

**DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES FOR
MOBILE'S HISTORIC DISTRICTS**

September 2025 Draft

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CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION



View of Dauphin Street in the Lower Dauphin Historic District

OVERVIEW

- Why preserve Mobile?
- Who should consult the Guidelines?
- The Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) application process
- The Secretary of the Interior's Standards
- Additional City Review Processes

INTERACTIVE PDF

This PDF contains interactive links that will take you to other areas of the design guidelines. Links can be clicked with your mouse to access the content directly. Text within this document will be **bolded and underlined** or have a standout box when there is an interactive link.

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WHY PRESERVE MOBILE?

Mobile is a city rich in history, culture, and character. It is home to America's oldest Carnival tradition and, in its more than 300-year history, has grown from a small trade post on Mobile Bay to a diverse port city. Mobile's story is told through its buildings: Creole cottages reflecting its Spanish and French colonial past, grand homes communicating its antebellum legacy, and humble shotgun houses embodying the resilience of working-class families. Its identity—both progressive and traditional—is expressed in its built landscape, from commercial high-rises to institutional buildings and neighborhood homes. Preserving this landscape ensures Mobile continues to tell its story and uphold its character.

Historic Preservation is a discipline that integrates the physical landscape of a place into our dialogue with the past to shape our future. It means keeping cultural resources intact for the benefit of future generations. By preserving existing buildings and guiding compatible redevelopment, the Design Guidelines promote three key elements for Mobile:

- **Cultural and Social Sustainability:** Preserving historic places and patterns supports everyday connections between residents and cultural heritage of the community.
- **Economic Stability:** The economic benefits of protecting historic resources include higher property values, job creation in rehabilitation industries, and increased heritage tourism
- **Environmental Stability:** Rehabilitation of historic resources supports environmental sustainability through conservation of embodied energy, adaptability, and maintenance of sustainable development patterns.

ABOUT THE GUIDELINES

The Guidelines in this document are the combined efforts of many professionals to help homeowners, business owners, contractors, and other stakeholders plan and execute building projects that preserve the identity of Mobile's seven locally designated historic districts.

Mobile's tradition of historic preservation and architectural review goes back to the early 1960s. The Guidelines have been updated several times to include the most current professional guidance as laid out by the National Park Service. They were first revised in 2000, and again in 2016. This document represents the most current Guidelines as of 2025.

WORK THAT REQUIRES A COA

Any work on the exterior of a building in a locally designated historic district requires a COA.

- Repairs, replacements, alterations, and additions to all existing buildings, regardless of age
- New construction
- Items attached to building exteriors (satellite dishes, cell towers, security bars, some HVAC units)
- Site planning elements (fences, lighting, paving, driveways, etc.)
- Building demolition
- Building relocation
- Commercial signage

WHO SHOULD CONSULT THE GUIDELINES?

All tenants, property owners, design professionals, architects, or contractors within the boundaries of Mobile's locally designated districts should consult these guidelines before embarking on projects that materially change the exterior of buildings. Any such work, including maintenance, must be submitted for review in order to receive a building permit. The Historic Development Department of the City of Mobile (HDD) receives these applications and, upon approval, will issue a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) which is needed before a building permit can be issued by the City of Mobile.

The Design Review Guidelines are applicable to changes to building exteriors and site features of properties within Mobile's locally designated historic districts regardless of the building's age, style, or use.

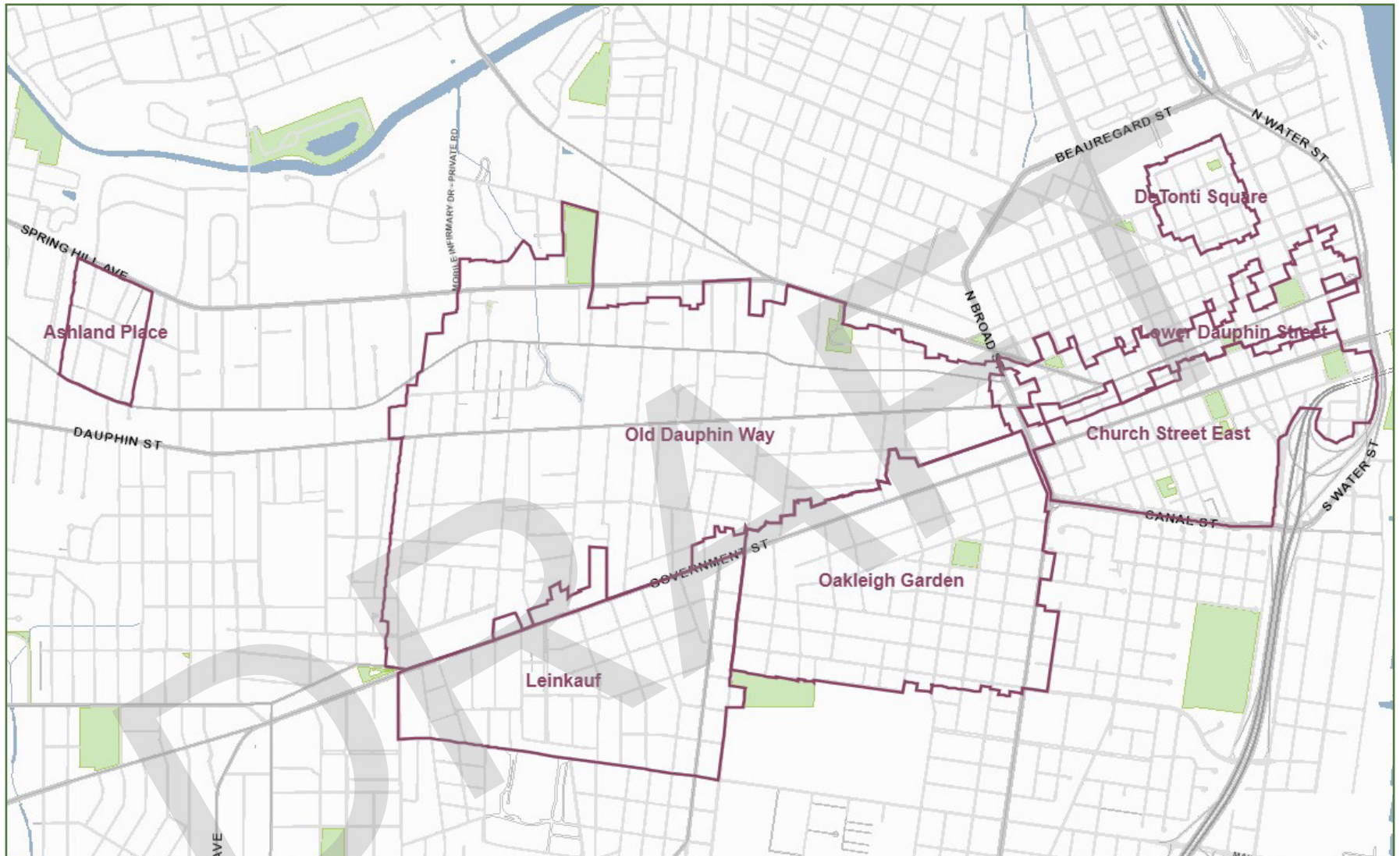
Am I in a Historic District?

The Guidelines apply to all buildings in Mobile's seven locally designated historic districts. All seven districts are also listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The seven locally designated historic districts are:

- [Ashland Place](#)
- [Church Street East](#)
- [De Tonti Square](#)
- [Leinkauf](#)
- [Lower Dauphin Street](#)
- [Oakleigh Garden](#)
- [Old Dauphin Way](#)

Additional districts may be added as time progresses. Property owners and contractors should consult the City website to determine whether or not they are in a local historic district. There are other districts and neighborhoods in Mobile that are listed in the NRHP, but are not locally designated and thus do not require an application for review or a COA.

Check The Map!



Source: <https://cityofmobile.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=44b3d1ecf57d4daa919a1e40ecca0c02>

The above map shows Mobile's seven locally designated historic districts as of 2025. More information about Mobile's historic districts can be found within the appendix. [Click here](#).

THE CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS (COA)

Applications for a COA are made online through the City's online permitting service. Detailed information about the online application process, required documents, application deadlines, and Architectural Review Board (ARB) hearing dates can be found on the City website. Simplified guides for common project types—including roof replacement, window repair and replacement, and fences—can also be found on the City website. For larger, more complex projects, including all new construction, applicants are strongly encouraged to schedule a staff consultation prior to applying. Please contact the HDD office to schedule a consultation.

HOW TO APPLY FOR A COA

There are two distinct review processes for the COA application. Simply stated, the ARB typically reviews all COA applications for major alterations, new construction, and demolitions. Basic repairs and more minor alterations may be approved on an administrative level. Visit the City website for a more detailed list of what work can be approved administratively and what must undergo ARB review.

ARB Review Process

The ARB meets on a bi-monthly basis to review COA applications that cannot be reviewed administratively. Applications must be received well in advance of the scheduled ARB hearing to allow HDD staff sufficient time to prepare a staff report familiarizing the ARB with the project. A schedule of all ARB hearings and corresponding application deadlines can be found on the City website. ARB hearings are open to the public. Either the applicant or the applicant's representative must attend the hearing, or the ARB will not review the application. The ARB will decide whether to approve or deny the application at the hearing. The applicant may choose to remove the application from consideration at any time before the ARB makes their final decision. If an application is denied, the applicant must wait six months before submitting another application for a similar scope of work. An incomplete application will not be placed on the ARB hearing agenda. For a full list of application requirements, see the City website.

Administrative Review

HDD staff may review COA applications for more basic repairs and minor alterations on an administrative level. This review process can happen much more quickly than the full ARB review process. Typically, administrative review can be completed within two or three business days. HDD staff can provide guidance on what type of repair, replacement, and alterations qualify for administrative review.

CITY OF MOBILE WEBSITE

As details regarding applications for a Certificate of Appropriateness, historic districts maps, or other guidance change, the City of Mobile website will be the most up-to-date resource for applicants and stakeholders.

Be sure to check the website!

LOCAL PRESERVATION AGENCIES AND COMMISSIONS

Several agencies and commissions work together to ensure Mobile's historic districts are preserved and maintained.

Architectural Review Board (ARB)

The ARB is a board of nine members nominated by the Mayor and appointed by City Council. Members are volunteers with expertise in architecture, history, urban planning, archaeology, or law.

The ARB is responsible for approving plans for exterior work in locally designated historic districts including, but not limited to, window replacement, additions, new construction, and demolitions. The ARB reviews plans to ensure they comply with the Guidelines. ARB meeting agendas and minutes are posted online.

Historic Development Department (HDD)

The HDD is a professional department of the Mobile City government that employs architectural historians and preservation professionals.

The HDD receives COA applications and determines which must go before the ARB for approval. HDD staff generate a detailed report for each application prior to ARB review. HDD staff also advise applicants concerning the Guidelines, review processes, and best practices for historic property maintenance.

The ARB has delegated approval of more minor projects that comply with the Guidelines to HDD staff. Projects of this class include, but are not limited to, basic repairs, painting (except for unpainted masonry), fences, driveways, and commercial signage.

MOBILE HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (MHDC)

While not directly involved in the review of COA applications, the MHDC plays a crucial role in approving any updates or alterations to these Design Guidelines.

The MHDC is made up of 13 volunteer members who, like the ARB, have experience in history, architecture, planning, law, and other relevant professions. In addition to approving changes to the Guidelines, the MHDC supports preservation efforts within the City of Mobile and administers the Banner & Shield award program.

MHDC meeting agendas and minutes are posted online.

IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS

Rehabilitation - The process of making a building usable through repair or alteration while preserving the historic character of a building.

Preservation - The process of applying measures to sustain the existing form, integrity, and material composition of a historic building without significant alterations.

Reconstruction - The process through new construction of replicating a historic building that no longer exists.

Restoration - The process of restoring a building to its historic appearance at a period in time.

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS

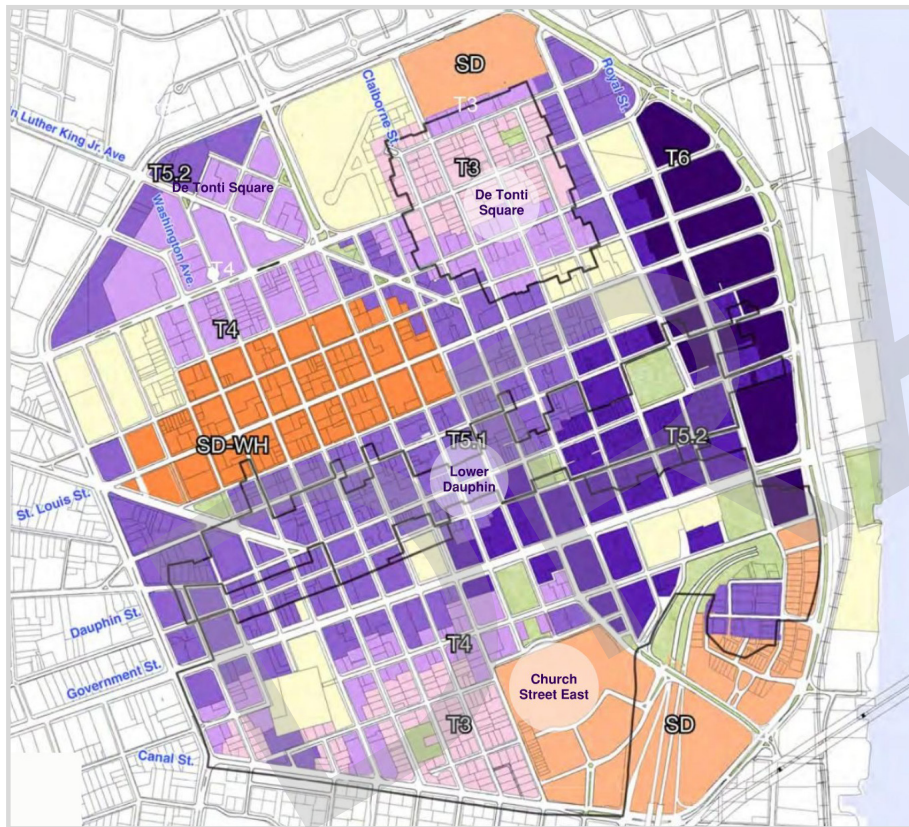
These Design Guidelines are based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation as published by the National Park Service (26 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 67.).

