

## Chapter VII: Guidelines for All Projects

The Design Guidelines for All Projects that follow shall apply to all projects in the South Main Street Historic District. These include certain site improvements, alterations to existing structures and new construction. They also apply to historic properties designated by the City and to all sites within designated historic districts, for general treatment of site design, landscaping and new construction. The city's Historic Landmarks Preservation and Architectural Review Board will use the Guidelines for All Projects in formal reviews of proposed changes to any affected properties.

## Design in the Public Right of Way

Many important features exist within the public right of way that contribute to the sense of character for the District. Among these are the use of sidewalks, alleys and the rhythm established by evenly spaced trees, street furniture or light poles. Paved sidewalks are found throughout the District. These sidewalks define where pedestrian traffic ends and vehicular traffic begins. This is one of the most important characteristics of improvements in the right of way and should be retained. A system of alleys is also found throughout the District. These alleys provide access for service and parking functions, and in some areas, they provide access to carriage houses. These alleys should be retained and they should continue to serve a mix of needs. The upkeep of such elements helps to reduce the impact of the car on the District.

### 7.1 Maintain the traditional street pattern of the District.

- a. Established street layouts should not be altered. Where the grid is established, it should be retained.
- b. New driveways shall be to the rear of structures. Curb cuts are not allowed along South Main Street.

### 7.2 Maintain the alignment and existence of sidewalks.

- a. Sidewalks should be installed that continue the traditional sidewalk design.
- b. Maintain existing planting strips.
- c. Preserve original brick and stone walks where they exist, and where physical conditions permit.

### 7.3 Maintaining the simple character of alleys is encouraged.

- a. Property owners are encouraged to provide landscaping along alley edges.

### 7.4 Preserve street trees when physical conditions permit.

- a. Maintaining the pattern of established trees is encouraged.
- b. When trees must be removed, or where gaps in the rhythm of street trees already exist, installing new trees is encouraged, when physical conditions permit.
- c. Where planting conditions permit, installing these replacement trees in a location that will continue to express the established rhythm is encouraged.
- d. Consult with the City Parks Department to arrange for the proper installation of trees and to select appropriate species.
- e. *It is the responsibility of the property owner to maintain street trees located on adjacent lots. See Sections 92.05 and 92.09 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of St. Charles.*



*Features, such as brick sidewalks and decorative paving materials, like this sidewalk in Asheville, North Carolina, add character to a district and should be preserved.*

## Color

The Board will consider the selection of colors and how color is applied in color schemes. In general, the Board will consider color on a case-by-case basis. However, if applicants wish, they may select color schemes from the Williamsburg Color Paint Chart, already approved by the Board. For this purpose, the Board will maintain a chart of appropriate and inappropriate colors. While color in itself does not affect the actual form of a building, it can dramatically affect the perceived scale of a structure and it can help to blend a building with its context.

### 7.5 Using the historic color scheme of the building is preferred.

- a. The applicant should conduct an analysis of the historic colors. Select a series of sample test patches and scrape away the layers of paint with a knife to identify early colors. Moisten the sample to determine its original saturation.
- b. When historic colors are to be used, provide accurate evidence of their historic application.
- c. Owners are encouraged to seek professional lab tests when researching historic color schemes.

### 7.6 Using the Williamsburg Color Paint Chart is required for pre-Victorian era structures when the original paint colors are unknown.

- a. The palette is available at the City of St. Charles, Department of City Development.
- b. Please note that Victorian color schemes are appropriate for Victorian era buildings.

### 7.7 Use colors to create a coordinated color scheme for the building.

- a. The facade should "read" as a single composition.

### 7.8 Employ color schemes simple in character.

- a. Using one base color for the building is preferred.
- b. Using only one or two accent colors is also encouraged, although precedent does exist for using more than two colors in some situations.

### 7.9 Base or background colors must be muted.

- a. Use the natural colors of the building materials, such as the buff color of limestone, as the base for developing the overall color scheme.
- b. Use matte finishes instead of glossy ones.

