Victorian houses include high and low style examples, and to call most of them Queen Anne would be misleading. There existed many High Victorian styles. Stick, Shingle, and Richardsonian Romanesque are just stylistic categories for numerous other expressions of the larger Aesthetics Movement. The Queen Anne was the most pervasive of the High Victorian styles. Something of a Misnomer, it resembled little which was constructed during the reign of the Stuart Queen. To nuance matters further, differences existed between the English and American articulations of the style.

Regardless of the persuasion, Queen Anne buildings are more complicated in plan and elevation than their predecessors. Rooms of varying sizes and shapes expressed themselves in compartmentalized exteriors. Bay windows, towers, umbrages of all description, and other constructions enlivened streetscapes and skylines. To the diversity of overall form there was variety of material expression. Shingles, slates, clapboards, tiles, and stained glass provided for array in color and texture.

Mobile’s most elaborate Queen residence is the Tacon-Tissington House at Government Street and South Georgia Avenue. Other prominent examples occur along Government Street, Dauphin Street, and Michigan Avenue. Modest middle class Victorian houses of almost infinite variety are common in Church Street East, Oakleigh Garden, and Old Dauphin Way, and Leinfauf. Commercial examples of the Queen Anne include the Spira, Spira & Pincus, and Scheuerman Buildings.
Period and Colonial Revivals—Spanish, Dutch, Tudor, English, Georgian, and “Southern”

The archaeological fixations of the 19th Century paled in comparison to those of the early 20th Century. The first three decades of the 20th Century witnessed reflection on Continental European and then examination of American Colonial design traditions. The level of exactitude ranged from evocation of past styles to full-fledged replication.

European informed Period Revivals took such diverse expressions as the French Renaissance (Burgess on Government Street), Swiss (Davis House on DeLeon Avenue), and Louis XVI (Clark-Hubbard House first incarnation on Government Street). A number of Mobile mansions featured rooms expressing various historical styles. Scrutiny of Continental expressions led to a sustained interest in America’s Colonial pasts.

The American Colonial Revival partook of the whole range of Continental and British architectural adaptions to America’s material and social conditions.

Spanish Colonial buildings feature stuccoed walls, arched openings, shaped parapets, and tiled roofs. Large in size, these dwellings often drew from specific styles and examples of the Spanish Colonial epoch. Mission style examples are less specific in origin and expression, as well as smaller in scale. The Fearn House on Old Government Street, Sims House on Lanier Avenue, the Gulf, Mobile & Ohio Railroad Station, and the Government Street Methodist Church are fine examples of the Spanish Colonial Revival.

Dutch Colonial revival buildings possess steeply pitched roofs and dormer windows. Most examples are residential in nature. These houses are predominately constructed with wooden clapboards. Examples of the Dutch Colonial Revival include the Christian House on Old Shell Road near the center of “Waterman Row” and the Dortch House on Lanier Avenue.

Adoption and exploration of English Colonial Design evolved. An earlier essay in the English Colonial is the Schley-Rutherford House at Selma and Ann Streets. Increased travel by architects and clients coupled with a vast increase in architectural publications resulted in more exacting expressions of English Colonial heritage. Georgian Colonial Revival buildings responded to British architecture of the Eastern seaboard. They evolved from and spurred further exploration of Tudor and other medieval styles. Whether constructed of bricks or clapboards, Georgian Colonial buildings invariably boasted symmetrical façades, sash windows, wooden shutter, and prominent entrances. The Walker House on Ashland Place Avenue and the Eichold House on South Georgia Avenue fine expressions of the expression in the residential sphere, while the Battle House’s façade Is an excellent institutional instance.

The Southern Colonial is the most nuanced of the American Colonial Revival styles. Characterized by a monumental portico, Southern Colonial buildings drew upon contemporary conceptualizations of both Colonial and Antebellum era precedents. The Robinson Houses on Government Street and Levert Avenue are two examples of the Southern Colonial.
**Arts and Crafts**

More of a movement than a style, the Arts and Crafts expression, like the Aesthetics Movement before and informing it, represented the architectural articulation of a larger societal-cultural worldview. A perceived vehicle of stylistic and lifestyle reform, the Arts & Crafts Movement employed houses informed by hearths and living rooms. Large porches often encircle Arts and house dwellings. Expressions vary, but they invariably relied upon the honest expression of materials and construction. Most of Mobile’s Arts and Crafts informed buildings are residential in nature. Bungalows constitute the most popular typology. Fine examples line North Reed, Bienville, and DeMouy Avenues. Fearnway features particularly impressive forays. See the ensuing section for a description on bungalows. Though the residential examples far outnumber other examples, St. Joan of Arc Church at Elmira and Selma Streets is notable instance of an Arts & Crafts house of worship.

