
CHAPTER I:

PURPOSE OF DESIGN GUIDELINES

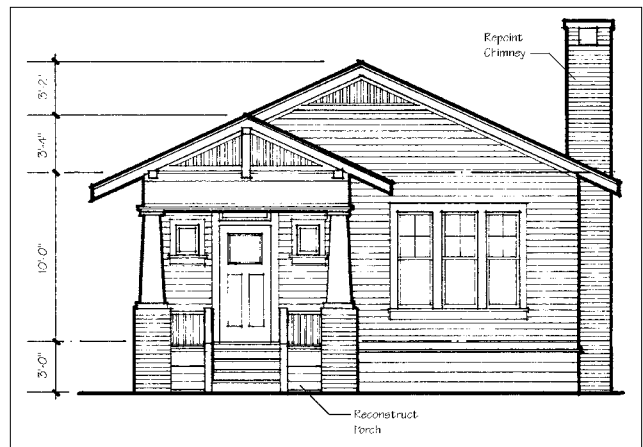
HOW WILL THESE DESIGN GUIDELINES BE USED?

Property owners may use the information included in these guidelines to assist them and their design professionals in planning an approach to projects to repair, rehabilitate, or alter properties with historic designation, including both individually listed sites and property located within designated historic districts. For certain historic districts, the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) uses district-specific guidance adopted as part of the designation process. Under the HPC's Rules, Guidelines and Procedures, district-specific guidance takes precedence over other review criteria in any cases where the review criteria are in conflict. See Chapter 5 for additional information about each historic district, including whether specific guidance has been adopted.

The guidelines articulate the approach that the Montgomery County HPC uses in administering its review authority over designated historic sites. The guidelines are a statement of existing HPC policy and practice in the review of HAWP applications, and not a new policy direction. Based on nationally accepted historic preservation best practices tailored specifically for the range of historic resources found in Montgomery County, the guidelines will not change review criteria currently in place such as existing district-specific guidelines. Owners are encouraged to review these guidelines, along with other adopted review criteria, when planning a project in order to ensure that the work contemplated will help preserve the historic character of their property and/or neighborhood.

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The design guidelines will be used to help property owners and design professionals make informed decisions about their preservation or rehabilitation project.

The Montgomery County Historic Preservation Ordinance and its related executive regulations stipulate the criteria the HPC is to use in the review of projects. Chapter 24A-8 directs the HPC to review applications to ensure that a project:

- will not substantially alter the exterior features of a historic site or historic resource within a historic district;
- is compatible in character and nature with the historical, archeological, architectural or cultural features of the historic site or the historic district in which a historic resource is located and would not be detrimental thereto or to the achievement of the purpose of this chapter;
- would enhance or aid in the protection, preservation and public or private utilization of the historic site or historic resource located within a historic district in a manner compatible with the historical, archeological, architectural or cultural value of the historic site or historic district in which a historic resource is located;
- is necessary in order that unsafe conditions or health hazards be remedied; or
- is necessary in order that the owner of the subject property not be deprived of reasonable use of the property or suffer undue hardship.

Definitions: Ordinary Maintenance and In-Kind Replacement

Ordinary Maintenance is defined as “work on a historic site or a historic resource within a historic district which does not alter **in any way** the exterior features of the subject property, including architectural style, design, and general arrangement of the exterior, **as well as** the nature, texture, details, and dimensions of building materials, windows, doors, siding, etc. This definition applies, whenever appropriate, to the appurtenances and environmental setting of a historic site or resource, as well as to the building, structure, or object itself.” (Rules, Guidelines, and Procedures, §1.1 (f))

In-Kind Replacement requires that the new feature exactly match the old in design, color, texture, and materials (*Secretary of the Interior’s Standards #6*, see Appendix page APP-1).

In addition to the criteria outlined above, the HPC also uses the *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards* (see below) and any district-specific guidelines included in the Master Plan. Historic districts with specific design guidelines are noted in Chapter 5; *The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation* appears in Appendix A.

As of 2008, Montgomery County has designated twenty historic districts, totaling nearly 2,400 properties, and approximately 400 individual historic sites in the Montgomery County *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. Individually designated sites and properties located within these districts are subject to the Historic Preservation Ordinance, Chapter 24A of the County Code. Owners of these properties are required to submit a Historic Area Work Permit (HAWP) for exterior modifications to their property. The HPC and their professional staff within the Montgomery County Planning Department will use these guidelines in the evaluation of projects subject to their review.

