

Neighborhood Conservation District Design Standards

These standards are detailed in the Neighborhood Conservation District Design Guidelines document.

All requirements only apply to modifications and new construction VISIBLE FROM THE PUBLIC WAY.

Massing and Scale for New Construction and Additions	
Standard	The basic building form - the massing and scale - of a new building shall be compatible with the general forms of neighboring structures, in terms of overall size, complexity of volumetric form, combinations of solids and voids in the overall shape, neighborhood characteristics, and roof configuration.
Standard	Additions shall not fill in the spaces between buildings (unless the addition is recessed), and new buildings should not disrupt the existing rhythm of the street.
Recommendation	A new dwelling or addition should relate visually to neighboring houses.
Recommendation	New buildings and additions should not be sited at unusual angles.

New Construction	
Standard	New dwellings shall follow the placement and setbacks of other dwellings in the immediate neighborhood.
Standard	The form of new dwellings shall be based on the form of houses in the Neighborhood Conservation District and should avoid the vocabulary and forms of builder housing found in new residential developments.
Standard	The design of new buildings shall have a rhythm that is similar to the rhythm of the adjacent buildings.
Standard	All parts of a new building façade shall be visually integrated as a composition, which should relate to adjacent buildings. The size, spacing, arrangement, and proportions of façade elements such as doors, windows, cornices, and water tables should create a harmonious composition.
Standard	New buildings shall not exceed the size of dwellings in the immediate neighborhood, as measured by floor area and volume, by more than 10%.
Standard	The eave line and ridge line of a proposed new dwelling shall not exceed the height of the eave and ridge lines of houses in the immediate neighborhood.
Standard	Large (institutional) buildings shall be designed as a series of masses or building elements compatible with the immediate streetscape. Where a large building in a Neighborhood Conservation District is unavoidable, the mass of the proposed structure can be broken down into traditional building blocks that relate to the scale of the streetscape, thereby blending into its context.

Additions	
Standard	An addition to an existing building shall be a secondary form that preserves the form of the historic building through its setback, massing, width, and detail.
Standard	The overall size of the principal façade of an addition, as measured by façade area, shall not exceed 30% of the size of an existing building.
Standard	The cornice line on the principal façade of an addition shall be no higher than the cornice line on the principal façade of the historic structure. Likewise, the ridge line of an addition should be no higher than the ridge line of the historic structure.

Recommendation	Generally, the width of an addition should not exceed one-half the width of the principal historic structure, subject to the total width not exceeding 10% of the width of other houses in the immediate neighborhood.
Recommendation	Proposed additions should follow the pattern of setbacks of adjacent dwellings and their additions in order to blend into the development pattern of the immediate neighborhood.
Recommendation	The form of a proposed addition should be based on the form of the existing dwelling and the form of other additions in the neighborhood. Proposed additions that use the design vocabulary and forms of contemporary houses in new developments may not be appropriate.

Materials	
Standard	An addition shall either replicate the existing exterior wall material in type, color, and texture or be constructed of a traditional exterior wall material found in the neighborhood.
Standard	Vinyl siding is permitted where corner boards, door and window trim, and cornices are fabricated from synthetic or natural wood profiles, and is prohibited elsewhere.
Standard	The use of traditional exterior wall materials such as brick, stone, stucco, wood siding, and synthetic wood siding and their related details are recommended for new construction.

Outbuildings	
Recommendation	New outbuildings should visually relate to their context. The design of outbuildings should not be overly elaborate.
Recommendation	New garages for new and existing dwellings should be located behind the dwelling, accessed by a driveway running alongside the dwelling.
Recommendation	Sheds, workshops, and other new outbuildings should either be placed behind, and remain visually secondary to, the principal building on the lot, or follow the pattern of adjacent properties.
Recommendation	Rear setbacks should follow the general pattern of the placement of outbuildings in the immediate neighborhood where feasible.

Architectural Features	
Standard	Do not create new openings or remove existing openings in a principal façade.
Standard	Do not wrap existing cornice with aluminum or plastic sheeting.
Standard	Do not construct new dormers or cupolas on any principal façade of an existing building, except where historic dormers already exist in the immediate neighborhood. Do not use prefabricated ventilators and cupolas visible from the primary façade.
Recommendation	Proposed new openings in walls should be compatible with the architectural character, rhythm, proportions, and scale.
Recommendation	Preserve historic dormers and cupolas.
Recommendation	Preserve historic chimneys. Replacements should be accurate reproductions based on physical or pictorial evidence.
Recommendation	Preserve historic cornices. Replacements should be accurate reproductions based on physical or pictorial evidence.

Windows	
Standard	New windows shall match the historic units in design, dimensions, and pane configurations.