**Modern**

Definitions and expressions of modern architecture vary. A core tenet of modern architectural theory and style was a want to break with the past. Discourse on modern design impacted all building types. The commercial architectural landscape was the first to respond to varying views of modernity. The Waterman Building is one of the South’s finest examples of an International Modern skyscraper. Not only does the building reference an earlier style, but form is an outward expression of spaces within (form following function). The little Sisters of the Poor and International Trade Buildings are fine essays of modern architecture. The designs and site plans of the aforementioned buildings pay homage to a so-called “Institutional Versailles” approach to planning. Many modern buildings employed new materials.
Mobile’s Architectural Typologies

This appendix describes the architectural typologies associated with Mobile’s locally designated historic districts.

Creole/Gulf Coast Cottage

The Creole and Gulf Coast Cottages represent two of Alabama’s most distinctive and related vernacular housing typologies. In Mobile, examples are scattered throughout all the districts except Ashland Place, a district that was originally centered on expanded version of a Coastal Cottage. As is generally accepted along the Gulf Coast, Creole Cottages are those houses with no interior passageways while Gulf Coast Cottages are those with the distinctive central hall plan. The Creole Cottage was a French building preference, brought via Normandy, Canada and the West Indies to the Gulf Coast. The Americans liked its practicality and lines, and added the central hallway, which they brought with them from the Eastern Seaboard.

North Conception Street in DeTonti Square and South Dearborn Street in Church Street East are lined Creole Cottages. The Hall Ford House on St. Emanuel Street is a particularly impressive manifestation of a Coastal Cottage. That dwelling is informed by stuccoed brick first story, frame upper stories, and full two story gallery supported by fluted columns. Coastal Cottages with wings, an elaboration of core type, are found on Spring Hill Avenue and in Spring Hill.

Side Hall and Side Hall with Wing

Side Hall dwellings were the principle constituted the principle residential typology of 19th America. The name is no misnomer. Quite simply put, a side hall house features a series of rooms accessed by hall located to one side. They were constructed singularly and in rows Side Halls don stylistic icings ranging from the Greek Revival to Italianate to the Queen Anne. The house type houses were especially well adapted to urban lots.

Single story side halls were constructed in Mobile, as were other variations. These single story examples are found in large numbers in Old Dauphin Way and Oakleigh Garden in particular. The most pervasive and distinctive of Mobile Side Halls was an expanded version which can be referred to as a Side Hall with Wing. A traditional Side Hall with an engaged wing, that particular housing option became the preferred housing type of Mobile’s civic-commercial elite during the middle third of the 19th Century. A number of Side Halls were enlarged to become Side Hall with Wings. At the turn of the Century, there were over four hundred Side Hall with Wings in Mobile. Currently, less than forty of Mobile’s most distinctive dwelling type survive. The Richards DAR, Bernstein House (Carnival Museum), St. John-Rutherford, and Hamilton-Snider Houses are notable examples.
Shotgun
Shotgun houses are located across the American South. The earlier known example dates circa 1860. Shotguns first appeared locally in large number in the 1880s, near the rail yards and river, and exploded in popularity during the first decade of the 19th century, and continued to be built up to World War II. So called for their long narrow construction with aligned front doors (if you fired a shotgun through the front, the buckshot would pass clean through the house) and rumored to have African cultural antecedents, the Shotgun were inexpensive and easy to construct. Speculators and mill owners erected them in large numbers. Demolitions have taken their toll, but many shotguns survive, mostly in Oakleigh, Texas Hills, Old Dauphin Way, and Church Street East. There are several nice rows of them, especially along Caroline Avenue and Elmira Street.

As the name implies, Shotguns are defined by their form and plan, but there are variations, usually in the form of a side wing. In Oakleigh on Chatham Street and in ODW on Julia Street, a few camelbacks are present. Different stylistic elements are featured on shotgun house facades, depending on when constructed or modernized. Early examples are very plain, one in CSE on Dearborn has Greek Revival columns; Victorian era models include turned posts, balusters, brackets and drop friezes, and boxed eaves; Craftsman era Shotguns have exposed rafters, battered porch columns on brick plinths, and knee braces and louvered vents in the gables.