For most exterior alterations to designated properties, the County Code requires that a property owner obtain a HAWP before the applicant files for a building permit. A HAWP is not required for interior changes, ordinary maintenance, in-kind repair of exterior features, or selection of paint colors. The County Historic Preservation Ordinance requires a HAWP for projects involving “construction, reconstruction, moving, relocating, demolishing, or in any manner modifying, changing, or altering the exterior features” of designated properties. HAWPs are also required for projects that would change features within the environmental setting of a historic site, erecting fences, or installing signs.

The design review process applies only to proposed actions initiated by a property owner. While the design review process may guide an approach to certain design problems by offering alternative solutions, the process does not dictate a specific outcome nor does it require a property owner to instigate improvements that a property owner has not contemplated. For questions regarding HAWP applications and the applicability of these guidelines, please contact the Montgomery County Planning Department Historic Preservation Section.

BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

These design guidelines incorporate principles set forth in *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, which provide guidance on four approaches to the treatment of historic properties: Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration, and Reconstruction. The treatment most often undertaken for projects reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission is “rehabilitation,” and the design guidelines that follow are consistent with *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* (referred to in this document as “The Secretary’s Standards”).

The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards are general rehabilitation guidelines established by the National Park Service. The rehabilitation standards are used by the federal and state government, as well as by historic preservation commissions nationwide, in the review of historic preservation projects, and the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission uses these standards in the review of all Historic Area Work Permit applications.

The Concept of Historic Significance

In order to be designated, properties must be determined to have “significance.” What makes a property significant? Significance stems in part from age, in part from “integrity,” and partly from possessing characteristics meeting one or more of the criteria the County adopted to establish historical/cultural and/or architectural/design significance.

It is generally recognized that a certain amount of time must pass before the historical significance of a property can be evaluated. Criteria for listing resources in the National Register of Historic Places, the federal government’s list of historic properties, suggests that a property be at least 50 years old or have extraordinary importance before it may be considered for listing. Montgomery County generally follows this practice for designating sites and districts in the County Master Plan for Historic Preservation.

Historic sites and districts possess a period of significance—that is, a timeframe during which the site or district acquired its historic, cultural, or architectural importance. A site or district is significant in part because it represents or is associated with a particular period or date in history. For an individual building, the period

Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties

The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties include guidelines for four treatment approaches: Rehabilitation, Preservation, Restoration, Reconstruction. For additional information about the Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, see <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/standguide/>.

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

Preservation: the process of sustaining the existing form, integrity, and materials of a historic property, generally focusing upon the ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and features rather than extensive replacement and new construction.

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

Reconstruction: the process of replicating the appearance of a no longer existing structure by means of new construction.

of significance may be its date of construction through dates when significant additions or alterations were made, or a timeframe when the building was associated with a significant personage. Portions of the building and its fabric that date from the building's period of significance typically contribute to the character of the building, while later fabric may not. A historic district's period of significance may, for example, represent the timeframe from when the first buildings were constructed through when the development characterizing the district ceased. Buildings constructed during that period may contribute to the district, while buildings constructed after the period of significance may not.

Individual sites or districts must possess integrity in order to be designated. In order to have integrity, a building or district must retain a sufficient percentage of fabric dating to the period of significance and its character-defining features should remain largely intact. In other words, architectural details – such as windows or porches – and the overall mass and form of a building or district should be recognizable as a product of its time in order for the building or district to have integrity.

Montgomery County's historic preservation ordinance establishes that a property may be significant if it meets one or more of the following criteria:

- possesses character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the County, state, or nation;
- is the site of a significant historic event;
- is identified with a person or group of persons who influenced society;
- exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, political or historic heritage of the County and its communities;
- embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction;
- represents the work of a master;
- possesses high artistic values;
- represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction;
- or
- represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community, or County due to its singular physical characteristic or landscape.

Alterations

Many historic houses have experienced alterations over time, as design tastes changed or need for additional space occurred. Traditionally, additions were subordinate in scale and character to the main building. Alterations were often executed using materials that were similar to those in use historically.

Some early alterations may have acquired historic significance in their own right. Additions or alterations constructed in a manner that was compatible with the original building and that are associated with the period of significance may merit preservation.

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

This tradition of alterations is anticipated to continue. It is important, however, that proposed alterations be designed in such a manner that they are compatible with the historic character of the primary structure.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation #4: Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation #9: New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

The Secretary of the Interior's guidance for additions recommends:

- constructing a new addition so that there is the least possible loss of historic materials and so that character-defining features are not obscured, damaged, or destroyed
 - designing a new addition in a manner that makes clear what is historic and what is new.
 - considering the design for an addition in terms of its relationship to the historic building and the historic district or neighborhood. Design for the new work may be contemporary or may reference design motifs from the historic building. In either case, it should always be clearly differentiated from the historic building and be compatible in terms of mass, materials, relationship of solids to voids, and color.
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STRUCTURE OF DESIGN GUIDELINES

Each design guideline in this document includes several components that constitute the material upon which design review decisions will be made.

