

**DESIGN GUIDELINES
of the
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
DOTHAN, ALABAMA**

GENERAL GUIDELINES:

1. These guidelines shall apply to the exterior portions of buildings that are either facing a street or are visible from the public right-of-way, as for instance along an alley. There will no intent in these guidelines to monitor interior arrangements, design, or decor.
2. A primary concern of the guidelines is good maintenance of properties. Nothing in these guidelines shall be construed to be counterproductive to maintaining a building according to the City's codes.
3. General tenets of historic preservation and rehabilitation are at the center of these guidelines. Changes to historic buildings within the district will be considered with consistent emphasis on appropriate applications of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation as set forth in these guidelines.
4. For ordinary maintenance not involving changes in materials, style or other exterior applications, the applicant may petition the Historic Preservation Commission for an expedited review procedure as described in the Ordinance.
5. Only in cases of demonstrable and irreversible damage to original material will its covering or replacement be considered.

FACADES AND STOREFRONTS:

1. Masonry: Brick, Stone, Terra Cotta, Concrete, Stucco and Mortar.
 - (a) Masonry that is unpainted shall be kept clean and in good repair, with no loose or extraneous elements adhering. Any patching to a masonry surface must be in keeping with the material and color, resembling the original as closely as possible, and, in the case of patches to brickwork, should match the original bonding and pointing.
 - (b) In general, a historically unpainted masonry

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surface should not be painted. Exceptions to this may be in the case of side or rear walls that have uneven color or texture due to removal of parti-walls, previous patching, or other visually disparate elements. Any paint on masonry should match the color of the unpainted portions of the building as closely as possible.

- (c) Decorative masonry such as brackets, cornices, honeycomb brick patterns, etc., should be maintained in as close to original condition as possible. In cases where these have been damaged, replacement in either the original or a modern material (such as fiberglass or drivit) is desirable. Where replacement is not feasible, consultation with a preservation architect should precede any plans to remove or cover decorative elements.
- (d) Existing facing materials such as metal screens, masonite panels, fiberboard or plywood panels, etc., must be kept in good repair or removed to expose the original material underneath. No new facing material over original material will be approved under these guidelines.

2. Storefronts

- (a) The storefront is defined as the entrance, show windows, signpanels or transoms, and any other elements of the building up to a height of 14' from grade.
- (b) Glass show windows and transoms, where still intact, shall not be obscured or covered with any other material. Whenever possible, transoms should be uncovered or faced in a manner to reflect their original framing elements and proportions within the historic storefront.
- (c) Inappropriate changes to the original style and character of a storefront will not be permitted. Examples of such inappropriate changes would be false colonial designs with multi-pane windows, false western designs, Mansard canopies, and the like.
- (d) Aluminum storefront framing elements in historic buildings should be finished in appropriate color.
- (e) Carrara glass storefronts dating from the '30s and

'40s are considered to be historic and should be retained and restored to the greatest extent possible.

3. Upper Windows

- (a) On building faces, all upper windows must be glazed and at least translucent. No street windows will be permitted to be painted or otherwise blocked by metal, plywood, masonry, or any other material. Alternatives such as closed shutters will be considered if appropriate to the building's other elements.
- (b) Upstairs windows on non-street walls may be blocked or covered with materials appropriate to the surrounding walls and as unobtrusively as possible. In general, blocking of windows will be discouraged unless interior arrangements demand it.
- (c) Replacements of upper windows should resemble the originals as closely as possible in style and materials. On historic buildings, modern metal-frame windows will not be permitted.

4. Temporary Replacement of Broken Windows

As per Chapter 50, Section 50-127 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, ALL broken window glass in all structures must be replaced.

All replacements of broken window glass in designated historic districts must duplicate the original glass in color, size, and installation technique, with the following exceptions:

(a) Where the original window glass installation does not meet current building codes and/or safety standards in materials or installation, owners or their agents must meet current codes, following standard installation practices, while visually replicating the original window.

(b) In street front windows of commercial buildings not currently occupied, or where final use plans are pending, where large sheets of broken specialty glass would have to be replaced, building owners may replace glass as follows:

- 1. Use minimum 1/2" thick exterior grade plywood, OSB, or similar material cut to the same dimensions as the sheet of glass to be replaced;
- 2. Replacement material should be fixed in the existing opening in place of the missing glass, securely anchored so as to meet all code requirements;
- (over)
- 3. All edges should be neatly trimmed with exterior grade trim material and caulked;

4. All replacement materials and trim should be primed with exterior grade primer, then painted with two coats of standard exterior grade paint.
5. On major surfaces, paint colors should be restricted to a range of deep shades (for example, dark gray, green, umber). Lighter complementary colors may be used on trim only, but whites, yellows, and colors containing a high proportion of these should be avoided.
6. In order to give the boarded up window a more lively and fashionable look, the Downtown Group logo may be placed on the temporary board. The property owner would have to approve the logo placement. There would be no cost to the owner for placement of the logo.
7. On upper story, multi-pane windows, if the breakage is less than 50 percent (50%) the broken panes must be replaced. If the window breakage is 50 percent (50%) or more, the entire window must be boarded up using the same standards as the lower story windows.