American Foursquare
The American Foursquare represents a uniquely American building type. Foursquares, box-like houses with four principle rooms upstairs and similar number of rooms upstairs, were very common in Mobile. Georgia Avenue in the Oakleigh Garden District is lined with an impressive number of examples of varying styles. Other good examples of this basic box can be found in Old Dauphin Way and Leinkauf.

The heyday of the American Foursquare was from the turn of the 20th forward to about 1920 at the latest. Like the side hall plan, the Foursquare was adaptable to various stylistic and ornamental variations, but is most commonly associated with Neo-classical. One story examples, sometimes referred to as the Workingman’s Foursquare, are to be found in ODW, Leinkauf, and Midtown. Sometimes Foursquare dwellings feature side halls or foyers, but entry directly into the living space is not uncommon.
Bungalow
Bungalows even more than Shotguns have subject of much spilled ink. Scholarly discourse traces the origins of the building type to vernacular housing on Asian Continent. The temporary umbrage-skirted form has been shown to have evolved into an international colonial expression by way of the expansion of Empire. Bungalows remain the quintessential expression of the Arts and Crafts Movement. That said classically detailed examples were constructed. Anchoring porches, prominent roofs, and plans anchored around living spaces inform the house type. By the 1920s Bungalows became great favorites with middle class Americans nationwide, and even working class residents adapted some of its features. The popularity of the bungalow coincided with the Mobile’s early to mid-20th century suburban growth, and great concentrations are found toward the western reaches of Old Dauphin Way and Midtown.

Ranch House
By the late 1940s, Ranch houses were appearing in Mobile’s expanding suburbs and they came to dominate residential construction for several decades thereafter. Ranch houses are defined by a low slung massing expressive of situation on large lots and responsive to single family habitation. While Ranch houses generally utilized new materials, a sizable number of Mobile’s ranch houses employed salvaged materials. Handmade bricks and cast or wrought ironwork distinguish many Mobile expressions of the nationwide type.
Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation

The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation are as follows:

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 alterations of the 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 example 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 can 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 archaeological 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, 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.
Sustainability and Energy Efficiency Guidelines

This section addresses the addition of sustainability and energy efficiency features to the exteriors of historic structures. The addition of any modern technological features should be designed to minimize impacts to the historic structure.

Sustainability

Objectives for historic preservation and community sustainability are often in alignment. This section provides solutions for maintaining and improving resource and energy efficiency in historic buildings, as well as methods for approaching energy conservation and generation technologies.

Maintaining Inherent Energy Efficiency

A.1 Preserve the inherent energy efficient features of the original building.

» Identify a building’s inherent sustainable features and operating systems and maintain them in good condition.
» Repair or restore covered, damaged or missing features where appropriate.

A.2 Maintain a building’s energy efficient features in operable condition.

» Retain original shutters, awnings, canopies and transoms. Operable features like these will increase the range of conditions in which a building is comfortable without mechanical climate controls.
» Install draft stoppers in a chimney to increase energy efficiency.
Enhancing Energy Performance

Improvements to enhance energy efficiency should complement the original building. The structure, form and materials of energy efficiency improvements should preserve the building’s character. Weather-stripping, insulation and storm windows are energy efficient, cost effective and historically sensitive approaches.

A.3 Use noninvasive strategies when applying weatherization techniques.

- Weather-strip original framework on windows and doors.
- Install additional insulation in an attic, basement or crawl space as a simple method to make a significant difference in a building’s energy efficiency. Provide sufficient ventilation to avoid moisture build-up in the wall cavity.
- Install weatherization strategies in a way that avoids altering or damaging significant materials and their finishes.
- Use materials that are environmentally friendly and that will not interact negatively with historic building materials.
- When a roof must be replaced, consider installing a radiant barrier.

A.4 Enhance the energy efficiency of original windows and doors.

- Make best use of original windows; keep them in good repair and seal all leaks.
- Retain early glass, taking special care in putty replacement.
- Maintain the glazing compound regularly. Remove old putty with care.
- Use operable systems such as storm windows, insulated coverings, curtains and awnings to enhance performance of original windows.
- Weather strip and caulk original framework.
- Double pane glazing may be acceptable where original glazing has been lost and the frame can support the weight and profile.
A.5 Design site and landscape improvements to promote energy efficiency.