1. Design Element

The guidelines are grouped into pertinent design element categories (e.g., landscaping, building materials, accessory structures).

2. Background Information

The background information is a brief discussion of the issues typically associated with the specific design topic. This may include technical information as well as other relevant preservation theory.

3. Design Objective

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

4. Design Guidelines

Specific design guidelines are numbered in order to reference them during the design review process. The numbering system does not reflect a prioritization of the design guidelines.

5. Additional Information

The design guideline statement is followed by supplementary information that may include additional requirements, or may provide an expanded explanation. The supplementary information is listed as bulleted (•) statements.

6. Illustrations

Design guidelines are further explained with photographs and illustrations. The examples given should not be considered the only appropriate options, however. Each illustration is accompanied by a caption.



Guideline 1.1: The wrap around front porch, uniquely designed balustrade, post brackets, and ornate barge board are all character-defining features of this structure that should be preserved.

1. I.O TREATMENT OF CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

2. Historic features contribute to the character of a structure and are referred to as character-defining features. They should be preserved when feasible, with continued maintenance as the best preservation method.

3. Design Objective
Preserve historic architectural features and details.

4. 1.1 Maintain significant stylistic and architectural features.

- 5.
- Do not remove or alter architectural details that are in good condition or that can be repaired.
 - The best preservation procedure is to maintain historic features from the outset so that intervention is not required. Employ preventive measures such as rust removal, caulking, limited paint removal and reapplication of paint. These should not harm the historic materials.

Example design guideline format.

WHICH DESIGN GUIDELINES APPLY TO YOUR PROJECT?

Use the chart below to identify the chapters that apply to the work being considered: the rehabilitation of a historic structure, an addition to a historic structure and/or new construction on a historic site or within a historic district.

Type of Project	Chapter 2: Architectural History and Resources	Chapter 3: General Rehabilitation	Chapter 4: Additions to Historic Properties	Chapter 5: Historic Districts
Identifying a historic resource building style	X			
Exterior alteration to a primary historic building (windows, doors, skylights, solar panels, etc.)	X	X		
Exterior alteration to an accessory building or outbuilding	X	X		
Exterior alteration to commercial storefront (including signage)	X	X		
Site work (fences, landscaping, etc.)	X	X		
General Maintenance (minor project)	X	X		
Alteration to an existing addition	X		X	
New addition to a historic building	X		X	
Any work in a designated historic district	X	X	X	X

BENEFITS OF PRESERVING HISTORIC STRUCTURES

Across the country, more than 3,000-3,500 localities have recognized that historic preservation is a powerful tool that contributes to neighborhood vitality, livability, and quality of life, as well as the economic well-being of communities. Like Montgomery County, these communities have adopted historic preservation ordinances to protect the historic character of their buildings, streetscapes, and neighborhoods, and promote a sense of place that makes these communities desirable locations to live, work, and visit.

Preservation of Montgomery County's historic built environment is an important public purpose. By protecting the County's historic resources, we retain a link to the County's past that helps maintain the sense of place that defines Montgomery County as a unique and desirable community, which in turn generates economic and social benefits for the future.

Historic preservation has global and practical benefits as well. From the quality of construction, craftsmanship, and materials found in many historic structures to economic, environmental, quality of life considerations, the positive implications of historic preservation are numerous.

Construction Quality

Many of Montgomery County's surviving historic structures are of high quality construction. Often, building materials used in historic structures was of superior quality. For example, the lumber used in historic buildings came from mature trees, was properly seasoned and typically was milled to "full dimensions," which often yielded stronger framing and durable building components. Masonry walls were carefully laid, resulting in buildings of considerable permanence. In addition, the County's historic resources often were thoughtfully detailed and the finishes were generally of high quality—features that many owners today appreciate. Historic materials, construction techniques, and details are often not replicated in contemporary construction. The high quality of construction in historic houses is therefore of "value" for many people.

Livability and Quality of Life

Groups of houses in their historic context often create a street scene that is "pedestrian friendly" and encourages walking and neighborly interaction. Front porches promote social interaction. Mature trees and decorative architectural features also contribute to a sense of identity, attributes often associated with historic buildings but which are rare and difficult to achieve in newer areas of the County. This physical sense of place found in many historic neighborhoods can also reinforce desirable community social patterns and contribute to a sense of security (points not lost on proponents of good urban design and planning, who are increasingly trying to replicate traditional patterns of building and community design in some new developments).