(c)The steps above may be used to replace broken glass in cases of rear, side, and other windows similarly located in places not commonly in public view.

(d)The temporary replacement of broken windows shall only be valid for a period of six months from the date of repair. (07/11/2002)

5. Metal Trim and Downspouts

- (a) Metal scuppers, downspouts, gutters, copings, etc., should be securely fastened to the building and in good condition. They should be painted to harmonize with other elements of the building face.
- (b) Any miscellaneous elements no longer in use, such as conduit, sign brackets, light fixtures or fasteners, etc., should be removed from the building.

6. Awnings and Canopies

- (a) Canvas or vinyl awnings are appropriate and desirable to shade storefronts and upper windows. These can be permanent or retractable.
- (b) Storefront awnings projecting the width of the sidewalk must be attached to the building at 14' above the grade of the sidewalk. Awnings may only project two-thirds the width of the sidewalk if attached lower than 14' above the grade of the sidewalk. Awnings also cannot descend lower than 9' above the sidewalk can project no further than 7' from the face of the building. Care should be taken that the awnings take up a proportional section of storefront and do not obscure too much

of the building surface.

- (c) Flat canopies of the type popular in the '30s and '40s are acceptable and appropriate if kept in good condition.
- (d) Fake Mansard or colonial canopies are inappropriate and should be removed where feasible. These guide-lines do not permit the addition of new ones to any building in the district.

7. Entrances and Porches

- (a) Recognizing that porches can define an architectural style or a building's historical period, care should be taken to retain or restore original details and shape, outline, roof height, and roof pitch.
- (b) When it is necessary to replace deteriorated pieces, the new material should match the original in material, texture, shape, size, and color. Existing features should be repaired rather than replaced. Decorative elements should only be added when they can be documented as having previously existed. The addition of ornate decoration is discouraged.
- (c) Enclosing of front porches is inappropriate if done in a manner that destroys their intended appearance.

8. Miscellaneous

- (a) Roofs must be kept in good condition and free of debris, standing water, or other elements tending to deterioration. Mechanical equipment on the roof should be screened if possible, or painted a dark color to minimize its visibility.
- (b) Rear loading docks and entrances should be kept in good condition and should be identified by appropriate signage (see Signage below).
- (c) Vacant lots and parking lots should be kept clean and in good repair.

- (d) Electrical equipment such as junction boxes, transformers, ballast switches, etc., should be hidden from view as much as possible, and should not in any case be installed on the street face of a building.
- (e) Neon lighting as a design element or accent should be used only on buildings of an appropriate and corresponding historical style. (02/13/97)

9. Signs

In general, signs consistent with the historic period of the buildings will be encouraged. Dothan's historic buildings date prior to 1950, so there is a wide range of choices to be made. The primary criteria for signs, however, are good quality and appropriate size.

- (a) Signs shall be for the purpose of identifying businesses only. No permanent signs displaying advertising or promotions are permitted (exempting historic wall paintings, see below), other than those relating to the primary use of a property. Lettering describing a business's general goods or services may be permitted if it conforms to other guidelines as to size and quality.
- (b) No more than three (3) signs for any individual business will be permitted.
- (c) Plastic signs will be carefully reviewed for quality and size. In general, use of lesser-grade corrugated plastic signs will not be approved. This applies to both projecting and flat-mounted, lit and unlit signs.
- (d) Signs shall be in keeping with the character and proportions of the building to which they are attached; they should not overpower the building or obscure any significant architectural features. Specific size guidelines are as follows:
 - 1. Signs mounted flat against the building face shall not exceed in area more than three (3) times the width of the building; e.g., a 25' building cannot have more than 75 sq. ft. in signage. Buildings with two (2) street faces are allowed this computation for both faces. Ground-floor businesses in multi-story buildings cannot mount signs higher than 14'

above grade. Signs incorporating lighting (back illuminated, neon, etc.) shall be reviewed for appropriateness regardless of the above-mentioned size limitations.
(02/13/97)