» Use drought tolerant plants to reduce the need for irrigation.
» Plant trees and shrubbery to serve as windbreaks and provide seasonal shading.

A.6 Avoid adverse impacts to a historic building when installing a green roof.

» A green roof provides thermal mass to help regulate internal temperature, as well as helps to reduce the urban heat island effect.
» Green roof material should not replace historically significant roofing materials.
» The weight of the green roof should not threaten the structural integrity of the building. If additional structural support is needed, it should avoid adverse impact to the building’s historic significance.
Residential Building Energy Efficiency Diagram

This diagram summarizes the principal guidelines for a rehabilitation project for energy efficiency on a residential building. These measures can enhance energy efficiency while retaining the integrity of the historic structure.

**Chimney**
- Install draft stopper

**Attic**
- Insulate internally

**Roof Material**
- Retain and repair

**Solar Panels**
- Set back from primary facade

**Doors**
- Retain and repair original and early doors
- Weather strip

**Exterior Color**
- Consider using a light colored paint when appropriate to the style

**Shutters, Awnings and Porches**
- Repair and retain original or early windows
- Weather strip

**Windows**
- Weather strip
- Set back from primary facade
- Repair and retain original or early windows
- Enhance thermal and acoustic efficiency with storm windows (preferably interior)
- Insulate internally
- Install draft stopper
- Set back from primary facade
- Repair and retain original or early windows
- Weather strip
Commercial Building Energy Efficiency Diagram

This diagram summarizes the principal guidelines for a rehabilitation project for energy efficiency on a commercial building. These measures can enhance energy efficiency while retaining the integrity of the historic structure.

Wind Turbines
» Set back from primary facade to minimize visibility from street

Roof Material
» Retain and repair

Upper story windows
» Maintain original windows
» Weather strip and caulk
» Add storm windows (preferably interior)

Transoms
» Retain operable transom to circulate air

Solar Panels
» Set back from primary facade to minimize visibility from the street

Attic
» Insulate internally

Green Roof
» Place below parapet line to minimize visibility from the street

Awnings/Galleries
» Use operable awnings to control solar access and heat gain
» Use fixed galleries or canopies to provide year-round shade and shelter

Doors
» Maintain/weather strip original doors
» Weather strip
» Consider interior air lock area when appropriate to the style of the building

Storefront Windows
» Maintain/weather strip original windows
Energy-Generating Technologies
When integrating modern energy technology into a historic structure, maintain the resource’s historic integrity and the ability to interpret its historic significance. Use of energy-generating technologies should be the final option considered in an efficiency rehabilitation project. Utilize strategies to reduce energy consumption prior to undertaking an energy generation project. Consider the overall project goals and energy strategies when determining if a specific technology is appropriate for your project.

As new technologies are tried and tested, it is important that they leave no permanent negative impacts to historic structures. The reversibility of their application will be a key consideration when determining appropriateness.

A.7 Locate energy-generating technology to minimize impacts to the historic character of the site and structure.

» Locate technology where it will not damage, obscure or cause removal of significant features or materials.
» Maintain the ability to interpret the historic character of the building.
» Plan installation of integrated photovoltaic systems so they will not hinder the ability to interpret the historic significance of the structure. For example, installation of solar shingles on a rear or secondary roof façade where the original roof material is missing or significantly damaged would be appropriate.
» Size collector arrays to remain subordinate to the historic structure.
» Mount collectors flush below the ridge line on a sloping roof.
» Install collectors on an addition or secondary structure.
» Minimize visual impacts by locating collectors back from the front façade.
» Ensure that exposed hardware, frames and piping have a matte finish, and are consistent with the color scheme of the primary structure.

A.8 Install new technology in a reversible manner.

» Install technology in such a way that it can be readily removed and the original character easily restored.
» Use materials that are environmentally friendly and that will not interact negatively with historic building materials.
» Attach turbines in a manner that avoids damage to significant features.
» Install turbines to allow restoration of affected building areas.
» Install turbines as freestanding structures in unobtrusive locations when feasible.
» Do not overload structural or roof protection systems when attaching turbines.
Locating Energy Generating Technologies

When locating energy generating technology on a historic property, it is important to minimize visibility from the street and impacts on historic buildings. As illustrated below, the ideal location for wind turbines and solar panels is in an unobtrusive location on the property.
SOLAR COLLECTORS
Solar collectors should be designed, sized and located to minimize their effect on the character of a historic building.