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 alteration of 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 examples 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 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 archeological 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, size, 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.

OTHER CITY REVIEW PROCESSES

These Guidelines are part of Mobile's Historic Preservation Ordinance, which is included in full as an appendix. The Ordinance, which is Chapter 44, Article IV of Mobile City Code, includes rules, regulations, and procedures for preservation in Mobile, including standard review of projects by the ARB. The ARB examines applications solely on the basis of impairment to the historic character of a building or a historic district.

Additional regulations, like the Unified Development Code and the Downtown Development District (DDD) regulate other aspects of a construction or alteration project. Applicants may need to apply for approval by other City departments for elements of a project such as safety, setbacks, trees, right-of-way issues, and other considerations. While the ARB and HDD staff try to inform applicants of possible conflicts, it is up to the applicant to clear all requests with the appropriate departments.



Downtown Development District (DDD) plan, showing boundaries downtown historic districts

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Lower Dauphin

OVERVIEW

- Introduction
- Guidelines Applicable to All Building Types
- Guidelines for Additions to Existing Buildings
- Specific Guidelines for Commercial Buildings
- Landscape and Site Features

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INTRODUCTION

These guidelines allow for necessary repair and alterations to properties within Mobile's historic districts while preventing the unnecessary loss of historic materials and character-defining features. The guidelines prioritize repair of existing materials over replacement. If replacement is necessary, the guidelines prioritize in-kind replacement (i.e., replacement using identical materials, dimensions, and profiles to the original) over replacements that alter original materials or redesign character-defining features. However, the guidelines do allow for modern alternative replacement materials in certain circumstances. The following section walks stakeholders through typical repairs, in-kind replacements, and alternative materials considered appropriate and beneficial to properties within Mobile's locally designated historic districts.

The guidelines apply to all properties within the local historic districts regardless of building age, style, or designation as contributing or non-contributing. Contributing buildings are defined as those structures listed as contributing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) nomination form for the district in which the property is located. Contributing structures must be 50 years old or older and retain sufficient historic material and architectural features to identify construction period and style. Non-contributing structures include all structures that have not met the 50-year benchmark as well as older structures that do not retain sufficient historic material and features.

The design concepts discussed in this document are intended to provide direction to stakeholders in the care and treatment of their properties. However, complexities of project scope and/or unique site conditions may introduce design and material questions that the Design Guidelines do not address directly. For this reason, the ARB reviews applications on a case-by-case basis. Work approved on one structure does not necessarily create a precedent that allows a similar treatment on another structure. It is ultimately the responsibility of the applicant to demonstrate that the proposed design would not impair the integrity of the structure or the character of the district where the work occurs.

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY OF MOBILE

A number of historic architectural styles are found throughout Mobile's seven historic districts. Understanding the character-defining elements of the different styles is a critical part of maintaining the historic integrity of each building and the districts as a whole. Character-defining elements should be preserved whenever possible, and the regular maintenance and repair of these elements helps to maintain the integrity of each historic district. Applicants are encouraged to review the appendix for an overview of the historic styles found in Mobile and their character-defining elements. Click the box below to be taken to the Appendix.

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW THE
HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL
STYLES FOUND IN MOBILE'S
HISTORIC DISTRICTS](#)

MAINTAINING HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Routine and timely maintenance is essential for the longevity and preservation of historic buildings. Regular inspections of a building can identify maintenance issues before they become a larger problem.

Exterior Maintenance Checklist

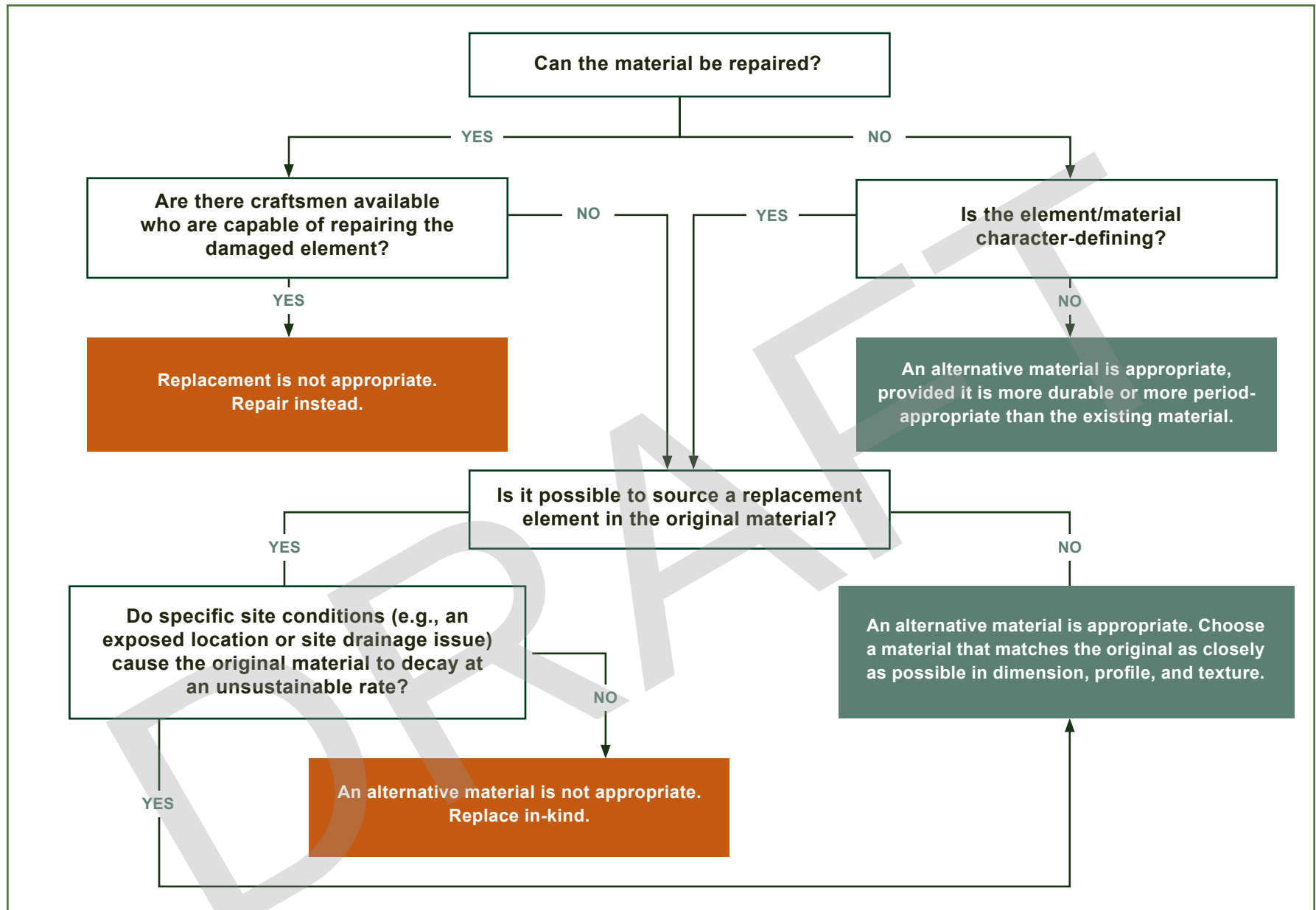
- Regular remove tree branches, vines, and shrubs that encroach within 2-3 feet of the building exterior.
- Clean and inspect gutters and downspouts every 6 months.
- Inspect the property for termite or other insect infestation every 6 months.
- Inspect roof for damage at least once a year and after any major storm.
- Repaint exterior wood every 5 to 7 years. If wholesale painting is cost prohibitive, spot paint areas of failure to match existing.
- Replace glazing putty on historic wood windows every 10 to 15 years.
- Repoint brick mortar joints every 25 to 30 years.

Replacement in Kind

With proper maintenance and occasional repairs, many historic materials will significantly outlast their modern counterparts. However, most materials will eventually deteriorate to the point that replacement becomes necessary. In-kind replacement using materials identical to the original should always be the first option considered.

Alternative Materials

In some situations, in-kind replacement may be unfeasible due to high material costs, lack of experienced craftsman, or unique site considerations. In these cases, an alternative replacement material may be considered. The flow chart on the following page can help property owners determine when replacement with an alternative materials is or is not appropriate.



Alternative Materials Flow Chart

GUIDELINES APPLICABLE TO ALL BUILDING TYPES

ROOFS AND GUTTERS

A building's roof is one of its most dominant features. Roof's form, pitch, material, and detailing are frequently integral to identifying a building's architectural style and period of construction. Mobile's locally designated historic districts are rich with a variety of roof forms and materials, including slate, clay tile, and standing-seam metal. The preservation of these features contributes to district character.

If alterations, repairs, or replacements must take place, observe the following best practices:

Maintain Form

- Maintain the original pitch of the roof, as well as the original eave depth and overhangs.
- Do not enclose exposed rafter tails if they are original to the building.
- Gutters and downspouts original to the building should be retained and repaired.
- New dormers, skylights, vents, or attic ventilators should be located out of view from the street, if possible.
- Solar panels, mechanical equipment, and communication equipment should be set back from the primary facade and not visible from the public right-of-way. Take care not to damage or remove historic materials or features to the greatest extent possible.



Clay tile roof in Old Dauphin Way



5-V Crimp metal roof in Oakleigh Garden

Repairs and Replacements

- Repair rather than replace. If replacement is necessary, replace in kind using original materials.
- If original materials are unavailable or cost-prohibitive, use an approvable alternative replacement material that matches the original in dimension, profile, texture, finish, and color.
- Asphalt shingles are an appropriate replacement material for asphalt and asbestos shingle roofs.
- Wood or slate shingles can be replaced with composite shingles that match the original in dimension, profile, texture, color, and finish.
- Metal roofs are allowed when appropriate to the building's period and style. Metal shingle and standing seam metal roofs with low profile seams are preferred. 5V-crimp metal roof panels are acceptable.
- Replace terra cotta roof tiles in kind if feasible. Otherwise, acceptable alternative materials include concrete, fiber cement, glass-fiber reinforced polymers (GFRP), and metal, as long as replacement tiles match the original in dimension, profile, texture, color, and finish.
- Finish roof edges in a similar manner to those seen traditionally.

APPROVABLE

- Clay or terra cotta tile
- Composite shingles, including asphalt, fiberglass, and fiber cement
- Standing-seam metal, 5V-crimp metal panels, and metal shingles
- Slate shingles
- Wood shingles
- Other materials original to the building
- Built-up or membrane roofing (on a slope equal to or less than 3:12)

RESTRICTED

- Corrugated fiberglass
- Ribbed or corrugated metal
- Asphalt roll roofing unless obscured by parapet walls
- Built-up or membrane roofing (on a slope greater than 3:12)
- Panel and batten



Roof with matching replacement tiles in Ashland Place

SIDING AND EXTERIOR WALLS

Exterior cladding and wall materials are integral to a building's historic period and architectural style. Not only the composition of the material but its color, texture, and profile provide insight into the architect or builder's original design intent. Original exterior wall materials and finishes should be preserved intact wherever possible. Any alterations to the exterior wall materials or finishes should maintain the texture and profile of the original. Whenever replacement is necessary, remove only the deteriorated material that is beyond reasonable repair. Patch or piece-in new material as needed.

Wood Siding

Wood siding is ubiquitous throughout Mobile's historic districts. This versatile exterior material varies in depth, profile, shape, trim, and other character-defining details.

- Repair damaged wood siding whenever possible. Only replace wood that has deteriorated beyond what is reasonable to repair.
- Replace siding in kind on the building façade and on secondary elevations that are visible from the public right-of-way. Consider removing later covering materials that have not achieved historic significance.
- If in-kind replacement is not feasible, choose an appropriate replacement material that matches the original in dimension, profile, and texture. Do not use composite siding with a simulated wood grain texture.