Standard	Replacement windows shall have true divided lights or simulated divided lights, not removable or snap-in muntins on glass panes or muntin grids that are sandwiched between layers of glass.
Standard	Trim around windows shall not be covered by panning.
Standard	Do not install filler strips around the perimeter of replacement windows.
Standard	Use clear glass only, not tinted, reflective, or opaque glass.
Recommendation	Vinyl replacement windows are not recommended.
Recommendation	Install interior or exterior storm windows rather than replacing existing historic windows.
Recommendation	Proposed windows and doors in an addition or new construction should be compatible with the proportions, sizes, and types of traditional windows and doors found in the original house.

Roofs and Roofing Material

Standard	The overall width of a shed dormer shall be no wider than one-half the overall roof width.
Standard	Additions and new construction shall employ the roof forms that are found in the immediate neighborhood.
Standard	The roofing material on an addition shall match the roofing material on the original structure or be visually similar to the existing roofing material. (However, the roofing material of a one-story shed addition to a two-story house could be another appropriate material such as painted metal.)
Standard	If asphalt shingles are proposed, heavyweight, dimensional shingles that resemble the color of the historic roofing material being replaced or remaining on the existing building shall be used.
Recommendation	Additions on a secondary façade can have a different roof form from the original structure.
Recommendation	In the design of new buildings, the use of one of the roof forms found in the district is recommended. Roof forms not prevalent in the immediate neighborhood are not recommended.
Recommendation	Shed dormers on principal façades are discouraged except where they exist in the immediate neighborhood.
Recommendation	Continuing the historical precedent, additions to gable roof structures that face a street should also have a gable roof with eave parallel to the street.
Recommendation	Prefabricated ventilators and cupolas are not recommended.
Recommendation	Determine original roofing materials and replicate original materials. Preserve significant historic roofing materials and features that are visible from the public way.
Recommendation	Traditional roofing materials such as slate and cedar shingles are recommended on new buildings. Synthetic slates, including composite rubber, concrete, and clay types, are also recommended.
Recommendation	Continued maintenance of existing slate roofing. If necessary, use natural or synthetic slate roofing where existing slate is severely deteriorated. Replicate patterns, colors, and texture of the historic roof where applicable.

Porches

Standard	Porches on primary facades: original materials, configurations, details, and dimensions shall be preserved or restored. New components shall be similar to original in dimensions, design, and finish.
Standard	Skirting (under porches) shall be repaired or replicated if original; new shall be painted wood rather than vinyl or plastic panels.

Standard	Vinyl and pressure-treated railing systems shall not be used.
Standard	On new structures, porches shall visually relate to the proposed building in a manner similar to the relationship of existing porches to existing dwellings in the immediate neighborhood.
Recommendation	On additions, porches should be simple in design and visually relate to the existing building.

Decks	
Standard	Deck floor elevations shall be no higher than the first floor elevation.
Recommendation	Reduce visibility of wood decks from public way.
Recommendation	The exposed structure under the deck should be screened by landscape plantings and wood lattice.
Recommendation	Railings should be a simple picket design, fabricated from painted wood or synthetic wood.
Recommendation	Privacy screens are not recommended.

Streetscape	
Standard	Existing historic retaining walls shall be preserved or restored.
Standard	New retaining walls that are visible from a public way shall be built with materials traditional to the neighborhood.
Standard	Chain-link fences and plastic fences are prohibited.
Standard	Gates shall be designed to swing into the private walkway or driveway, not onto the public sidewalk.
Standard	Yard lighting and parking lot lighting shall be post-mounted on maximum 12-foot high posts.
Recommendation	Where sidewalks occur, they should be maintained. Where conflicts occur between sidewalks and street trees, the sidewalk should be reconfigured to avoid damage to street tree buttress roots.
Recommendation	Site lighting should be compatible with the traditional neighborhood setting, and may include either traditional (period) lighting fixtures or simple modern fixtures.
Recommendation	High-efficiency fixtures such as mercury vapor or low-pressure sodium are not recommended because of their light color.
Recommendation	Off-street parking areas should be carefully planned to protect the character of residential streetscapes.
Recommendation	If a new parking area or driveway is required at a location that is currently vegetation, grass-block pavers, clay brick, Belgian blocks, or crushed stone are encouraged.
Recommendation	New fences along street fronts should be designed to allow views of the yard and building. New fences for rear and side yards may be more opaque.
Recommendation	Wood picket, vertical board, wood stockade, and ornamental iron fences are recommended.
Recommendation	The removal of mature landscaping and trees to provide parking areas is discouraged.

Sustainability	
Recommendation	Locate solar panels on the site rather than on the roof of the dwelling, or on new construction, outbuildings, or additions. Place solar panels in areas that minimize their visibility from a public way. Avoid installations that would result in the permanent loss of significant, character-defining features of the dwelling. On flat roofs, set solar panels back from the edge.