2. Window and door lettering is permitted for identification but not for advertising. Letters and/or logos should not cover more than 25% of the glass area. All window and door signage will be reviewed for appropriateness to its space.
 3. Signs identifying tenants in upper stories can be lettered on the windows according to the above computations, i.e., not to exceed 25% of the window in area.
 4. Signs identifying tenants at the rear or loading areas of a building should not exceed 6 sq. ft. in area and should be mounted flat against the building.
- (e) Projecting signs will be carefully reviewed for their size and appropriateness, but they can be considered acceptable if they do not overpower or obscure their own building or neighboring buildings. They should not be longer than 8', and the overall projection cannot exceed 9½' from the face of the building. They must be kept in good repair and working order, and must be finished on both sides.

In general, projecting signs shall not be lower than 10' above grade. However, the Historical Preservation Commission may at its discretion allow small, non-mechanical signs, of the sort generally accommodating a business name only, to hang at the same minimum height as that for awning valences, which would allow them to extend to 8' above grade.

- (f) Business identification sewn or painted on awnings or canopies is permitted under the size guidelines applying to other types of signs.
- (g) Advertising in the public right-of-way is prohibited. Examples of such advertising would be A-frame sandwich boards, temporary trailer or other portable moving-light signs, or any other temporary signage that could be an impediment to pedestrian traffic.

- (h) Temporary advertising adhering to store windows is prohibited unless specifically permitted by the Design Review Committee after review of the style and circumstances of the promotion. There will be a 30 day delay limit on such promotional signs.
- (i) Day-Glo signs, either permanent or temporary, are prohibited.
- (j) Billboards and portable signs are prohibited in the historic district.
- (k) Unless historic in nature, signs mounted on the roof of a building or rising above the parapet line shall not be permitted.
- (l) Historic wall paintings should be retained and restored to the greatest extent possible. Any new wall signs should conform in style and content to the historic precedents. Approval of new wall painting will be considered on a case-by-case basis, with close attention paid to surrounding signage, architectural features and other pertinent building and contextual elements.
- (m) All signs shall be fabricated by a professional sign-maker and be of good quality and appearance as deemed acceptable by the Historic Preservation Commission under these guidelines. Any exception to this general standard can be made by the Commission only upon presentation by the applicant of acceptable plans and/or samples, assuring that non-professionally made signs will be of good quality as defined above.
- (n) All signs, including signs made of plastic, must meet Standard Building Codes for construction.
(05/08/97)

10. New Construction

- (a) New construction in the historic district must be compatible and harmonious with the existing scale, materials and setbacks of the existing blocks. This should not be interpreted as an attempt to inhibit modern building style or technique, whether utilitarian or decorative. The intent is to maintain a sense of continuity and wholeness that out-of-scale or jarringly variant structures would compromise or destroy.
- (b) New structures should respect the masonry facings and fenestration rhythms of their neighbors.

- (c) No new construction will be permitted in front of the building line of the existing buildings on the block.
- (d) Uses of new buildings are governed according to the City's Zoning Code and not by any provision of these guidelines.

11. Demolition

- (a) Except as provided below, demolition of any structure for purposes of surface parking is not permitted.
- (b) Except in cases of extreme deterioration and potential danger to the public safety as determined by the City Building Inspector, demolition within the historic district will be discouraged and requests to demolish will be considered only upon presentation of plans for the building's replacement with another structure acceptable under these guidelines (see 8 above).
- (c) An owner must demonstrate extreme economic hardship and inability to redevelop before being allowed to demolish a building for other purposes than redevelopment of the property. The City of Dothan Historic Preservation Commission or other agencies of the City of Dothan shall have the option to seek other avenues for rehabilitation of a building in danger of demolition; this option will be in effect for no longer than six (6) months after the date of the request for a demolition permit.
- (d) Surface parking lots must be accompanied by landscaping, facades, street fixtures or other treatments which, in the opinion of the Commission, contribute to the historic character of the neighboring buildings and the Historic District.

STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation have served for many years as the "10 Commandments" for historic preservation projects. These standards are used to certify historic rehabilitations and are also used for grant-funded projects. The basic standards, listed below, are incorporated into Dothan's Design Guidelines.

STANDARD NO. 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.

STANDARD NO. 2: The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.

STANDARD NO. 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.

STANDARD NO. 4: Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.

STANDARD NO. 5: Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be retained and preserved.

STANDARD NO. 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.

STANDARD NO. 7: Chemical or physical treatments, such as sand-blasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.

STANDARD NO. 8: Significant archaeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.

STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION (CONT'D)

STANDARD NO. 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, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

STANDARD NO. 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.