Wood lap siding in De Tonti Square



Wood lap and shingle siding in Oakleigh Garden

Stucco

Many contributing buildings in Mobile's historic districts feature distinctive stucco exteriors. Buildings with Mediterranean or Spanish Revival style often have distinct or tooled stucco exteriors, and many 19th-century brick buildings feature stucco scored to resemble stacked stone or ashlar.

- Failed stucco that has detached from its underlying surface should be replaced to the extent of its failure. Whole sale removal and replacement should be avoided.
- Replacement stucco should match the original in strength and porosity as well as texture and surface appearance.
- Stucco should be applied only to areas that historically featured stucco and not to surfaces that were originally uncovered.
- If stucco was originally scored to mimic stone, score new stucco to match.



Scored stucco to mimic stone in Lower Dauphin



Textured stucco in De Tonti Square



Two-tone brickwork is a character-defining feature of many contributing buildings in Mobile's local historic districts, such as this Craftsman style bungalow in Old Dauphin Way.

Masonry

Brick and stone appear in all Mobile historic districts and range from 19th-century load-bearing masonry walls to the masonry veneers of the later 19th and 20th centuries. The color, texture, and profile of historic brick, stone, and mortar are integral to our understanding of a building's period and architectural style. In the 19th century, fine brickwork with expertly struck mortar joints demonstrated both the skill of the mason and the wealth of the building owner. In the 20th century, a wider array of specialty shaped or glazed bricks provided both designer and builder a greater range of masonry colors and textures.

- Repoint masonry mortar joints every 20 to 30 years. Spot repointing may be sufficient. Wholesale repointing is recommended when more than 30% of mortar joints have failed.
- Take care when cleaning and repairing historic masonry. Consult HDD staff for guidance on the best approaches to avoid damaging material.
- Do not paint brick or stone that was not painted historically. When repainting historic masonry that was previously painted, choose a color that is appropriate to the building's age and style. Use only compatible paints that are vapor-permeable.
- Elastomeric, vinyl, or ceramic coatings are not permitted on historic masonry.

Exterior Wall Materials

APPROVABLE	▪ Brick ▪ Smooth composite siding (fiber cement or poly-ash) ▪ Stucco ▪ Wood siding and shingles ▪ Other materials original to the building
RESTRICTED	▪ Composite panels with stamped brick or stone patterns ▪ Composite siding with faux wood grain texture ▪ Exposed/unfinished concrete block ▪ Exterior Insulation Finish System (EIFS) ▪ Metal siding ▪ Mineral fiber siding, panels, or shingles ▪ Plywood ▪ Vinyl siding

Varieties of Brick found in Mobile's Local Historic Districts



Glazed brick in Lower Dauphin



Textured Roman brick in Oakleigh Garden



Ironspot brick in Church Street East



Textured brick in Lower Dauphin

PAINTING MASONRY

Painting unpainted masonry on contributing buildings is generally not appropriate. This is especially true for character-defining decorative brickwork, including:

- Polychromatic brickwork
- Structural or decorative bond patterns
- Glazed, shaped, or Roman brick
- Details such as quoining, denticulation, corbeling, etc.

Painting masonry may be appropriate in the following circumstances:

- An existing masonry addition that is an exceptionally poor match to the original in color, texture, or quality. Painting the addition is preferable to painting the original. Install a vertical trim piece to ease the transition between painted and unpainted masonry.
- A contributing building with many poorly executed masonry repairs that detract from the overall appearance. Masonry infill at old window and door openings typically does not rise to this standard. These provide a visual record of original fenestration and a road map for future restoration.
- A non-contributing masonry building that employs a simple running bond and no other decorative brick elements

Cleaning Historic Exteriors

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards state instruct that historic materials should be cleaned using the gentlest method possible. While a dirty building may be less attractive than a clean one, most forms of soiling and staining will not damage the effected material. In contrast, harsh cleaning methods - including high-pressure washing, sandblasting, and certain chemical cleaning - can remove historic material and cause long term, irreversible harm to stucco, brick, stone, and siding. Consult HDD staff for recommendations for cleaning different exterior building materials. Before using any chemical cleaner, read the manufacturer's Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) to determine proper handling and application

- Do not clean masonry that has failed or eroding mortar joints.
- First try a low-pressure water wash, preferably under 300 psi and not to exceed 600 psi.
- Use a neutral biocide - such as D/2 Biological Solution - to treat biological growth and staining.
- If stained masonry requires additional cleaning, select a chemical formulated specifically for historic masonry. Test chemical cleaners in a small area out of prominent view.
- Do not use acidic cleaners (pH <7) on glazed brick, glazed terra cotta, or calcareous stones, such as limestone and marble.
- Do not sandblast.

Painting Exteriors

Historically, most exterior wood surfaces were painted to protect against weathering. Repaint regularly- typically every 3 to 7 years - to protect wood from water, UV damage, and insect attack. Exterior stucco was typically finished with a limewash or paint. Historic brick and stone were typically not painted.

- A COA is required before painting the exterior of any building in the locally designated historic districts.
- Paint colors and schemes are generally approved at the staff level, provided they are in keeping with the age and style of the building.
- Use compatible paints. Some latex paints will not bond to existing oil-based paints without a primer.
- The ARB will review all applications to paint unpainted brick or masonry on a case-by-case basis.

WINDOWS

Windows are among the most essential character-defining elements of contributing buildings. The window type, material, light configuration, shape, and size all communicate the architectural style and character of a building. Even the relative placement of windows on a building exterior has a significant impact on the building's overall proportion and rhythm. Altering original windows or their placement can undermine the architectural integrity of a contributing building. Windows on the front facade and those on the secondary elevations that are visible from the street are the most important to preserve.

Window Repairs

- Before performing any work on historic wood or metal windows, contact the Alabama Department of Public Health for recommendations on lead paint safety.
- Regularly maintain historic wood windows. Repaint every 3 to 7 years. Replace glazing putty every 10 to 15 years.
- Retain and repair historic windows whenever possible. HDD staff can provide informational materials to assist property owners in repairing their windows.
- Preserve historic window features, including the casing, sash, muntins, glazing, sills, heads, and jambs.. Repair windows to be operable whenever possible.
- For repair of window components, epoxies and related products may serve as effective solutions to material deterioration and operational malfunction.



Tripartite window grouping in Church Street East



Steel picture and casement window in Old Dauphin Way



Window Anatomy

Wood Window Sash Repair Process



Deteriorated wood window sash removed from framed opening in preparation for repair and restoration



Window sash in process of removing old glazing putty and glass panes



Wood window sash after paint removal



Window sash after application of paint primer followed by reinstallation of glass panes with new glazing points and putty



Window sash primed and painted after allowing putty to fully cure



Fully restored window sash reinstalled in framed opening

Window Replacement

- Applications involving wholesale replacement of wooden windows must include a window schedule that includes photographs of each window documenting the condition. If the degree of deterioration is substantiated by the window schedule, replacement may be approved for designs that match the original window type, light configuration, size, and other features.
- Replacement windows must match the existing with regard to location, framing, light configuration, and dimension.
- Replacement windows should be of the same material as the original whenever possible. If original materials are unavailable or are cost prohibitive, use an approvable alternative replacement material.
- Where possible, use salvageable windows on a side or rear elevation to replace windows on the facade that are not in repairable condition.
- A new window shall be installed in such a manner as to fit the original window opening and match in depth and filling of the reveal (depth of the window sash from the outer surface of the wall).
- When a historic window is missing on a key character-defining façade or elevation, use a historically accurate replacement. Use photographic, physical, and/or documentary evidence.

Window Replacement Materials

APPROVABLE	▪ Wood sash ▪ Steel (if original) ▪ Aluminum-clad wood ▪ Fiberglass-clad wood ▪ Extruded aluminum and fiberglass ▪ True divided light or simulated divided light with spacer bar
RESTRICTED	▪ Vinyl ▪ Mill-finished aluminum ▪ Interior snap-in or between-glass muntins

Inappropriate Window Treatments



A fixed picture window (right) has replaced an original casement window that would have matched the remaining casement (left).



The black color of the storm windows makes them stand out against the white window frames and sash. The shutters are not operable and do not fit the window openings.



The two vinyl replacement windows (right) do not replicate the depth and dimensionality of the double-hung wood window (left).



The vinyl replacement windows do not fit the existing window openings. Original window casing has also been removed.

Storm Windows

In addition to protection from storm damage, exterior storm windows increase the energy efficiency of a historic window assembly by preventing drafts and providing an insulated air pocket between the two windows.

- Exterior storm windows must fit within the window reveal and not cause damage to window casings.
- Operable storm windows are encouraged.
- Design storm windows with a meeting rail that aligns with the window behind.
- Wood and metal are the preferred materials for storm window frames. Vinyl storm window frames are acceptable.
- Aluminum storm windows should have a baked-on enamel or anodized color coating.
- Match the color of the storm window frame to the window casing and/or sash.

Security Bars

It is preferable to locate security devices inside buildings, if possible. If security bars are necessary, interior, operable, transparent devices are preferred. Exterior security bars must not damage any significant architectural features of a historic building. Furthermore, they should be reversible and cause no harm to the building when they are removed.

INTERIOR STORM WINDOWS AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

While not as effective as exterior storm windows, interior storm windows can improve the energy efficiency of a historic window assembly. They accomplish this by eliminating drafts and providing an insulating air barrier between the inner and outer windows.

Moreover, interior storm windows do not require approval from the ARB.



These storm windows have been customized with muntins that match the respective windows: a two-over-two double-hung sash on the left and a fixed picture window with unequal light sizes on the right.

WINDOWS AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

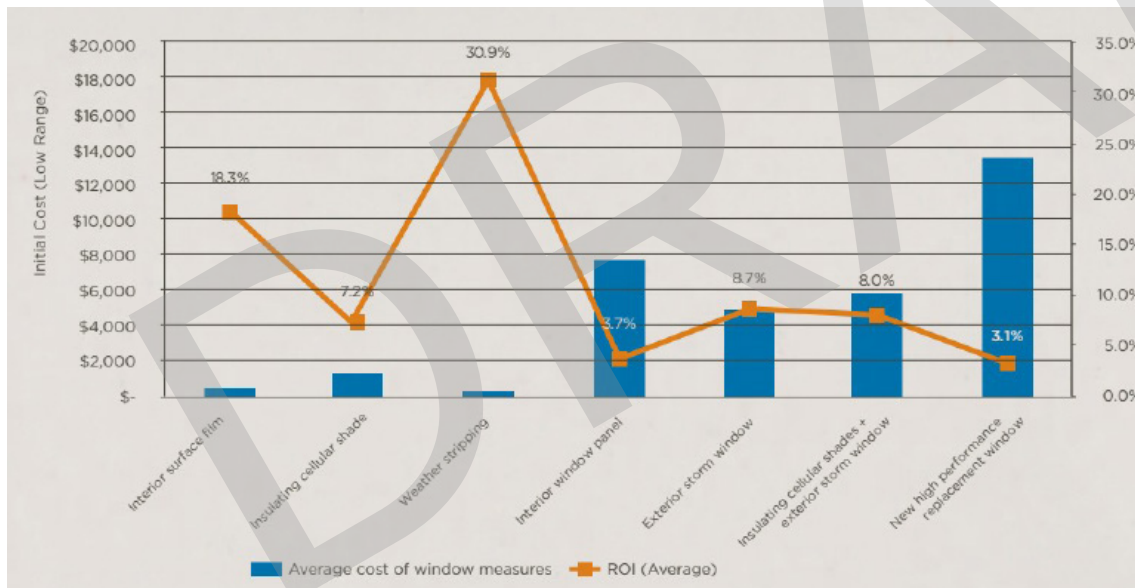
Poorly maintained wood window assemblies are prone to air leakage, and single-pane glass allows more solar heat gain than its modern multi-pane counterparts. However, simple upgrades to existing windows - including caulk, weatherstripping, solar films, storm windows, awnings, and window coverings - can be “the most cost-effective option to increase the comfort of your home and save money on energy costs” (U.S. Department of Energy, “Update or Replace Windows,” *Energy.gov*). According to a study completed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the average return on investment was highest for weatherstripping, interior surface films, and exterior storm windows (see graph below). Replacement with new high-performance windows had the lowest return on investment.

Before replacing historic windows, consider the following more cost effective solutions:

- Install weatherstripping at the sills and meeting rails
- Install a low-emissivity (low-e) interior film. Opt for a clear film that is not visible from the public right-of-way. Dark-tinted film is not recommended.
- Install interior cellular shades.

“The common misconception that replacing windows will save as much as 50% in energy costs is simply not true. The windows in many historic buildings have functioned for more than 100 years and, with regular maintenance, will usually survive longer and work better than any replacement window. A replacement window does not generally pay for itself in a reasonable length of time.”

From “Weatherization of Historic Buildings”
(National Park Service, 2022)



Average return on investment (ROI) for various window upgrades, from NTHP, Saving Windows, Saving Money, (2012)

SHUTTERS AND AWNINGS

Prior to the proliferation of central air condition, shutters and awnings acted as passive cooling systems on both residential and commercial buildings. On hot days, shutters would be closed on the west and south sides of a building to block the harshest sunlight. Shutters were opened on the north and east to allow relatively cooler breezes in from the more heavily shaded sides of the building. This orientation would be reversed on cold days so that the closed shutters provided insulation against cold northerly winds, and open shutters allowed the warm southerly sun inside. Shutters typically had operable louvers or slats to allow greater control of air flow.