Economic Benefits

Historic houses are finite and cannot be replaced, making them precious commodities that many people seek. Therefore, preservation adds value to private property. Studies undertaken in many states across the country, including Maryland, bear out this point, documenting that designation of historic districts tends to protect, and in many cases enhance, property values of designated properties as compared with similar non-designated properties. Historic designation protects investment. Owners of historic properties know that the time and money they invest in their property may be matched by similar efforts by their neighbors.

Rehabilitating a historic house also can cost less than constructing a new one. In fact, the design guidelines presented in this document promote cost-saving measures, in that they encourage simpler solutions, maintenance, and repair over often costlier alternatives.

Environmental Benefits

Preserving historic structures is also sound environmental conservation practice. “Recycling” buildings and building components saves energy, reduces the need for producing new construction materials, and reduces the amount of materials placed in landfills. Making sensitive stewardship of the existing building stock, rather than its replacement, a priority will significantly reduce our environmental impact because preserving and adapting a historic structure is sound environmental policy.

Furthermore, many simple approaches to achieving energy efficiency in historic buildings can have equal – or even greater – impact than many more invasive – and often more costly – alternatives. For example, adding insulation to attic spaces costs far less and often saves more energy than replacing windows, and properly caulking and weather-stripping a historic window and adding a storm window is far less expensive and equally energy efficient as many replacement windows (and neither approach involves putting the historic windows in a landfill). Contact the Planning Department Historic Preservation Section for additional information.

Embodied Energy

Embodied energy is defined as the amount of energy used to create the original building and its components. Preserving, restoring, or rehabilitating a historic structure will retain this energy. Investment studies confirm that the loss of embodied energy associated with the replacement of an existing, unimproved building would take three decades or more to recoup from reduced operating energy costs in a new building. When historic buildings are demolished, their “embodied energy” is lost and significant new energy demands are required to replace it. According to the EPA, building debris constitutes approximately one-third of all waste generated in this country. This percentage and the consequential amount of waste produced can be reduced significantly if historic structures are preserved rather than demolished and their building components restored rather than replaced.

Building Materials

Many historic buildings were constructed of durable, traditional building materials such as old growth wood, stone, and brick. These surviving buildings were constructed for longevity, in a manner allowing for the repair, rather than replacement, of building components. With routine maintenance, most traditional construction materials and building components – such as siding, windows or doors, and architectural detailing – can be preserved or easily repaired. Many modern synthetic manufactured materials, such as vinyl and plastic used in windows or siding, cannot be repaired when they fail and many fail to live up to their maintenance-free claims. These synthetic materials are unsustainable, require high levels of energy for their production, and often do not have a product life span equal to many traditional building materials.

Building Energy Savings

As noted above, the argument that historic building components should be replaced with modern ones to achieve energy and cost savings often does not consider all the facts. For example, considerably more energy is lost through attics, walls and around door and window cavities than through window glazing and doors. Properly caulking and weather-stripping windows and doors, adding storm windows and insulating will effectively save energy at a higher rate than replacing single paned wood windows with double or triple paned windows. Often replacing an old, inefficient boiler with a modern, high efficiency unit will have a greater impact on energy savings, and shorter return on investment, than window replacement.

Adaptability

Most historic buildings can be adapted to serve modern needs. Rearrangement of internal spaces is not subject to HPC review. Countless historic buildings have received historically appropriate additions to serve modern demands. The guidelines that follow provide recommendations for the design of additions.

Financial Incentives

In recognition of the public purpose and benefits of historic preservation, Montgomery County, the State of Maryland, and the federal government have established special financial incentives to encourage the preservation of historic properties and offset the costs of appropriate rehabilitation projects. Eligible projects can qualify for County, state, and in more limited cases, federal tax credits.

Montgomery County Historic Preservation Tax Credits:

To encourage the restoration and preservation of privately-owned historic properties, the Montgomery County Council in 1984 passed legislation providing for a tax credit against County real property taxes (Chapter 52, Article VI) for maintenance and preservation projects. The value of the credit is equal to 10% of documented expenses for exterior maintenance, restoration or preservation work. To qualify, properties must be designated on the Montgomery County Master Plan for Historic Preservation either individually or within a historic district. Tax credit-eligible work includes repairs, restoration, or preservation of exterior features of designated structures. New construction and interior work are ineligible expenditures. For additional information about the County tax credits, see <http://www.mcparkandplanning.org/historic/instructions/taxcredit.shtm> or contact the Planning Department Historic Preservation Section.