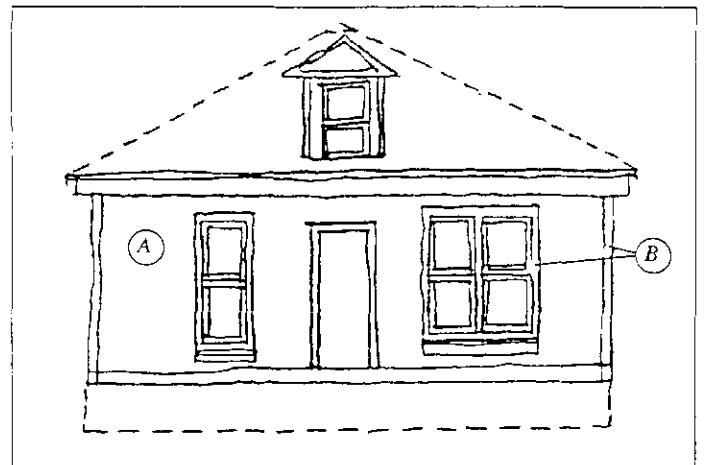
### 7.10 Reserve the use of bright colors for accents only.

- a. Bright colors may highlight entries.

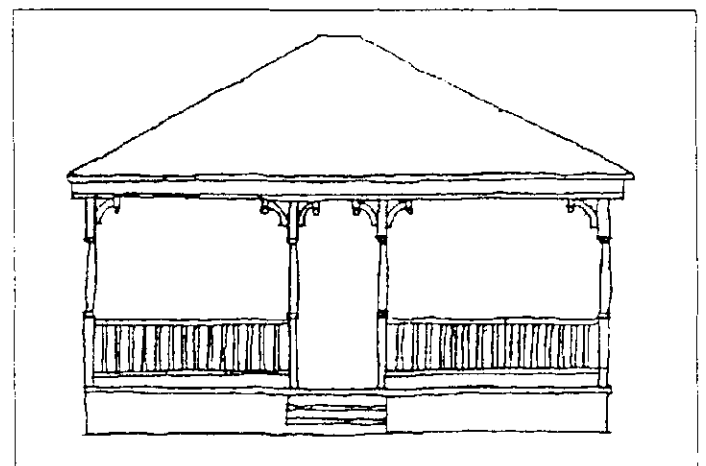


When designing your own color scheme, consider the entire composition:

- a) The back plane of the main facade is a major surface for which a scheme should be devised.
- b) A color scheme for the front plane, composed of a porch in this case, also should be designed.



Apply a base color to the main plane of the facade (A). Next, apply the first trim color to window frames and edge boards (B).



When developing a color scheme, use a limited number of colors. Apply one or two colors to porch elements; avoid making the scheme too busy. Consider using a different shade of the first trim color--or even matching it exactly for porch trim.

## Accessibility

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) mandates that places of public accommodation be accessible to all users.

- 7.11 The guidelines introduced herein should not prevent or inhibit compliance with accessibility laws.**
- a. All new construction shall comply completely with ADA.
  - b. Owners of historic properties also should comply to the fullest extent, while also preserving the integrity of the character-defining features of their buildings.
  - c. Special provisions for historic buildings exist in the law that allow some alternative solutions in meeting the ADA standards.

## Design for Energy Conservation

Many times historic elements on homes and commercial structures are lost due to a misconception that old doors and windows are not energy efficient. For the most part historic structures were constructed to be naturally energy efficient (i.e. high ceilings) and often times are more energy efficient than even the most up to date buildings. Simple techniques can be utilized to reclaim a loss in energy efficiency in historic structures and are strongly encouraged.

**7.12 The use of energy conservation methods in building design is encouraged.**

- a. It is not necessary to remove existing glass or to install thermopane to realize energy savings. Generally, the problem is that older glass has dried and the glazing compound around it has shrunk, which allows air to leak around the glass.
- b. The best strategy is to re-glaze the existing glass and add weather-stripping. Storm windows may be installed on the interior side of windows. Be certain that the frame styles of the storm windows match those of the original windows.
- c. Weather-strip doors and windows.
- d. Install destratification fans to circulate the air.
- e. Install insulation in the attic.
- f. Consider installing insulation in the crawl space or basement.

**7.13 Energy conservation techniques used must be compatible with the District.**

- a. Solar collection devices are not permitted.
- b. Existing window sashes and glass should not be removed.
- c. Energy conservation methods recommended here should not be visible from public ways.

## Mechanical Equipment and Service Utilities

Mechanical equipment, service utilities and service areas all have become a necessary evil for many historic commercial districts. Such equipment is needed for the success of many businesses but often detracts from the visual enjoyment of the architecture of the District. It is the duty of property and business owners alike to minimize such visual impacts of equipment, lighting and service areas while providing a healthy commercial/residential environment.

### 7.14 Minimize the visual impact of mechanical equipment.

- a. Screen equipment from view.
- b. Do not locate window air conditioning units on the building's facade.
- c. Use low-profile mechanical units on roof-tops that are not visible from public ways.