Exterior awnings were installed to shade a window without impeding airflow. Awnings could be seasonal - installed for each summer and put away in the winter.

Existing Shutters

- Original shutters should be repaired and retained whenever feasible.

Appropriate Shutter Treatment



These shutters in De Tonti Square are operable and appropriately sized to fit the window opening.

Inappropriate Shutter Treatment



These shutters are inoperable and would not fully cover the windows if closed.

Replacement Shutters

- Install new shutters where shutters are missing. Only replace original or historic shutters if repair is not feasible.
- Replacement shutters must be precisely sized to fit the window opening and should match any existing shutters in style and material. If original materials are unavailable or cost prohibitive, use an approvable alternative replacement material.
- Replacement shutters should be operable whenever feasible.
- Fixed shutters must hang on the window frame so that they appear to be operable.

Storm Shutters.

- Impact-resistant hurricane shutters should appear similar to wood louvered or paneled shutters.
- Impact-resistant window films must be transparent and not visible from the street.

Shutter Replacement Materials

APPROVABLE	▪ Wood ▪ Durable composite materials with smooth finish ▪ Other materials original to the building
RESTRICTED	▪ Composite with faux wood grain texture. ▪ Lightweight plastic or vinyl



Hang replacement shutters on the window frame at an angle, so that they appear to be operable even if they are fixed.



Do not install shutters flush with the siding material, as shown above.

Awnings

Awnings can be found on both commercial and residential buildings and can be made from a wide variety of materials including canvas, metal, vinyl, or wood. Awning styles and placements are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Do not remove an original awning from a contributing building.

For replacement awnings, plan to install an awning type that fits the window opening. A shed-type awning should fit a rectangular window or door opening. Curved or rounded awnings match the curve of round openings and arched windows. Avoid installing a bubbled or curved awning on a rectangular opening. Also, avoid installing awnings so that they cover transom lights or decorative millwork, or other significant details like window or hood molding.

Awning Replacement Materials

APPROVABLE

- Canvas or similar woven fabric.
- Colors that blend with the colors of the structure.
- Wood or metal slat awnings if used historically

RESTRICTED

- Materials without proven durability.



Adjustable fabric shades protect a west-facing porch in Old Dauphin Way from evening sun.



Window awnings shade windows on the south and west elevations on a craftsman cottage in Oakleigh Garden.

ENTRANCES AND DOORS

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 façade.

Door Repair

- Preserve the decorative and functional features of a primary door.
- Original doors and openings, including their positions, proportions, and dimensions, should be retained along with any moldings, transoms, or sidelights.
- Seek first to repair a damaged historic door using original materials if possible.



Italianate door and surround in De Tonti Square



Neoclassical Revival porch and entry door in Leinkauf



Mid-20th Century Contemporary door with glass block surround in Old Dauphin Way

Door Replacement

- If a door must be replaced, replacements should reflect the age and style of the building.
- Use replacement materials that are visually comparable to that of the original door.
- Use wood screen doors that are backed with screening.
- Metal screen doors should have an appearance similar to painted wood.
- Fiberglass doors with a smooth finish may be allowed on side and rear elevations, especially where not visible from the public right-of-way.

Storm Doors

Storm doors should be selected and installed to minimize the visual impact on a contributing building.

- Use a transparent storm door 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.

Door Replacement Materials

APPROVABLE	▪ Wood panel with or without glass lights ▪ Leaded glass with lead cames ▪ Metal with a painted or anodized finish ▪ Smooth fiberglass, if minimally visible from street ▪ Other materials original to the building.
RESTRICTED	▪ Unfinished metal ▪ Fiberglass with faux wood grain texture ▪ Vinyl

ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS

Historic details and ornamentation are often character-defining features of a building and should be preserved. These details include, but are not limited to, brackets, spindles, corbels, cornices, dentils, capitals, rafter tails, decorative panels, and much more. Retain and treat these exterior stylistic features and examples of skilled craftsmanship with sensitivity. Minimize damage to architectural details when repairs are necessary. If such details must be removed during a project, document their location to ensure they are reinstalled correctly.

- Repair only the damaged portion of the architectural element when possible.
- Photographs or other documentary evidence may inform the reproduction of historic architectural features that are no longer present.
- When replacing historic details, match the original in profile, dimension, and material.
- Avoid removing architectural features that are in good condition or can be repaired.
- Avoid adding architectural features where none were historically found, or that are incompatible with the architectural style of the building. Doing so would create a false sense of history.



Molded and glazed terra cotta ornamentation in Lower Dauphin



Palladian window on a Neoclassical Revival home in Old Dauphin Way

PORCHES, BALCONIES, AND GALLERIES

Porches, balconies and galleries are important parts of traditional Mobile architecture, both residential and commercial. They frame and protect primary facades and often display a concentration of decorative details.

Balconies and galleries are distinguished from one another in that balconies are cantilevered elements that project from upper floors, whereas galleries are supported by structural posts that extend to the ground. Balconies and galleries are found on both residential and commercial buildings in Mobile, many of them rich with decorative ironwork.

- Retain the original location, form, and configuration of a porch, balcony, or gallery.
- Repair damaged elements rather than replace.
- If replacement is necessary, replace in kind. If original materials are not available, use alternative materials that match the original in dimension, profile, texture, and finish.
- Do not enclose a front porch, balcony, or gallery if feasible.
- Do not completely replace an entire porch, balcony, or gallery or one of its elements unless absolutely necessary; only replace the element or portion of an element that requires replacement.
- Do not add cast-iron columns or railings where none existed historically.



Colonial revival wrap-around porch in Ashland Place



20th-century decorative ironwork on a porch in Oakleigh Garden

Alterations to Balconies, Galleries, and Porches

Preserving a front porch is a high priority. Preserving rear or side porches is also important, especially on corner lots.

- Where a rear or side porch is enclosed or screened, preserve the original configuration of the columns, handrails, and other important architectural features.
- Where an original porch is lost, base a reconstructed porch on photographic or other documentary evidence. Pay particular attention to handrails, balusters, lower rails, decking, posts/columns, and decorative details. If no such evidence exists, design a simplified porch that draws from similar buildings in the district.
- If adding a railing to a porch that has none, use railings in a compatible style to the building.
- Do not relocate an original front stairway or steps.

Alterations to Balconies and Galleries

- If a balcony or gallery 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 to ensure that it will be compatible with the building.

RAMPS AND WHEELCHAIR LIFTS

- Locate ramps or lifts on the side or rear of the building whenever possible.
- Design a ramp to be compatible with the building in scale, massing, and style.
- Use materials of similar quality and durability to the original.
- Do not remove or obscure character-defining features of the building.



Ironwork balcony in Church Street East



Iron gallery in Lower Dauphin

FOUNDATIONS

Raised masonry foundations were an important architectural adaption to Mobile's coastal climate and are typical of most contributing buildings in the local historic districts. Most 19th-century and early 20th-century buildings are raised on brick piers above open crawl spaces. Continuous masonry foundations often feature ornamental iron vents or masonry latticework. In addition to being character defining, raised foundations are important protective measures against rising damp and flood events. Open crawl spaces provide natural ventilation that prevents mold growth and wood rot. Raised masonry foundations reduce the likelihood of termite infestations by keeping wood elements off the ground.

Foundation Repair and Replacement

- Preserve original piers, foundations, and screening wherever possible. Repair rather than replace.
- If replacement is necessary, replace in kind. If original materials are impractical or unavailable, use approvable alternative materials.
- Crawlspace may be fully open or screened. Screening should be compatible in design and material to the building's age and architectural style.
- If used, lattice must be hung from the skirt board or siding and so that it sits slightly behind the pier fronts. Do not secure lattice to the face of siding or piers. Lattice must be framed with trim



This continuous masonry foundation in Church Street East features decorative iron vent grilles.



Masonry pier foundations may be left open with no infill between piers, as is seen in this 19th-Century cottage in Old Dauphin Way.

Foundation Replacement Materials

APPROVABLE	▪ Brick ▪ Stuccoed brick or concrete block ▪ Wood lattice or wood picket infill ▪ Composite material of compatible design ▪ Other materials original to the building
RESTRICTED	▪ Sheet metal infill ▪ Plywood or mineral board panels ▪ Plastic or vinyl sheeting ▪ Imitation brick or stone ▪ Exposed concrete block



The lattice infill show above is properly framed and hung below the wood siding.



Brickwork lattice is an appropriate infill between masonry piers.

EXISTING ACCESSORY STRUCTURES

Many contributing buildings in Mobile's locally designated historic districts have accessory buildings. Many are contemporary with the contributing building to which they are associated and share the style, design details, and materials to their primary structures. Others may not be contributing or not acknowledged at all in the original historic district inventory. Ask HDD staff for assistance if you are not sure of the status of your accessory structure.

Contributing accessory structures should be repaired instead of replaced, if possible. Any repair or alteration project to an accessory structure should adhere to the same guidelines as a contributing main structure with regard to siding, roofs, windows, and foundations.

GARAGE DOORS

- Preserve, maintain, and repair a historically significant garage door.
- Wooden garage doors should be painted to protect their condition.
- If garage doors must be replaced, use a door that appears similar to an original wood one to match the historic architectural style where possible.
- Design replacement garage doors to be simple and compatible with the primary building.



Detached garage apartment in Old Dauphin Way



Semi-detached two-car garage in Old Dauphin Way

ALTERATIONS TO NON-CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS

These design guidelines also apply to exterior alterations made to non-contributing buildings. However, since maintaining the architectural or material integrity of a non-contributing building is less critical than a contributing building, the guidelines may be applied less strictly. There is typically greater freedom in altering architectural features or using alternative materials on non-contributing buildings.

When making alterations or additions to a non-contributing building, the primary goal is to avoid any negative impacts on the surrounding district. The goal is not to alter the architectural style of the non-contributing building so that it more closely matches historic styles present in the district. This would risk creating either a false sense of history or an awkward composition that mixes incompatible materials and features. Alterations to a non-contributing structure should respect its existing style, and, in general, additions should be in proportion to the non-contributing building. However, an out-of-scale addition may be appropriate if it brings a non-contributing building more in line with the historic patterns of building size, massing, setback, and orientation of the district. Once again, the addition should not seek to disguise the non-contributing building as a historic structure.

Non-contributing buildings are limited to the same replacement materials as contributing buildings. The ARB may be more open to approving materials deemed appropriate on new construction for use on non-contributing buildings, but this cannot be guaranteed. Applications to introduce materials other than those listed as approvable in this chapter will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

ADDITIONS

This section of the guidelines applies to the construction of additions for contributing buildings in Mobile's historic districts. Existing additions should be treated in the same manner as the primary building, depending on their status as either a contributing or non-contributing resource to the district. If your project involves alterations to existing additions, refer back to the section of the guidelines for the element of the addition that is proposed for alteration. A basic understanding of mass, scale, form, rhythm, proportion, setback, and orientation is important for understanding what constitutes an appropriate addition to a historic building in one of Mobile's historic districts. **Refer back to the beginning of this chapter for an overview of the approvable and restricted materials for each element of the new addition.**

GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR ADDITIONS

- Design new additions so there is the least possible loss of historic fabric to the existing building.
- Ensure that character-defining features of the primary building are not destroyed, damaged, or obscured by the new addition.
- New additions should be designed so that the characteristics of the property (site topography, character-defining site features, trees, and significant vistas and public views) are retained.
- New additions should be constructed in a manner so that if the addition were to be removed, the form and integrity of the primary building would remain intact.
- Design new additions to be compatible with the color scheme, material composition, and character of the primary building, block, neighborhood, and district in which they are found.
- New additions should be designed in an architectural style that is compatible with the primary building, the block, neighborhood, and the district in which they are found.
- Components of the addition such as the roof, foundation, doors, windows, and other exterior elements should be compatible with the primary building.
- Maintain ratio and pattern of solids to voids (windows and doors) found on the existing structure.

ADDITIONS TO HISTORIC RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS:

The following guidelines are specific to residential buildings in Mobile's historic districts. Commercial and Institutional building additions are covered later in this chapter.

Mass and Scale

- Additions should be subordinate to the existing building.
- Use a physical break or setback from the original exterior wall to visually separate the existing building from the new addition.

Form

- Additions should have a similar form to the existing building, in most cases this will be the rectangular form.
- Elements of the addition should be compatible with the form of elements found on the existing building. For example, if the building features arched windows then arched windows would be appropriate on the new addition.

Rhythm and Proportion

- Use similar floor-to-floor heights and foundation heights with new additions.
- Elements of the addition such as windows and doors should be of a similar size and proportion to what is found on the existing building.

Setback and Orientation

- Additions should be placed at the rear or side of the primary building and adhere to underlying zoning setback rules.
- Vertical additions and other additions which are taller than the existing building should only be placed at the rear.