A.9 Use the least invasive method feasible to attach solar collectors to a historic roof.

» Avoid damage to significant features.
» Install a collector in such a way that it can be removed and the original character easily restored.
» Do not threaten the structural integrity of the building with collector arrays.
Locating Solar Panels on a Historic Structure

When locating historic panels on a historic building, it is important to consider the building’s significance as well as the visibility of the proposed installation location.

**Existing Structure**
The two-story structure illustrated at right has a significant south-facing sloped roof area.

- Gable roof end faces the street
- Side of roof faces south

**Preferred Location**
If the existing structure has a high level of historic significance, the surrounding context has many intact historic structures or the roof is highly visible, panels should be set back from the front facade and flush-mounted to the roof.

- Panels are set back from the front facade
- Panels are flush with the roof

**Acceptable Location**
If the roof is highly visible and/or site constraints restrict solar access, it may be appropriate to locate flush-mounted solar panels towards the front facade.

- Panels are set back from the eave, but closer to the front
- Panels are flush with the roof
- Panels are subordinate to the roof plane
Outside Preservation Resources
This section includes contact information and web addresses for accessing local, State and national resources relevant to historic preservation.

Local Resources
Mobile Historic Development Commission
205 Government Street, Second Floor, South Tower
Post Office Box 1827
Mobile, Alabama 36633-1827
http://www.mobilehd.org

For information on Mobile’s Historic Districts, Certificates of Appropriateness, and technical assistance, contact the MHDC staff, 251-208-7281.

State Resources
State Historic Preservation Office
The Alabama Historical Commission
468 South Perry Street
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-0900
www.preserveala.org

National Resources
U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240
http://www2.cr.nps.gov

National Trust for Historic Preservation
1785 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20036
http://www.nationaltrust.org

Southeast Regional Office of the National Park Service
NPS/Atlanta Federal Center
100 Alabama Street, SW
Atlanta, GA 30303
Glossary of Architectural Terms

ALKYD RESIN PAINT
a common modern paint using alkyd (one group of thermoplastic synthetic resins) as the vehicle for the pigment; often confused with oil paint.

ALUMINUM SIDING
sheets of exterior architectural covering, usually with a colored finish, fabricated of aluminum to approximate the appearance of wood siding. Aluminum siding was developed in the early 1940s and became increasingly common in the 1950s and 1960s.

ARCH
a structure formed of wedge-shaped stones, bricks or other objects laid so as to maintain one another firmly in position. A rounded arch generally represents classical or Romanesque influence whereas a pointed arch denotes Gothic influence.

ARCHITRAVE
the lowest part of a classical entablature, symbolizing a beam laid across capitals of columns, or as more commonly used in connection with houses, the moulded trim atop a door or window opening.

ASBESTOS SIDING
dense, rigid board containing a high portion of asbestos fibers bonded with Portland cement; resistant to fire, flame or weathering, and having a low resistance to heat flow. It is usually applied as large overlapping shingles. Asbestos siding was applied to many buildings in the 1950s.

ASHLAR
a squared building stone.

ASPHALT SHINGLE
a shingle manufactured from saturated roofing felts (rag, asbestos or fiberglass) coated with asphalt and finished with mineral granules on the side exposed to the weather.

ASPHALT SIDING
siding manufactured from saturated construction felts (rag, asbestos or fiberglass) coated with asphalt and finished with mineral granules on the side exposed to weather. It sometimes displays designs seeking to imitate brick or stone. Asphalt siding was applied to many buildings in the 1950s.

ATTIC VENTILATOR
in houses, a screened or louvered opening, sometimes in decorative shapes, located on gables or soffits. Victorian styles sometimes feature sheet soffits or metal ventilators mounted on the roof ridge above the attic.

AWNING
a roof-like covering of canvas, often adjustable, over a door, window, etc. to provide protection against sun, rain and wind. Aluminum awnings were developed in the 1950s.

BALUSTRADE
a low barrier formed of balusters, or uprights, supporting a railing.
BAND, BAND COURSE, BAND MOLD, BELT
flat trim running horizontally in the wall to denote a division in the wall plane or a change in level.

BARGEBOARD (ALSO VERGEBOARD)
a wooden member, usually decorative, suspended from and following the slope of a gable roof. Bargeboards are used on buildings inspired by Gothic forms.

BAY
within a structure a regularly repeated spatial element usually defined in plan by beams and their supports, or in elevation by repetition of windows and doors in the building façade.