Maryland Heritage Preservation Tax Credits:

The State of Maryland also provides tax credits to encourage the rehabilitation of historic properties. Maryland's Heritage Preservation Tax Credit Program, administered by the Maryland Historical Trust, provides a 20% credit applied against a property owner's Maryland income tax for qualified project costs. Both exterior and interior work may be eligible. Eligible properties may include those listed in the Montgomery County Master Plan for Historic Preservation. Contact the Maryland Historical Trust for additional information (www.marylandhistoricaltrust.net).

Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits:

A federal rehabilitation tax credit program is also available. Properties must be listed in the National Register of Historic Places and be considered "income producing" (owner-occupied residential properties are not eligible for federal tax credits; they are eligible for County and state tax credits). Additional information is available from the National Park Service at <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/tax/>.

PLANNING A PRESERVATION PROJECT

Each preservation project is unique. It is important to develop an overall strategy for treatment that is based on an analysis of the building and its setting. Analysis should begin with an investigation of the history of the property. Develop an understanding of the significance of the building as a whole, as well as its individual components and its relationship to its setting. Identify alterations that may have taken place over time, and assess existing conditions. Consider which building elements are original and which may have been altered, and assess their physical condition. Then consider the goals of the proposed work program. For example: is the project focus to provide additional living space or preserve and maintain the existing configuration? Using the guidelines that follow to select an appropriate treatment approach will greatly enhance the overall quality of the project and facilitate the approval of your HAWP application.

Preservation Approach

In selecting a preservation approach, a strategy with the least level of intervention is preferred. By following this principle, the highest degree of historical and/or architectural integrity will be maintained for the property.

1. **Preserve:** If a feature is intact and in good condition, maintain it as such.
 2. **Repair:** If the feature is deteriorated or damaged, repair it to its original condition.
 3. **Replace:** If it is not feasible to repair the feature, then replace it with one that is the same or similar in character (e.g., materials, detail, finish) to the original one. Replace only that portion which is beyond repair.
 4. **Reconstruct:** If the feature is missing entirely, reconstruct it from appropriate evidence.
 5. If a new feature or addition is necessary, design it in such a way as to minimize the impact on original features.
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DESIGN OF ALTERATIONS, NEW OR INFILL CONSTRUCTION

While the alteration of historic properties may be proposed, the goal should be to design these changes such that they have no – or little – effect on the integrity of the property. Design any alterations to be compatible with the historic character of the property. Avoid alterations that would hinder the ability to interpret the original design character of the house, as well as those that imply an earlier historic period than that of the building. These approaches are generally inappropriate. Design alterations such that damage to historic features or materials is minimal, or avoided entirely.

Similarly, new or infill construction should be designed to fit within the setting of the historic site or district. This requires some planning, as well as an understanding of the development site. The Montgomery County historic preservation program recognizes that while historic districts and sites convey a certain sense of time and place associated with their history, they also remain dynamic, with alterations to existing structures and construction of new buildings occurring over time.

The design guidelines that follow were written to help assure that, when new building occurs, it will be in a manner that reinforces the basic visual characteristics of an area. The guidelines do not require that new buildings must look old. In fact, imitating historic styles found in Montgomery County is generally discouraged. Some people may be confused about this concept; for many, the initial assumption is that any new building should appear to be old. But rather than imitating older buildings, a new design should relate to the traditional design characteristics of a neighborhood while also conveying the stylistic trends of today. New construction may do so by drawing upon some basic building features—such as the way in which a building is located on its site, the manner in which it relates to the street and its basic massing, form and materials—rather than applying conjectural historic detailing to a new building. When these design variables are arranged in a new building to be similar to those seen traditionally in the area, visual compatibility results. Therefore, it is possible to be compatible with the historic context while also producing a design that is distinguishable as being newer.

RESPONSIBILITY OF OWNERSHIP

Ownership of a historic property carries both benefits and a responsibility to respect the historic character of the property and its setting. This responsibility does not necessarily translate into higher construction or maintenance costs. Ultimately, residents and property owners should recognize that historic preservation is a long-range community policy that promotes economic well-being and overall viability of Montgomery County at large and that they play an essential role in helping implement this important public policy through the careful stewardship of the County's historic resources.

The HPC, the staff of the Montgomery County Planning Department Historic Preservation Section, Local Advisory Panels, and the County's many local, nonprofit preservation organizations are partners in this process and resources for property owners and their design professionals. Information about the HPC, historic preservation staff, and the County preservation program is available (see the appendix for contact information). Staff can provide assistance with the HAWP application and design review process, financial incentives, the County Historic Preservation Ordinance and other historic preservation related matters.