CLICK HERE TO REVIEW THE
DEFINITIONS FOR MASS, SCALE,
FORM, RHYTHM, PROPORTION,
SETBACK, AND ORIENTATION

Appropriate Residential Addition

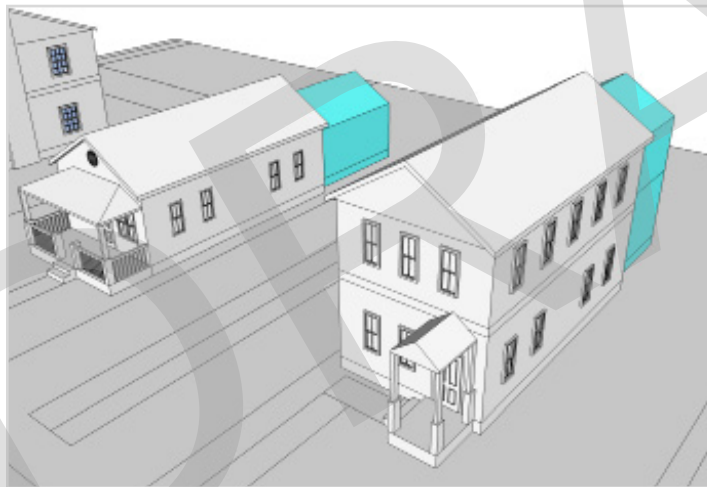
Additions to historic residential buildings should be clearly differentiated from the original structure and be subordinately scaled as illustrated to the left. Where space is available, additions should be located at the rear of the building, feature a similar or smaller footprint, and have a similar roof type and pitch.

Two-story additions may be appropriate for single-story buildings, but should be located at the rear of the building and include a transitory space such as a hallway that helps to differentiate the addition from the attached building while minimizing its larger massing and size.

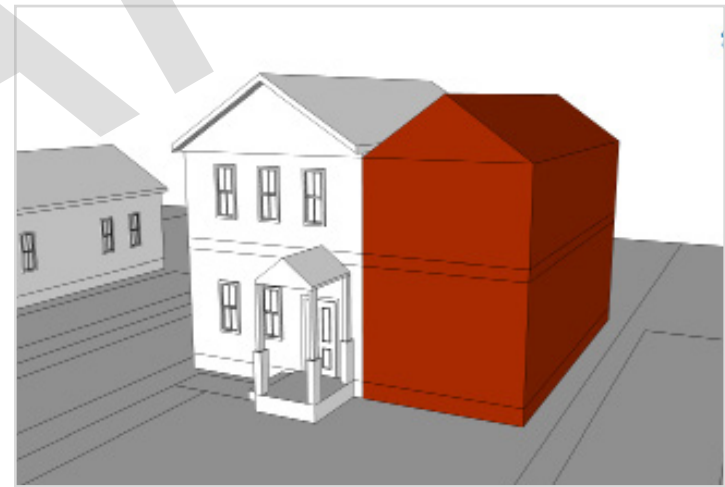
Inappropriate Residential Addition

While side additions may be appropriate in some cases, they should be subordinate in size and scale to the attached historic building. While the side addition in this example includes similar rectangular forms, foundation heights, floor-to-floor heights, and a similar roof type and pitch, the addition nearly doubles the size of the attached historic building.

Additionally, side elevations run the risk of removing significant architectural features which may be highly visible from the street. Additions should avoid removing character-defining features to the greatest extent possible.



Whenever possible, locate additions to the rear of a property.



Size and orient a side addition so that it does not overwhelm the original structure.

Inappropriate Side Addition



Side additions should be recessed behind the front wall plane of the original structure. This addition obscures the front porch of this contributing residence.

Appropriate Rear Addition



When possible, locate additions to the rear of a contributing property. Despite being taller than the main house, this rear addition is not easily visible from the street.

Roofs

- The roofs of additions should be compatible with the existing building in shape, pitch, material, and level of complexity.
- Roof elements such as exposed rafters, soffits, cornices, fascias, frieze boards, moldings, and other decorative elements are appropriate as long as they are of a similar appearance to what is found on the existing building.
- Avoid including roof elements that are more elaborate than what is found on the existing building.
- Roof elements such as dormers and skylights may be appropriate but should be placed in inconspicuous locations.
- Windows on dormers should be compatible with what is found on the existing building.

Exterior Materials and Finishes

- Materials on the new addition should be compatible with the existing building.
- The color scheme of the new addition should match or be compatible with the existing building.
- New materials should have a proven durability.
- Faux stucco, vinyl, and EIFS are not appropriate materials for new additions.

Doors and Windows

- The material composition, configuration, and operation of doors and windows should be compatible with what is found on the existing building.
- Extruded aluminum windows or aluminum clad wood windows may be used on a case-by-case basis, provided they are compatible with the existing building.
- Doors and windows should be of a similar scale and massing to what is found on the existing building.
- If doors or windows are removed to accommodate the addition, they should be reused on the addition.

Shutters and Awnings

- Shutters and awnings on the addition should match what is found on the existing building.
- Operable shutters should be used unless decorative, non-operable shutters are found on the existing building.
- Awnings should be compatible with the existing building. In most cases this will include fabric awnings, but metal awnings may be considered if they are found on the existing building.

Architectural Details and Ornamentation

- Architectural details should be compatible with what is found on the attached structure in profile, dimension, and material construction.
- Architectural details and other ornamentation should be less elaborate than what is on the attached structure.
- Avoid adding architectural details and other ornamentations that are not aligned with the architectural style existing building.

Foundations

- The foundation of additions should be of a similar height and material composition as the building to which it is attached.
- Pier foundations may be used if compatible with the attached building.
- Do not use raw concrete blocks or wood posts as foundations for new additions.

Porch Additions

- New porches additions should be located to the side or rear and should be subordinate to any existing porches on the building. A new front porch may be appropriate if there is evidence that one existed historically.
- The overall scale and proportions of a new porch should be compatible with the building to which it is attached.
- The foundation height of new porches should match that of the existing building.
- The height, shape, and slope of roofs on new porches should be compatible with the building to which it is attached. Rooflines of porch additions should not interfere with second story elevations.
- Porch elements such as columns, brackets, railings, and pickets should be compatible with the existing building.
- Do not expand original front porches.
- Do not use contemporary deck railings on porches visible from the street.
- Do not use cast concrete steps on porches visible from the street unless original to the building.

Inappropriate Porch Addition



Inappropriate Porch Addition: In the early 1980s, the front porch of this simple raised cottage in Old Dauphin Way was expanded and dressed up with faux Queen Anne style details. This treatment creates a false sense of history and would not be considered appropriate under these Design Guidelines.

Appropriate Porch Addition



1055 Dauphin Street prior to the porch reconstruction.



1055 Dauphin after the porch reconstruction.



In this example, the reconstruction of a heavily altered front porch at 1055 Dauphin Street (bottom right) was modeled on the surviving porch of its “sister house” at 1053 Dauphin Street (bottom left). The reconstruction did not attempt to replicate the more decorative trim at 1053 Dauphin, instead opting for simpler detailing that identifies the porch as a modern reconstruction. A more exact copy of the porch at 1053 Dauphin Street would also have been appropriate.

ADDITIONS TO COMMERCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL BUILDINGS

This section provides guidelines for additions to locally-designated historic commercial and institutional buildings in local historic districts. Click the link below to be taken to the beginning of this chapter for an overview of *mass, scale, form, rhythm, proportion, setback, and orientation*.

Additions to commercial buildings generally fall within two distinct types of additions: ground level additions and rooftop additions. Ground level additions involve expanding the horizontal footprint of a building, while rooftop additions are added to the top of the roof of an existing building. The guidelines below include measures for both types of additions. Rooftop additions are rarely, if ever, appropriate for institutional buildings and will only be considered on a case-by-case basis. For certain landmark institutional buildings, there may be instances where both ground level and rooftop additions are not appropriate. For these cases, new detached construction may be appropriate; refer to the guidelines for new construction in these cases.

Exterior Materials and Finishes

- Materials used on an addition should be compatible with what is used on the existing building.

Mass, Scale, Form, Rhythm, and Proportion

- Use similar building forms and volumes for new additions.
- Use similar roof forms for new additions. Pitched roof forms are inappropriate for flat roof buildings.
- Use similar window, door, and floor-to-floor heights for new additions.
- Windows, doors, and bulkheads should be of a similar scale to the existing building and adjacent buildings.
- Architectural details such as belt courses, cornice lines, and vertical elements may be used to reinforce the rhythm of the addition in relation to the existing building and adjacent buildings.
- For ground level additions, use similar foundation heights for additions.

CLICK HERE TO REVIEW THE
DEFINITIONS FOR MASS, SCALE,
FORM, RHYTHM, PROPORTION,
SETBACK, AND ORIENTATION

Placement and Orientation (Ground Level Additions)

- Additions should be located to the side or rear of the existing building.
- Additions should be oriented in the same direction as the main building and adjacent buildings.
- Additions to primary building elevations are not appropriate.

Placement and Orientation (Rooftop Additions)

- Where base zoning permits, rooftop additions should be set back from the primary wall face or cornice lines of existing buildings. Doing so minimizes the visual impact of the addition from the street.
- Rooftop additions should be oriented in the same direction as the main building and adjacent buildings.
- Avoid significantly altering the historic roofline of a historic commercial building when constructing a rooftop addition.

Appropriate Non-Residential Addition

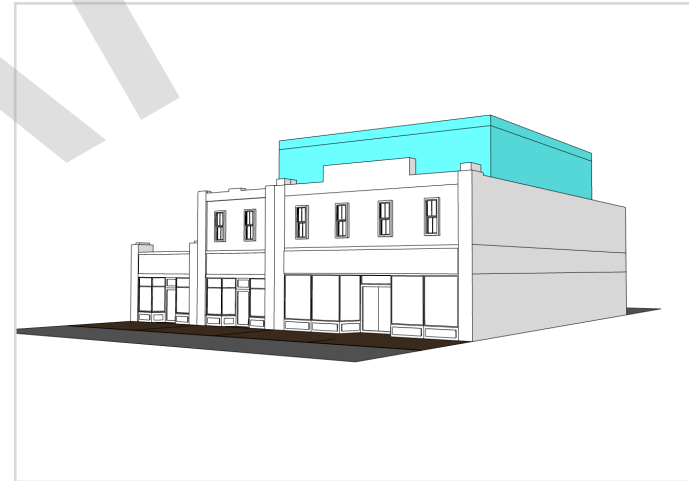
Additions to historic non-residential buildings should be clearly differentiated from the original structure and be subordinately scaled as illustrated to the left. Many historic commercial buildings had a footprint that encompassed the entire lot, in which case the roof may be the only space available for a new addition.

Rooftop additions such as these should be set back from primary elevations where they are more visible from the street and other public areas. Rooftop additions should also avoid removing significant rooftop architectural details such as cornices.

Inappropriate Non-Residential Addition

When rooftop additions are placed along exterior walls they run the risk of damaging or removing important architectural features that commonly adorned the cornices of historic commercial buildings. Additions such as these also overwhelm the massing of the attached structure and can have a negative impact on adjacent buildings. By setting the addition back from the cornice, the addition preserves architectural features and reduces visual massing.

Rooftop additions should rarely, if ever, be more than one additional story. A good rule of thumb is to set the addition back at least one bay from street-facing elevations.



Recess a rooftop addition behind the facade to minimize its impact on the streetscape.



Similar massing and exterior materials unite the original LeinKauf School building (left) and two later additions (middle and right). Floor-to-floor heights remain consistent across the three building phases. Changes in rooflines and the degree or ornamentation differentiate one building phase from another.



The main massing of this rooftop additions is set back from the building face, lessening its impact on the streetscape.

ADDITIONS TO NON-CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS:

The following guidelines are specific to non-historic or non-contributing buildings in Mobile's historic districts. Additions to non-contributing buildings should be compatible with the type of building (residential, commercial, institutional) and the district character in which the building is found.

General Principles for Non-Contributing Building Additions

- Design additions that retain the size, scale, and massing that is similar to nearby contributing buildings.
- Design an addition to be compatible in mass and material composition with nearby contributing buildings.
- Retain an overall proportion of building mass to open space that is not significantly different than that of the surrounding historic district.
- When designing rooflines, bays, porches, or other elements associated with an addition, consider the scale of surrounding historic structures while ensuring the addition is consistent with the property itself.

Consider the following aspects of the addition and design them to respect the character of the historic district in terms of size, scale, mass, and materials:

- Exterior walls
- Exterior finishes and paints
- Roof shape and material
- Porch size and orientation
- Details and ornamentation
- Windows

Additions to non-contributing buildings should observe the character elements of the district in terms of size, scale, mass, orientation, and other general qualities. However, copying architectural details from a style not original to the non-contributing building gives a sense of false history that is not appropriate. Maintain characteristic elements that are original to the non-contributing building design if possible.

Setback and Orientation

- Additions to non-contributing buildings should respect the original orientation of the building while respecting that of nearby historic buildings.
- Preserve setback distances and open spaces with additions to be compatible with surrounding historic buildings.

Building Elements, Materials, and Ornamentation

- Elements such as cornice lines, foundation lines, window and door heights, and floor-to-ceiling heights should match the rhythm of these elements on the existing building and blend in harmoniously with historic buildings in the district.
- Use materials which have a proven history of durability in Mobile's climate.
- Building ornamentations should be simple and at a scale that is consistent with historic buildings in the district.
- Window materials and type should be similar to what is historically found on nearby historic buildings. Tempered glass will be considered when required by the Mobile Code of Ordinances.