BEVELED GLASS
glass panes whose edges are ground and polished at a slight angle so that patterns are created when panes are set adjacent to one another.

BLINDS
external or internal louvered wood shutters on windows and doors that exclude direct sunlight but admit light when the louvers are raised.

BOARD-AND-BATTEN
closely applied vertical boards, the joints of which are covered by vertical narrow wooden strips; usually found on Gothic Revival-style buildings.

BOND
the laying of bricks or stones regularly in a wall according to a recognized pattern for strength. Masonry bond is essential to brickwork when wire reinforcement is not used.

BRACKET
a symbolic cantilever, usually of a fanciful form, used under the cornice in place of the usual modile or modillion. Brackets were used extensively in Victorian architecture and gave rise to a style known as Bracketed Victorian.

BULKHEAD
the area below the display windows on the front façade of a commercial storefront.

CAPITAL
the top head of a column. In classical architecture there exist orders of columns: Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, Tuscan, and Composite.

CASEMENT WINDOW
a window that swings open along its entire length, usually on hinges fixed to the sides of the opening into which it is fitted.

CASING
the exposed trim moulding, framing, or lining around a door or a window, may be either flat or moulded.

CAST IRON
iron that has been shaped by being melted and cast in a mold.

CAULKING
a resilient mastic compound, often having a silicone, bituminous, or rubber base; used to seal cracks, fill joints, prevent leakage, and/or provide waterproofing.
CHALKING
the formation of a powder surface condition from the disintegration of a binder or an elastomer in a paint coating; caused by weathering or an otherwise destructive environment.

CHAMFER
a beveled edge or corner.

CHECKING
small cracks in a film of paint or varnish that do not completely penetrate to the previous coat; the cracks are in a pattern roughly similar to a checkerboard.

CLAPBOARD
horizontal wooden boards, tapered at the upper end and laid as to cover a portion of similar board underneath and to be covered by a similar one above. The exposed face of clapboard is usually less than 6 inches wide. This is a common outer face of nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings.

CLASSICAL
a loose term used to describe the architecture of ancient Greece and Rome, and later European offshoots, the Renaissance, Baroque, and Rococo styles. In the United States, classical embraced Georgian, Federal, Greek Revival, and Renaissance Revival (or Neoclassical).

CLERESTORY
windows located relatively high up in a wall that often tend to form a continuous band. This was a feature of many Gothic cathedrals and was later adapted to many of the Revival styles found here.

COLONIAL ARCHITECTURE
architecture transplanted from the motherlands to overseas colonies, such as Portuguese Colonial architecture in Brazil, Dutch Colonial architecture in New York, and above all, English Georgian architecture of the eighteenth century in the North American colonies.

COLUMN
a vertical shaft or pillar that supports or appears to support a load.

COMPATIBLE
consistent or in keeping with the original.

COMPOSITION BOARD
a building board, usually intended to resemble clapboard, fabricated from wood or paper fabric under pressure at an elevated temperature, usually with a binder.

COPING
the cap or the top course of a masonry wall.

CORBEL
a projection (or building out) from a masonry wall, sometimes to support a load and sometimes for a decorative effect.

CORNER BLOCK
a block placed at a corner of the casing around wooden door or window frame, usually treated ornamentally.
CORNER BOARD
one of the narrow vertical boards at the corner of a traditional wooden frame building, into which the clapboards butt.

CORNICE
the top part of an entablature, usually moulded and projecting; originally intended to carry the eaves of a roof beyond the outer wall.

CRESTING
decorative iron tracery or jigsaw work placed at the ridge of a roof.

CUPOLA
a small dome on top of a roof; sometimes spherical in shape, sometimes square with a mansard or conical roof often used to provide light or ventilation to the building.

DECK
an uncovered porch, usually at the rear of a building; popular in modern residential design; also used in early 20th century design atop the first story porch of a two story house.

DENTIL
a repetitive cubical element at the base of a classical cornice. Dentils resemble teeth.

DORMER
a structure containing a window (or windows) that projects through a pitched roof.

DOUBLE-HUNG WINDOW
a window with two sashes that open and close by sliding up and down in a cased frame.

DOWNSPOUT
a vertical pipe, often of sheet metal, used to conduct water from a roof drain or gutter to the ground or a cistern.

DRESSED
descriptive of stone, brick or lumber that has been prepared, shaped, or finished by cutting, planning or rubbing, or sanding one or more of its faces.