### 7.15 Also minimize the visual impacts of utility connections and service boxes.

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

- a. Cutting channels into historic facade materials damages the historic building fabric and is inappropriate.
- b. Avoid locating such equipment on the front facade.

### 7.17 Minimize the visual appearance of fire sprinklers inside buildings, as seen from the public way.

### 7.18 Use lighting for the following:

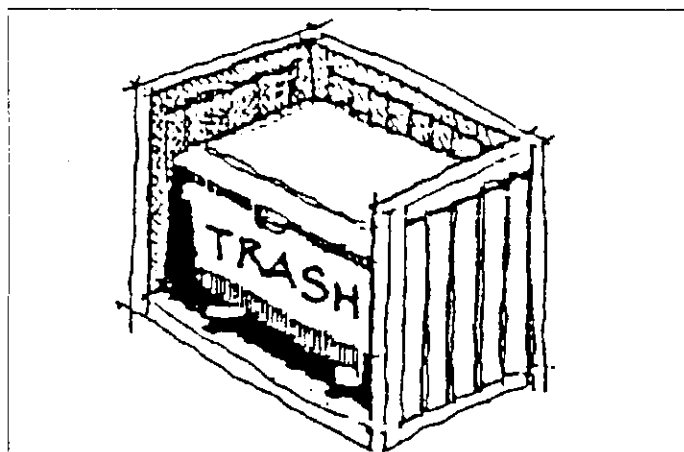
- a. To accent architectural details.
- b. To accent building entries.
- c. To accent signs.
- d. To illuminate sidewalks.

### 7.19 Use lighting as it was used historically in the District.

- a. All light sources shall be shielded.
- b. Lighting should not dominate a facade or the street.
- c. Washing the entire facade with light is inappropriate. Lights focused upward to light the facade also are inappropriate.
- d. Lighting may not be animated. Chase lights, for example, are prohibited.

### 7.20 Minimize the visual impact of trash storage and service areas.

- a. Dumpsters shall be screened from view.
- b. Locate service areas away from major pedestrian routes, in the rear.



*Minimize the visual impact of trash storage and service areas. Dumpsters shall be screened from view.*

## Awnings and Canopies

Historically, awnings and canopies have been a successful part of many commercial districts. However, with the frequent use of balconies and galleries in the South Main Street Historic District, awnings and canopies have been used less frequently. Awnings and canopies can become an integral part to the District but must be used in cases where they are historically accurate.

**7.21 Horizontal, fixed canopies are permitted where historic evidence demonstrates that a canopy existed during the building's period of significance.**

- a. Appropriate supporting mechanisms are wall-mounted brackets, chains and posts.

**7.22 Fabric awnings are appropriate for Victorian era buildings and new buildings in their context.**

- a. Operable awnings are encouraged.
- b. Use colors that are compatible with the overall color scheme of the facade. Solid colors or simple muted striped patterns are appropriate.
- c. Simple shed shapes are appropriate for rectangular openings.
- d. Odd shapes, bull-nose awnings and bubble awnings are inappropriate.

**7.23 Internal illumination in awnings is inappropriate.**

**7.24 Mount awnings and canopies accentuate character-defining features.**

- a. They should be mounted to highlight moldings that may be found above the storefront.
- b. Their mounting should not damage significant features and historic details.

## Technical Maintenance and Repairs

Regular and periodic maintenance of a historic building assures that more expensive preservation and restoration measures will not be needed at a future date. Historic buildings were typically very well built and were meant to last decades and centuries into the future. Preventive maintenance is intended to keep moisture from remaining in and around the structure.

**7.25 Use the gentlest possible procedures for cleaning and refinishing historic materials.**

- a. Abrasive methods such as sandblasting are prohibited, as it permanently erodes building materials and finishes and accelerates deterioration.
- b. For cleaning masonry, use procedures such as low pressure water and detergents. Do not apply acid cleaners to materials such as limestone and marble. Conduct out surface cleaning tests before beginning cleaning procedure.
- c. It is recommended that a firm experienced in the cleaning of historic buildings be hired to advise on the best, low impact method of cleaning appropriate to the project.
- d. Property owners also should note that early paint layers may be lead-based, in which case special procedures are required for its treatment.
- e. Also see technical rehabilitation literature published by the National Park Service and available through the Department of City Development, City of St. Charles.