Porches and Patios

- Porches should be located and oriented in a location on the existing building that is historically found in the historic district.
- Porches should be of a similar size and proportion to surrounding historic buildings.

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

In most cases, design guidelines for commercial buildings are the same as for residential buildings, especially when it comes repairs and building maintenance. However, commercial and residential buildings interact entirely differently with the public realm. For that reason, design considerations will often differ between the two, especially when it comes to the treatment of storefronts relative to residential porches and entryways. The following sections discuss how to approach uniquely commercial design concerns. However, in some instances

Storefronts and Facades

- Preserve the key character defining features of a historic commercial façade.
- Consider retaining a non-original storefront where it has achieved historic importance as an option.
- Do not remove façade veneer if it may cause permanent damage to original materials beneath..
- Replace elements of an original or historic storefront to match existing.
- If in-kind replacement is not feasible, use approvable alternative replacement materials.
- Do not change the original location of a storefront. Do not recess or project a replacement storefront from the facade if not done so originally.



Storefront in Lower Dauphin



Storefront in Lower Dauphin



Cornice

Upper windows

Canopy

Transom

Storefront window

Recessed entry

Bulkhead

Storefront anatomy

STOREFRONT ELEMENTS

Cornices

- Reconstruct a missing cornice where historic evidence is available.
- Use a simplified interpretation of a compatible historic style for a replacement cornice if no evidence is available to support its historic appearance.

Transoms

- Preserve the historic shape and configuration of the transom.
- Do not remove, enclose, or obscure a transom. If transom must be infilled, do so without removing, obscuring, or altering the transom frame.

Windows

- Maintain original window locations and spacing patterns.
- Do not use opaque treatments for a window, including black plexiglass or reflective mirror glass.
- Do not paint over windows.
- Do not introduce multi-lite windows where they do not already exist, unless there is evidence that this treatment existed historically.

Bulkheads

- Retain an existing bulkhead below the display window.
- If the original bulkhead is missing, develop a sympathetic replacement design that is similar in profile, texture, and durability to the original. It is appropriate to use bulkheads on nearby commercial buildings as a point of reference.

COMMERCIAL SIGNAGE

Mobile's zoning code provides the basic requirements for signs, including specific sizing and dimensional standards. Consult HDD staff with questions or clarifications associated with this chapter.

Historic Signage

Retain historic signs wherever feasible, taking into consideration the history, context, and design of the sign and building. Avoid over-restoring a historic sign to the point that it no longer provides evidence of a building's age. Historic signage is particularly important when the sign is:

- Associated with a historic figure, event or place.
- Significant to the building or 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.
- 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.
- Attached such that removal could harm the integrity of the building's design or materials.

Ghost Signs

Historic painted signs (called "ghost signs") found on the external walls of buildings should be preserved and not painted over or removed. It may be appropriate to consolidate or inpaint areas of deterioration to preserve a historic ghost sign. However, ghost signs should not be so overly restored as to appear new.



Historic blade sign in Lower Dauphin

New Signs

New sign guidelines apply to contributing, non-contributing, and new construction in Mobile's locally designated historic districts. As with historic signs, new signs impact the character of the district. New signs should be compatible with the associated building and the overall district.

Sign Placement and Installation

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, install new anchor points into mortar joints rather than into the face of masonry units.

Sign placement should be compatible with those in the district. New signs should fit within rather than obscure existing architectural features.



Different types of signs covered in the DDD Form Based Code (from 2013 Code Publication)

Sign Types

All signs, regardless of type, should not overwhelm the character of the building facade. The following design guidelines supplement standards laid out in Mobile's zoning code for several sign types that are potentially appropriate in locally designated historic districts.

The total maximum area for all signs is 1.5 sq ft per linear front foot of the principal building, not to exceed 64 sq ft. A multi-tenant building is also limited to a maximum of 64 sq ft.

Awning and Canopy Signs

An awning sign lays flat against the surface of an awning's material. An under canopy sign is one that is suspended below a canopy and is usually perpendicular the building face. Awning and 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 or flat sign, is attached to or painted on an exterior wall. Wall signs can be located directly above a storefront or on the second floor of the building. Wall signs should align with signs on nearby buildings and be relatively flush with the wall. They should sit within, rather than forward of, the fascia or other architectural details.

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



Individually-lit letters on an awning sign in Lower Dauphin



Under-canopy sign in Lower Dauphin

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 within one foot of the inside window pane or upon the windowpane 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

Directory Signs

A directory sign or tenant panel displays locations of tenants or businesses for a building. Locating a consolidated tenant panel or directory sign near a primary entrance on the first floor wall of a building can reduce the total number of signs on a building.

Projecting or Hanging Blade Signs

A projecting sign is attached perpendicular to the wall of a building. It is appropriate to locate a small projecting sign just above or beside the main entrance. Large projecting signs should only be mounted above the first-floor level. The bracket on which a projecting sign is hung should complement the sign design.



Wall sign with external lighting in Lower Dauphin



Window sign lettering in Lower Dauphin

Pole Mounted Signs

A pole mounted sign is freestanding and is generally mounted on one or two simple poles. A pole sign should not rise above the storefront level of adjacent buildings nor should it include panels that stretch all the way to the ground.

Sandwich Board and Temporary Signs

Sandwich boards are A-frame signs that may or may not be attached to the sidewalk, pavement, or other objects. Sandwich boards must not obstruct the flow of pedestrian traffic.

Temporary signs include banners, decorations, or bunting which commemorate special on-premise events, grand openings, or promotional sales.

Murals

Painted murals can be located on the secondary elevations of buildings. Murals should be compatible with the associated building and overall character of the building. Mural should not be painted onto previously unpainted brick walls on contributing buildings.



Monument sign in Oakleigh Garden



Painted wall mural in Lower Dauphin



Pole-mounted signs in Church Street East

Monument Signs

Monument signs sit directly on the ground and are detached from the building. They are typically used for businesses fronting commercial corridors where buildings are set back from the street (seen frequently on Dauphin Street, Government Street, and Old Shell Road). They are usually situated in a landscaped front setback area.

Design a monument sign to be compatible with the building it serves and the historic district. Monument signs are limited to 25 square feet per face (for a maximum sign area of 50 square feet) and should not exceed 8 feet in height. Monument signs shall not be internally illuminated. Instead, install an external, shielded light source directed toward the sign.

Sign Illumination

Where signs must be illuminated, use a compatible, shielded light source to illuminate a sign, ideally with warm colored light. For signs with halo lighting (in which the light source is situated behind letters or signs to create a glowing effect), locate the light source so that it is not visible. Back-lit signs (in which light shines through the front face of the letters) should be illuminated in so that each individual letter or element is lit separately.

Sign Materials

APPROVABLE	▪ Painted or carved wood. ▪ Individual wood or cast metal letters or symbols. ▪ Stone (e.g. slate, marble, sandstone). ▪ Painted, gilded, or sandblasted glass. ▪ Metal (if appropriate to the building).
RESTRICTED	▪ Whole plastic face.

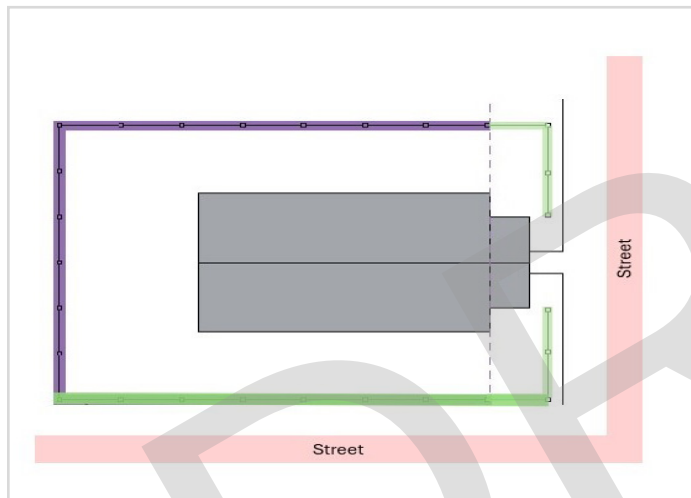
LANDSCAPE AND SITE FEATURES

This section provides site planning guidelines for all properties in locally designated historic districts including contributing, noncontributing, and new construction.

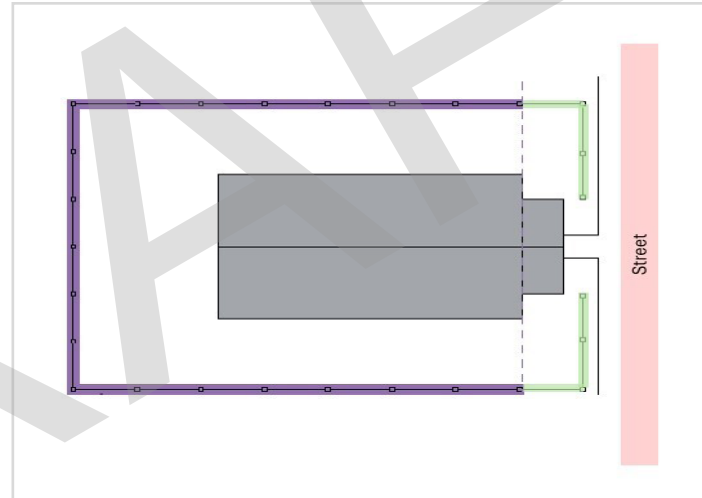
FENCES, WALLS, AND GATES

Fences and walls are character-defining features of many properties in Mobile's historic districts. A historic fence, wall, or gate should be preserved and maintained. New fences, walls, and gates should be compatible with the architectural style of the primary building as well as other fences, walls, and gates found in the district.

Historically significant fences made from wooden pickets or cast iron should be maintained. So should historically significant stuccoed brick or concrete masonry site walls.



For corner lots where the side of the lot is visible from the street, the street-side fence must not exceed three feet in height.



Fences in front-facing lots can have 3 ft maximum height on their primary side (green) and 6 ft on secondary areas like sides and rear (purple).

Fences

New fences installed in front of the front building plane are not to exceed 36 inches (3 feet). New fences built behind the front building plane may be up to 72 inches (6 feet) between residential properties. A height of 96 inches (8 feet) is allowed behind the front building plane along a property line between a residential property and a non-residential property. The front building plane is defined as the forward-most exterior wall. Porches, stoops, and steps are not considered to be the front building plane.

New fences in front of the front building plane may be painted wood picket, wrought iron, or aluminum with an appearance similar to iron. In addition to these materials, unpainted wood privacy fences are allowed behind the front building plane. An existing chain link fence behind the front building plane may be replaced in kind. The replacement chain link fence must maintain the exact same footprint as the existing.

It is permissible to replace an existing chain link fence behind the front building plane with chain link. The new chain link fence must have the same foot print as the existing.

Fence Materials

APPROVABLE	▪ Wood picket, slat, or lattice. ▪ Cast and wrought Iron. ▪ Aluminum that has the appearance of iron.
RESTRICTED	▪ Stockade. ▪ Post and rail. ▪ Plywood or asbestos paneling. ▪ Razor or barbed wire. ▪ Chain link

Walls

When building a solid wall, use a finish and material that is similar in texture, mass, and durability to historic walls in the neighborhood. As walls obscure visibility, their height is restricted to three feet (36 inches) maximum in front and visible side yards, and six feet (72 inches) in rear and non-corner side areas. For property lines shared with a commercial lot, walls can be up to eight feet (96 inches).

Wall Materials

APPROVABLE	▪ Brick. ▪ Stone. ▪ Stucco over masonry.
RESTRICTED	▪ Exposed/unfinished concrete block.



Wood picket fences are permitted in front of the front wall plane. Behind the front wall plane, wood privacy fences are allowed up to 6 feet in height.



In most cases, fences along the front property line should have open pickets or railings. Solid masonry walls and privacy fences are most appropriate for side and rear yards.

PAVING, SIDEWALKS, AND DRIVEWAYS

A variety of paving materials are used on Mobile's historic residential and commercial properties. These include sidewalks, pathways, driveways, and parking areas. These features should be designed to minimize impact on the historic character of a building or the district.

Sidewalks and Pathways

- Maintain historic sidewalks.
- If a historic sidewalk is damaged, replace the damaged portion to match the original.
- If the sidewalk has a historic stamped impression, that detail should be preserved.
- Walkways should lead directly from the sidewalk to the main building entry.
- New sidewalks should maintain the existing width of neighboring sidewalks.
- Use sidewalk materials that are consistent with those traditionally found in the district.



These footpaths in Ashland Place employ a mix of gravel, flagstones, poured concrete, and brick pavers.



Decorative concrete curbs, like these in Oakleigh Garden, are character defining landscape features in many of Mobile's local historic districts.

Driveways and Parking Areas

- When planning new parking areas, locate them at the rear or to the side of a site wherever possible.
- Use landscaping to screen a parking area that is visible from the public right-of-way.
- Minimize paved areas and curb cut widths.
- Repair a curb cut that is no longer in use. In some areas, granite curbs may be required.