EAVE
the part of a sloping roof that projects beyond a wall.

ELEVATION
a drawing showing the vertical elements of a building, either exterior or interior, as a direct projection to a vertical plane.

ENTABLATURE
a horizontal member divided into triple sections consisting of, from top to bottom, an architrave (symbolizing a beam), a frieze, usually ornamented, and a cornice.

ESCUTCHEON
a protective plate, sometimes decorated, surrounding the keyhole of a door, a light switch or similar device.

ETCHED GLASS
glass whose surface has been cut away with a strong acid or by abrasive action into a decorative pattern.
FAÇADE
the exterior face of a building, technically the front or principal face of a building; usage has expanded it to encompass any elevation, e.g., the south facade

FANLIGHT
an arched over door window, usually non-operable, whose form and tracery suggest an open fan.

FASCIA
a flat board with a vertical face that forms the trim along the edge of a flat roof, or along the horizontal, or eave side of a pitched roof. The rain gutter is often mounted on it.

FENESTRATION
the design of windows and their openings in a building.

FINIAL
a formal ornament at the top of a canopy, gable, pinnacle, street light, etc.

FLASHING
a thin impervious material placed in construction to prevent water penetration, to provide water drainage, or both, especially between a roof and a wall.

FLUSH SIDING
wooden siding that lies on a single plane; commonly applied horizontally except when applied vertically to accent an architectural feature.

FLUTING
a system of vertical grooves (flutes) in the shaft of an Ionic, Corinthian, or Composite column. Doric columns have proportions of the cylindrical surface of the columns separating the flutes.

FOUNDATION
the supporting portion of a structure below the first floor construction, or below grade, including footings.

FRENCH WINDOW
a long window reaching to floor level and opening in two leaves like a pair of doors.

FRETWORK
a geometrically meandering strap pattern; a type of ornament consisting of a narrow fillet or band that is folded, crossed, and interlaced.

FRIEZE
the intermediate member of a classical entablature, usually ornamented; also a horizontal decorative panel. A frieze is a feature of the Greek Revival style, but may be found in other types of architecture.

GABLE
the vertical triangular piece of a wall at the end of a ridged roof, from the level of the eaves to the summit.

GALVANIZE
to coat steel or iron with zinc, as, for example, by immersing it in a bath of molten zinc.
GAMBREL ROOF
a table roof more or less symmetrical, having four inclined surfaces, the pair meeting at the ridge and having a shallower pitch.

GERMAN SIDING
wood siding with a concave upper edge that fits into a corresponding rabbet in the siding above.

GLAZING
fitting glass into windows and doors.

GRADE
the point where the foundation wall or pier meets the surrounding fill.

GUTAE
the small vertical elements found under the triglyphs or mutules on the Doric entablature.

GUTTER
a channel of wood or metal running along the eaves of a house; used for catching or carrying off rainwater.

HEADER
a door or window head. Also the structural member that is nailed to the ends of the floor joists.

HIP ROOF
a roof formed by four pitched roof surfaces.

HOOD
a protective and sometimes decorative cover found over doors, windows or other objects.

INCOMPATIBLE
inconsistent; containing elements that conflict with the original.

JOISTS
horizontal framing members that run parallel to each other from wall to wall. Floor joists provide a supporting framework for floors; ceiling joists provide a base for furring strips on plywood sheets.

LATH
wood strips, metal strips or channels, or gypsum boards that are attached to framing members and are used as supporting base for plaster, tiles, shingles or other building materials.

LATTICEWORK
openwork produced by interlacing or crossing lath or thin strips of iron or wood.

LEAN-TO
a house that has a small addition with a lean-to (single-pitched) roof.

LINTEL
a horizontal structural member that supports a load over an opening; usually made of wood, stone or steel; may be exposed or obscured by wall covering.
MANSARD ROOF
a roof having two slopes on all four sides; the lower slope is much steeper than the upper.

MASONRY
work constructed by a mason using stone, brick, concrete blocks tile, or similar materials.

METOPE
the panel between the triglyphs in the Doric frieze; often treated in some decorative manner.

MULLION
a large vertical member separating two casements; the vertical bar between coupled windows or multiple windows; the central member of a double-door opening.

MUNTIN
thin strip of wood used to hold panes of glass within a window.

ORDER
a style of column and its entablature (i.e. the section resting on top of the column). In classical architecture, order refers to the specific configuration and proportions of the column, including the base, shaft, capital and entablature.