**7.26 Maintenance of streets and alleys.**

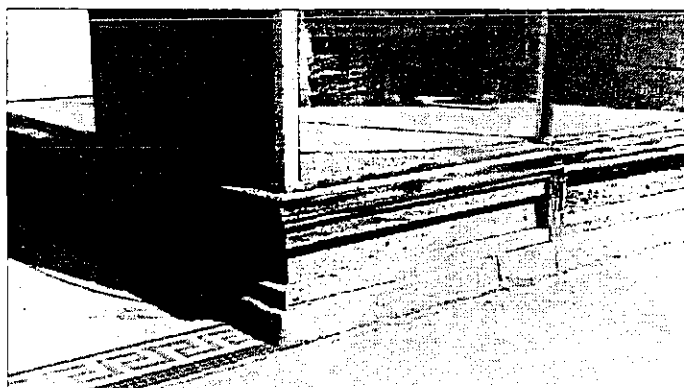
- a. Clean debris from sidewalks and alleys, especially where site drainage may be affected.
- b. Clean garbage around dumpsters.
- c. Property owners are responsible for keeping the sidewalk clean, and must patch sidewalk where they initiate work that causes cuts in the pavement or bricks.

**7.27 Maintenance of upper story windows.**

- a. Wash upper story windows.
- b. Clean debris from upper story windows.
- c. Repair shades or curtains in upper story windows or replace with new.
- d. Re-glaze loose glass. This will reduce air leaks.
- e. Install weather-stripping. This will enhance energy conservation significantly.
- f. Replace broken glass.

**7.28 Maintenance of storefronts.**

- a. Wash display windows.
- b. Repair damaged kickplates.
- c. Re-caulk display windows to reduce air infiltration.
- d. Install weather-stripping around doors.
- e. Re-point mortar where necessary. Use the proper procedure for repointing, matching color, texture and detailing of the original masonry.



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**7.29 Maintenance of roofs.**

- a. Clean debris from gutters and downspouts to prevent the backing up of water.
- b. Patch leaks in the roof. This should be a high priority for building maintenance.
- c. Replace deteriorated flashing.
- d. Re-point eroded mortar in the parapet wall, using appropriate mortar mix.
- e. Re-solder downspout connections to prevent water from leaking into walls.
- f. Connect downspouts to underground sewers where possible. Do not allow water to disperse at the foundation of a building. This water may cause damage to the foundation.

**7.30 Maintenance of awnings and canopies.**

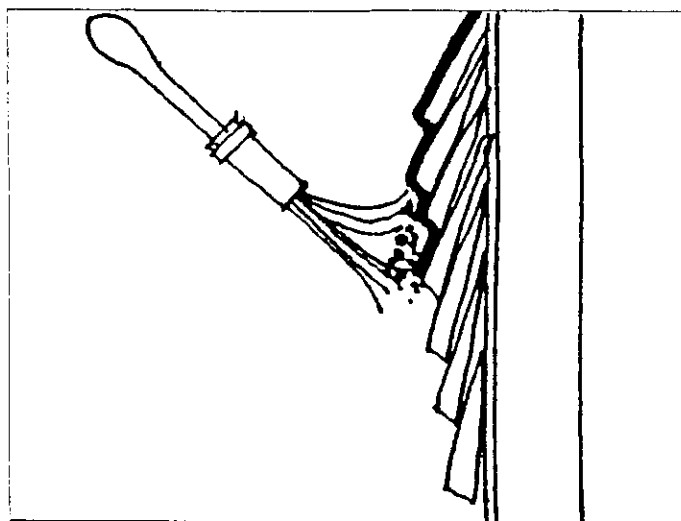
- a. Replace worn fabric awnings.
- b. Re-secure loose awning hardware.
- c. Wash fabric awnings regularly. This will help extend the life of the fabric. Spray with water from the underside first, to lift dirt particles, then rinse them off.

**7.31 Maintenance of signs.**

- a. Re-secure sign mounts to the building front.
- b. Repaint faded graphics.
- c. Repair worn wiring.
- d. Replace burned out bulbs.
- e. Remove obsolete signs.
- f. Preserve historic painted signs in place as decorative features.

**7.32 Plan repainting carefully.**

- a. If masonry has been painted, it may be preferable to continue to repaint it, because paint removal methods may cause damage to the building materials and finish.
- b. Note that frequent repainting of trim materials may cause a build up of paint layers that obscures architectural details. When this occurs, consider stripping paint layers to retrieve details. However, if stripping is necessary, use the gentlest means possible, being careful not to damage architectural details and finishes.
- c. Remember good preparation is key to successful repainting but also the buildup of old paint is an important historic record of the building. The removal of old paint, by the gentlest means possible, should be undertaken only if necessary to the success of the repainting. Remember that old paint is of very good quality enviable in today's painting world.
- d. Old paint may contain lead. Precautions must be taken when sanding or scraping is necessary.



*Plan repainting carefully.*