Paving Materials

APPROVABLE

- Gravel, shell, or crushed stone
- Brick
- Grasscrete
- Concrete or asphalt
- Cellular paving systems

LIGHTING

Site and exterior building lighting are important considerations for historic buildings and new construction. 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. Lighting should be in character with the historic district. Historic lighting fixtures should be preserved and maintained; if possible, they should be reconditioned and rewired to retain their function.

Best Practices for Outdoor Lighting

- Historic light fixtures should be repaired and maintained in place.
- It is generally appropriate to improve historic light fixtures with better illumination as long as the improvements do not damage historic light fixtures.
- Repair and replace light fixtures and their parts with in-kind materials.
- When in-kind replacement of a light fixture on a contributing property is not possible, the replacement shall be compatible with the surrounding district and the design of the building.
- Replacement light fixtures should take advantage of existing mounting locations when possible, and should be installed in such a way that they can be easily removed in the future.
- Light fixtures on new and non-contributing buildings should be scaled appropriately with the building and surrounding district, and constructed of durable materials.
- Mount security lights and flood lights to the rear or side of buildings rather than the front.
- Landscape lighting should be limited to the amount necessary for safety or the illumination of important site features
- Low-to-the-ground bollard lighting is recommended to illuminate a walkway or driveway.

RESTRICTED

- Light sources that create harsh glare
- Blinking or flashing lights

Brightness, Temperature, and Quality of Light

- Use incandescent lighting or a source that appears similar in character.
- Fluorescent or LED sources are acceptable provided the color is similar to that of an incandescent light.
- Warm lighting (3000 Kelvin or below) is the ideal color range for residential buildings.
- Low pressure sodium-vapor bulbs are inappropriate as their yellow monochromatic light can reduce nighttime visibility.
- Compact florescent, metal halide, and screw-in LED lamps are not appropriate in contexts where the bulb is visible. Metal halide bulbs in the 3000 Kelvin range are an option in cases where the bulb is concealed.
- For commercial properties, minimize standalone lighting and instead use ambient light from a storefront as a light source.
- Avoid placing electrical conduits or junction boxes in highly visible areas.
- Avoid removing features or damaging materials when installing lighting fixtures.

HERITAGE TREES

Heritage trees are trees in the public-right-of-way that are considered irreplaceable. They are identified by a number of important characteristics, particularly their trunk diameter and their species, including live oak, hickory, longleaf pine, and others, although water oaks are excluded. In historic districts, the parameters to meet heritage tree status are more inclusive. Heritage trees and all trees in the public right-of-way are considered public trees and require a permit from the Mobile Tree Commission before trimming.

The ARB, MHDC, and HDD are not responsible for heritage trees, nor do any of these agencies have authority over heritage trees. Concerns regarding heritage trees should be directed to the Mobile Tree Commission.

LANDSCAPING

Landscaping is an important character-defining element for Mobile's historic districts, particularly residential areas. Where possible, existing landscape features associated with historic properties should be preserved. New landscaping should be consistent in character with the landscaping seen in the historic district.

Provide a landscaped front yard for a residential property in a historic district with a predominance of plantings over paving. Instead of paving, consider modular pavers, grass, and cellular paving systems in order to minimize the impact of hard surface paving where grass or other plants are not present. In commercial areas, consider using landscaping to screen and soften the appearance of surface parking areas. Do not use landscaping to hide a design feature that is inconsistent with the Design Review Guidelines.

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 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 zoning ordinances.

CHAPTER 3 : GUIDELINES FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION



New residential construction in Oakleigh Garden draws influence from the historic styles of the district.

OVERVIEW

- Introduction
- Guidelines Applicable to All Building Types
- Guidelines Specific to Building Type
- Additions

DRAFT

GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION

The overall form, scale, massing, proportions, and orientation of new development must be in keeping with the historic district and especially any neighboring contributing structures. Building materials must be compatible in quality and durability to those used historically within the district. As long as these standards are met, there can be considerable flexibility in the building's style and ornamentation.

Guidelines for new construction do not seek to create exact replicas of historic building styles. The guidelines also do not encourage the addition of superficial "historical" ornamentation to otherwise contemporary 21st-Century building types and styles.

In general, there are two broad approaches to the building style that may be appropriate in Mobile's historic districts. The first and most common is the neotraditional design style, which references historic building styles without copying them exactly. The second approach encompasses contemporary 21st-century styles. While contemporary buildings are less common in the historic districts, they are by no means inappropriate. New contemporary design represents the continued development of American architecture just as neotraditional design references its past.

Regardless of style, new development should use building forms, proportions, setbacks, and façade rhythms that are in keeping with the district. Look to the nearest contributing structures when determining what is appropriate for new infill construction. These reference structures will ideally be on the same street and block as the infill construction. If there are no contributing structures within the immediate block, look to contributing structures on adjacent blocks and cross streets. Infill construction on blocks without any remaining contributing structures may be allowed greater flexibility in scale and setback.

COMMON BUILDING ELEMENTS

The following building elements are common across all local historic districts and are generally appropriate. This list is intended as a guide and is by no means exhaustive. Building elements and details not listed below will also be considered.

- Hipped and gabled roofs
- Low-sloped roofs behind a parapet wall
- Raised pier or continuous masonry foundations
- Residential front porches
- Operable window shutters

NEOTRADITIONAL DESIGN

- Only reference historic styles found in the surrounding district. See the appendix for more information about historic styles found in Mobile and the characteristic details of each.
- Do not directly copy any one historic style. The easiest way to do this is to use streamlined versions of historic design elements, such as brackets, columns, cornices, and decorative molding.
- It is appropriate to combine traditional and contemporary elements. It is also acceptable to reference more than one traditional style in new construction. Either approach should be done thoughtfully, preferably with the services of an experienced architect or designer.
- Stock building plans may be appropriate if they reference styles found in Mobile's historic districts and are consistent in form, massing, and scale with nearby contributing structures. Many of the contributing buildings in Mobile's historic districts are representative of the stock house plans and kit homes that were readily available in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. Contemporary 21st-Century Design:

CONTEMPORARY 21ST-CENTURY DESIGN

- When designing a new building in a modernist style, the designer must take special care to ensure the form, mass, height, scale, setback, and solid-to-void ratio are compatible with nearby contributing buildings.
- Use a material palette that compliments nearby contributing buildings. For instance, if most adjacent structures are finished with stucco, make stucco the primary cladding material. If wood siding is most common, use wood siding or an alternative material with a similar appearance, such as fiber cement or mineral polymer siding with a smooth texture.
- Even when using more contemporary window types and configurations, maintain a similar ratio of solid to voids as found on nearby contributing building. On walls without fenestration, use other elements - such as faux window openings, fixed shutters, pilasters, or panels - to break up blank walls.
- Design a primary entrance that is a focal point of the building facade. For residential buildings, a footpath must connect the primary entrance with the public sidewalk.

NEOTRADITIONAL FORM AND DETAILS

These residences in De Tonti Square display a predominantly neotraditional design intent and borrow heavily from historic architectural forms and styles:

- The building form is a traditional camelback shotgun with gallery porches.
- Neotraditional details include 2-over-2 sash windows, paneled doors, decorative window hoods, molded cornice, and operable shutters.

The use of some modern materials, such as fiber-cement siding, and contemporary design references identify each residence as a 21st-Century homage to historic styles.

- Molding profiles are simple, streamlined versions of historic styles.
- Transom lights over the paneled doors are elongated, simplified versions of those found on 19th and early 20th-Century residences.
- The inclusion of transoms over windows on the facade is a 21st-Century detail.



NEOTRADITIONAL FORM - CONTEMPORARY DETAILS

This institutional building in Church Street East combines a traditional building form with contemporary details.

- The center-block-with-wing building form reflects the tripartite massing of Barton Academy, the National Historic Landmark to its east.

While the building form is itself neoclassical, the individual building components and details draw more heavily on late 20th- and 21st-Century contemporary styles.

- While the large plate glass doors, transoms, and window walls are contemporary in style, their arrangement in regular, symmetrical groupings indicative of earlier classic and classical revival styles.





CONTEMPORARY FORM - TRANSITIONAL DETAILS

While this residence in Oakleigh Garden does not mimic any one historic building forms, it does reference common building elements seen on nearby contributing buildings.

- The low-sloped hipped roof is typical of the district, while the asymmetrical multiplanar facade is reminiscent of the complex forms of nearby Italianate and Queen Anne Style homes.
 - Regular punched openings replicate the fenestration patterns typical of the district.
- Neoclassical elements combined with more contemporary details to create a more transitional design.
- An arched main entryway with flanking Tuscan columns and a broad, if simple, masonry cornice reference historic neoclassical revival styles typical of the district.



CONTEMPORARY FORM AND DETAILS

Constructed in 1979, the Mobile Chamber of Commerce building is undeniably modern. However, the Brutalist design employs traditional materials and classical building proportions to soften its appearance in Church Street East.

- Massive masonry columns support a flat concrete roof system - a modern reference to the substantial porticoes and galleries that are typical of the grand homes and institutional buildings along Government Street.
- The metal-and-glass curtain wall centered on the primary facade provides open sight lines to two interior catwalks - a reflection of the two-story iron galleries found throughout Church Street East.
- Pinkish-tan brick cladding softens the monolithic appearance of the otherwise unornamented walls, while referencing the historic brick structures that are indicative of the local historic districts.

GUIDELINES APPLICABLE TO ALL BUILDING TYPES

The following guidelines are applicable to all building types for new construction in Mobile's historic districts. These guidelines should be reviewed closely in addition to the later sections of this chapter which provide more in-depth information for new construction based on the type of building being constructed (residential, commercial, institutional, and accessory structures).

MASS, SCALE, FORM, RHYTHM, PROPORTION, SETBACK, AND ORIENTATION

- **Mass:** The apparent bulkiness of a building including the composition of height, width, and depth for its constituent parts.
- **Scale:** The size of a building and its element in relation to each other and other buildings, typically those in the immediate vicinity. Scale differs by building type; residential and commercial buildings typically evoke a human-scale, while institutional buildings may have a larger, monumental scale.
- **Form:** The overall shape of a building as defined by its different parts. The rectangular form is most common.
- **Rhythm:** The arrangement and spacing of a building's elements such as windows, doors, foundations, roofs, and floor heights and how they relate to other buildings along a block face. The space between buildings or the contiguousness of building facades established a visual rhythm along a block face.
- **Proportion:** The relationship of dimensions between a building's elements such as windows, doors, foundations, roofs, and floor heights to each other and those same elements on other visible elevations.
- **Setback:** The distance from the property line to the nearest part of the applicable building, structure, or sign, as measured perpendicularly to the property line. Setback may also refer to the distance between buildings.
- **Orientation:** The direction a building or element of a building faces, in most cases this will be towards the street.

NEW RESIDENTIAL
CONSTRUCTION

NEW COMMERCIAL
CONSTRUCTION

NEW INSTITUTIONAL
CONSTRUCTION

NEW ACCESSORY
STRUCTURES

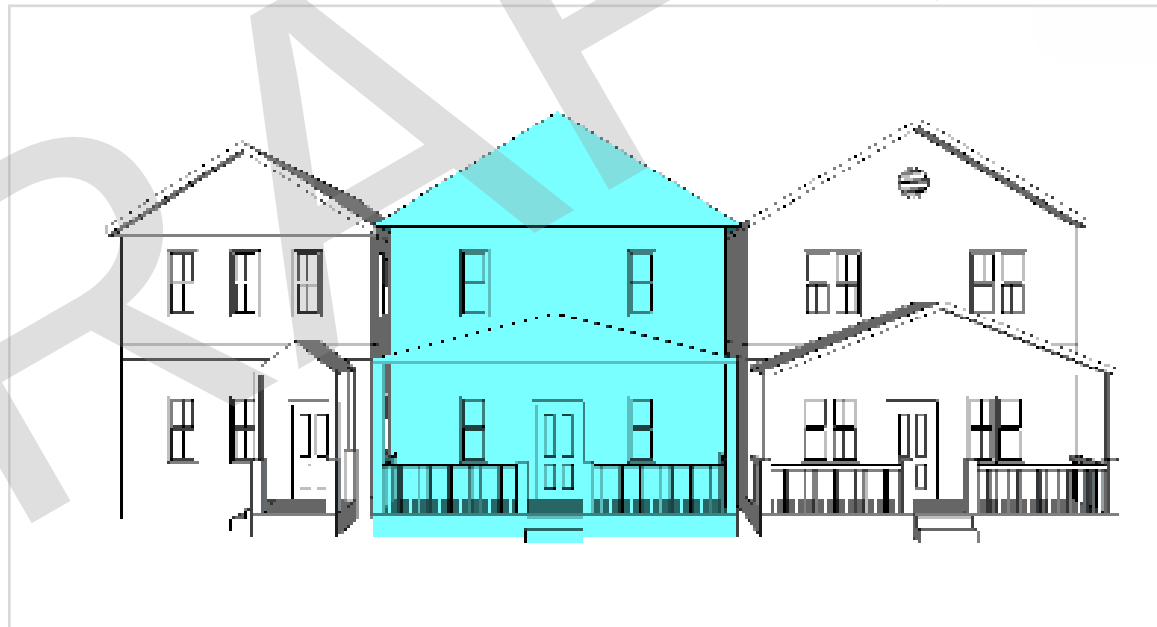
*Click the links above to be taken directly to
that section of the guidelines*

SITE DESIGN

Mass, Scale, and Form

- New buildings should be of a similar mass, scale, and form to other historic buildings along the block and within the historic district.
- The overall mass of a building and its elements should reflect what is found in the historic district.
- The scale of buildings should reflect the type of building being built (i.e., Residential, Commercial, or Institutional).
- Architectural elements such as windows, doors, porches, bulkheads, and roofs should be of a similar scale to other historic buildings along the block.