OUTBUILDING
an auxiliary structure that is located away from a house or principal building (e.g. a root cellar, spring house, smoke house, corn crib, pump house, etc.)

OVERHANG
the projection of one story beyond the one below. Also, the part of the roof that extends beyond the wall plane.

PARAPET
a low wall or protective railing; often used around a balcony or balconet, or along the edge of a roof.

PEDIMENT
a triangular section framed by a horizontal moulding on its base and two raking (sloping) mouldings on each of its side; used as a crowing element for buildings, doors, windows, overmantels and niches.

PIER
vertical supporting members that are part of the foundation.

PILASTER
a rectangular column or shallow pier attached to a wall; quite frequently decoratively treated so as to repeat a classical column with a base, shaft and capital.

PORTE-COCHERE
a covered entrance or porch projecting far enough across a driveway or entrance road so that automobiles, carriages, or other wheeled vehicles may easily pass through.
PRESERVATION
the act of process of applying measures to sustain the existing form, in- 
tegrity and material of a building or a structure, including but not limited to, initial stabilization work and ongoing maintenance of historic building materials and the existing form and vegetative cover of a site.

PYRAMIDAL HIPED ROOF
a pyramid-shaped roof with four sides of equal slope and shape.

RECONSTRUCTION
the accurate recreation of a vanished, or irreplaceably damaged struc- ture, or part thereof; the new construction recreates the building’s exact form and detail as they appeared at some point in history.

REHABILITATION
the act of returning a building’s useable condition through repair, altera- tion, and/or preservation of its features.

RESTORATION
the process of accurately taking a building’s appearance back to a specific period of time by removing later work and by replacing missing earlier features to match the original.

RETAINING WALL
a braced or free-standing wall that bears against an earthen backing.

RIDGE
the horizontal line formed when two roof surfaces meet.

SOFFIT
the exposed undersurface of any overhead component of a building, such as an arch, balcony, beam, cornice, lintel or vault.

STRETCHER
a brick or stone laid with its length parallel to the length of the wall.

STUCCO
an exterior finish, usually textured, composed of Portland cement, lime and sand mixed with water. Older-type stucco may be mixed from softer masonry cement rather than Portland cement.

SURROUND
the moulded trim around a door or window opening.

TAR PAPER
a roofing material manufactured by saturating a dry felt with asphalt and then coating it with a harder asphalt mixed with a fine material.

TERNEPLATE
sheet metal coated with terne metal, which is an alloy of lead containing up to 20 percent tin.

TERRA COTTA
hard unglazed fired clay, used for ornamental work and roof and floor tile; also fabricated with a decorative glaze and used as a surface finish for buildings in the Art Deco style.
TEXTURED SIDING
wood cut in various flat patterns, such as half-rounds or scallops, and applied to portions of facades to create a picturesque or romantic look. This treatment was generally used in Queen Anne-style buildings. Surface textures are often found in diamond, scallop, staggered butt, or composite patterns.

TONGUE AND GROOVE
a joinery system in which boards are milled with a flange (tongue) on one side and a slit (groove) on the other so that they can be tightly joined with a flush surface alignment.

TRABEATED ENTRANCE
a standard classical entrance featuring an over-door light and sidelights arranged in a horizontal pattern as opposed to an arch.

TRACERY
an ornamental division of an opening, especially a large window, usually made with wood or stone. Tracery is found in buildings of Gothic influence.

TRANSOM, OR OVERDOOR LIGHT
a glazed panel above a door or a storefront, sometimes hinged to be opened for ventilation.

TREAD
the horizontal surface of a step.

TRIM
the finish material on a building, such as mouldings applied around openings or at the floors and ceilings of rooms.

TURRET
a small tower, usually projecting from a corner.

VERANDA
a covered porch or balcony extending along the outside of a building, planned for summer leisure.

VINYL SIDING
sheets of thermal plastic compound made from chloride or vinyl acetates, as well as some plastics made from styrene and other chemicals, usually fabricated to resemble clapboard.

WATERBLASTING
a cleaning method similar to sandblasting except that water is used as the abrasive. As in sandblasting, high-pressure water jets can damage wood and masonry surfaces.

WATER TABLE
a belt course differentiating the foundation of a masonry building from its exterior walls.

WEATHERBOARDING
wooden clapboard siding.

WROUGHT IRON
iron that is rolled or hammered into shape by hand.