In the example above the middle building reflects the massing, scale, form, and rhythm established by the existing buildings through a similar foundation height, floor height, and roof height and the location of elements such as the porch, windows, and doors.



Rhythm and Proportion

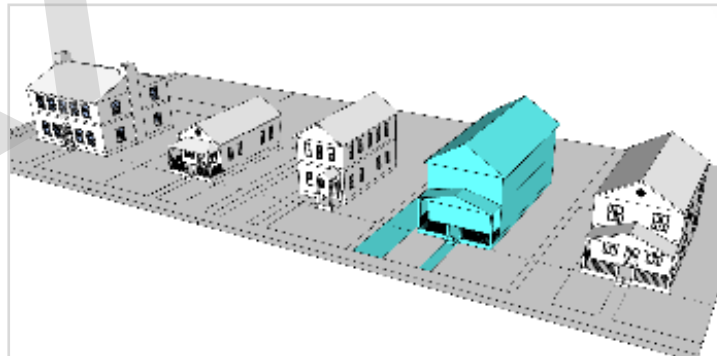
- Elements of façades should be spaced appropriately to establish a defined rhythm on the building being constructed.
- The rhythm of elements on a building should reflect that of its immediate neighbors and other buildings along the street.
- Building elements should be appropriately proportioned on building façades to create a visually appealing and cohesive appearance.
- The proportion of building elements should reflect what is found with its immediate neighbors and other buildings along the street.

Setback and Orientation

- With respect to underlying zoning, the setback of a new building should respect the established setback pattern of buildings along the street.
- Where there is a consistent setback along the street, the new building should be built at the same front yard setback.
- Where there are varying setbacks along a street, the new building should be placed within the range of front yard setbacks along the street.
- New buildings should be oriented in the same direction as adjacent buildings.



Historic commercial blocks typically included zero setback lines both at the front and sides of buildings.



New buildings should maintain the existing setback pattern of the block and be oriented in a way that is compatible with its neighbors.

BUILDING DESIGN

Roofs

The shape, pitch, orientation, and form of a building's roof can help to reinforce the rhythm of visual elements on the block and contributes substantially to a building's massing or apparent bulkiness. For this reason new buildings should have a roof that reflects the appearance of adjacent properties and those along the block face.

- Roof shape, height, pitch, and complexity should reflect what is found in the historic district and be compatible with nearby historic buildings in the district.
- Similar roof materials should be used and have a similar character, scale, texture, and color palette as nearby historic buildings in the district.
- When using contemporary or emerging roof materials that reflect the appearance of historic roof materials, the new material should have a verified record of durability.

Roof Materials

APPROVABLE	▪ Composite shingles ▪ Metal (standing seam, 5V-crimp, shingle, or classic rib) ▪ Clay or imitation clay tiles ▪ Slate or imitation slate ▪ Wood shake or shingles
RESTRICTED	▪ Asphalt roll roofing unless obscured by parapet walls ▪ Built-up or membrane roofing (on a slope greater than 3:12) ▪ Corrugated fiberglass ▪ Corrugated metal ▪ Panel and batten

Exterior Materials and Color Schemes

New buildings should be constructed of materials that are similar to nearby historic buildings in the district. A variety of materials are used throughout the district, though the immediate vicinity or block in which a building is located should serve as the primary reference. Paint and color schemes should likewise reflect what is found nearby. Use a unified color and paint scheme which helps to blend the new construction in with nearby historic buildings in the district.

Exterior Materials

APPROVABLE	▪ Brick ▪ Concrete shingle or siding ▪ Fiber cement shingle or siding ▪ Poly-Ash shingle or siding ▪ Stone ▪ Stucco ▪ Wood (lap siding, shingles,-board and-batten)
RESTRICTED	▪ Exterior insulation and finishing system (EIFS) wall systems ▪ Ceramic or vinyl coatings ▪ Masonite ▪ Metal siding ▪ Plywood ▪ Unfinished concrete block ▪ Vinyl siding

Windows and Doors in New Construction

Windows and doors are an important aspect of a building's façade and help to establish a unified fenestration rhythm with neighboring buildings. The greatest scrutiny shall be for windows and doors which are visible from the street and other public spaces.

- Scale windows and doors to have similar proportions to those seen on nearby contributing buildings.
- Arrange window and doors with a similar pattern and rhythm as nearby contributing buildings.
- Do not use reflective or tinted glazing.

Windows

- If using a multi-light pattern, use true divided lights or simulated divided lights with spacer bars.
- Windows should match the height of the primary doorway on the first floor.
- Windows should not abut the eaves or fascia of the roof.

Window and Door Materials

APPROVABLE	▪ Wood. ▪ Vinyl-clad wood. ▪ Aluminum-clad wood. ▪ Extruded aluminum. ▪ Fiberglass.
RESTRICTED	▪ Mill finish metal windows. ▪ Snap-in or artificial muntins. ▪ Vinyl.

Shutters, Storm Features, and Attached Awnings

Shutters, storm windows and doors, and awnings add visual appeal to a building while also providing practical benefits. These features should all be fitted and compatible with the opening to which they are attached.

- Operable shutters are preferred over non-operable shutters.
- Louvered or solid panel wood is the most appropriate material for new shutters. Alternative materials may be considered on a case-by-case basis but should have characteristics that mimic wood.
- Storm windows should fit precisely within the window frame.
- Storm doors should not obscure the door or doorway to the greatest extent possible.
- Awnings should fit proportionately over the window or door with an appropriate overlap at the site.
- Canvas awnings with a color scheme that complements the building's paint scheme are most appropriate. Synthetic material awnings may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Storm Safety Feature Materials

APPROVABLE	▪ Aluminum (with finish to match sash color). ▪ Wood. ▪ Vinyl. ▪ Metal with baked enamel or anodized of appropriate color.
RESTRICTED	▪ Mill finish aluminum.

Architectural Details and Ornamentation

Architectural details and other ornamentation are encouraged on new buildings and should be compatible with the overall style of the building and nearby historic buildings.

- It is appropriate to include decorative architectural details in new construction such as brackets, spindles, moldings, belt courses, balconies, chimneys, dormers, etc., though they should be simpler in design than their historic counterparts.
- Avoid architectural details which are overly elaborate, overwhelming, or which detract from the character of the historic district.
- Architectural details should pay homage to the historic style which they are inspired by. Avoid including architectural details from a variety of styles.



Traditional materials (i.e., stucco and salvaged brick) are used to render more modern streamlined versions of traditional window hoods, lintels, and pilasters on this apartment building in Old Dauphin Way. This treatment references neighboring contributing buildings without attempting to replicate them.



The traditional column profiles are a later addition to this Mid 20th-Century Contemporary duplex in Leinkauf. While this detail may reference historic architectural styles found in the district, it is not an appropriate treatment the contemporary style of the subject property.

Foundations

Foundations are an important component in creating compatible massing, scale, rhythm, and proportions between historic buildings and new construction.

- Raised pier foundations are most appropriate.
- Avoid slab-on-grade, raw concrete block, and exposed foundations.
- If a raised slab is required, use water tables, exaggerated bases, faux piers, or other similar methods to simulate a raised foundation.
- If foundation infill must be used ensure that it is compatible with the neighborhood and nearby historic buildings.
- When foundation infill is used, recess it and screen it with landscaping as appropriate. Lattice should be hung below the floor framing and between piers. Lattice should not be secured to wall faces or the foundation.

Foundation Materials

APPROVABLE	▪ Brick ▪ Concrete block with a stucco finish ▪ Wood lattice or picket infill ▪ Metal or composite lattice infill, provided it is properly framed
RESTRICTED	▪ Unfinished mineral board panels ▪ Unfinished concrete block ▪ Plywood panel infill ▪ Plastic or vinyl sheeting infill ▪ Sheet metal infill

GUIDELINES SPECIFIC TO BUILDING TYPE

RESIDENTIAL

This section presents guidelines specific to the construction of new residential buildings in locally-designated historic districts. These guidelines relate to the fundamental relationships of a building to its context, including its mass, scale, form, rhythm, proportion, setback, and orientation as discussed at the beginning of this chapter.

It is important for new residential construction to relate to the characteristics found in nearby residential buildings, especially those located along the same block. It may do so by drawing upon the basic elements of nearby buildings such as the way a building is located on its site, the style of the historic building, and the manner it relates to the street and its basic mass, form, and materials. New residential construction should be visually compatible with these nearby residential buildings and be compatible with the alignment of front setbacks and maintain the rhythm of buildings in relation to their side yards and other open spaces. The previous guidelines in this section related to new construction for all building types should be reviewed closely in addition to this section. **[Click here to be taken to the guidelines applicable to all building types.](#)**

Residential Massing and Scale

- New residential buildings should be of a similar massing and scale to nearby residential buildings, with emphasis on those buildings located adjacent to the subject property and along the same block face.
- New residential buildings should feature a similar number of floors or stories to adjacent buildings and with other residential buildings along the block face.
- In residential neighborhoods comprised primarily of single and two-story buildings, new multi-story construction may be appropriate. Additional stories above what is found on the street should be located toward the building rear to reduce the visual impact on the street scape.

Appropriate Massing and Scale of a Neotraditional Residence



This Neo-Craftsman residence in Old Dauphin Way is compatible in mass and scale with neighboring contributing structures.



Inappropriate Massing and Scale of a Neotraditional Residence



While its traditional detailing echoes that of its neighbors, this new build is out of scale with neighboring properties. A raised foundation, rather than slab-on-grade, would help correct problems of scale and maintain the established street rhythm.



Porches

New residential buildings should include a front porch as it reinforces the visual rhythm of the block and contributes to a dwellings scale and massing.

- Porches are encouraged on new residential construction and should be similarly designed to those found on nearby historic residential buildings.
- Porches and their elements should be of a similar scale to the main building and reflect the scale of nearby porches in the historic district.
- Porches should be oriented towards the street. Wraparound porches may be appropriate, but should have their primary entrance oriented towards the street.
- Porches should contain similar elements of other nearby porches such as a similar roof form, porch supports, steps, balustrades, and other ornamentation.



These neotraditional homes in Oakleigh Garden (left) have full-width front porches that are in scale with the full-width porches on contributing residences on the opposite side of Church Street (right).



While the over size and scale of this neotraditional home in De Tonti Square (right) is comparable to contributing properties on the street, the small entry porch is out of scale with the wrap-around porch of its neighbor (right).

COMMERCIAL

This section presents guidelines specific to the construction of new commercial buildings in locally designated historic districts. These guidelines relate to the fundamental relationships of a building to its context, including its mass, scale, form, rhythm, proportion, setback, and orientation as discussed at the beginning of this chapter. 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 De Tonti 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.

The previous guidelines in this section related to new construction for all building types should be reviewed closely in addition to this section. **[Click here to be taken to the guidelines applicable to all building types.](#)**

The construction of new commercial buildings should reflect the context in which they are found. There are three different contexts to consider for new commercial construction; these contexts are discussed more on the following pages.

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 De Tonti 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.



Lower Dauphin

Commercial Corridor Context

The Commercial Corridor context is those areas along arterials at the periphery of a predominantly residential historic district. In recent years, commercial projects have begun developing alongside historic residential buildings. 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. 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 spaces and residential neighborhoods.



Old Dauphin Way

Interior Neighborhood Context

The third context is the Interior Neighborhood context. This refers to new commercial construction that develops in the interior of a predominantly residential neighborhood. This context refers specifically to new, small-scale commercial construction such as corner stores or other neighborhood-serving retail uses that are predominantly surrounded by residential development. In most cases, commercial infill in this context is likely to develop on corner lots; however, interior commercial infill is also possible, particularly in De Tonti Square and 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 De Tonti Square, Oakleigh Garden, Leinkauf, and portions of Old Dauphin Way and Church Street East.



Leinkauf

BUILDING PLACEMENT AND ORIENTATION

All Contexts

- New buildings should be oriented in a similar manner to nearby contributing buildings.
- Front and side setbacks should be similar to nearby contributing buildings.
- It is most often appropriate to orient facades and storefronts towards the street or sidewalk.
- Ancillary buildings should be screened or placed behind the primary new construction.
- When new parking is required, it should be located at the side or rear of the new building and screened appropriately. Avoid placing parking at the front of the building.
- Off-street parking should be screened appropriately from residential development when the new construction is adjacent to residential buildings.

Main Street Context

- Storefronts and facades should be close to the sidewalk, in keeping with adjacent historic commercial buildings.
- Minimize side setbacks to establish a consistent street wall.
- Orient storefronts and facades towards the street and other public spaces.
- Entries and storefronts should be located near the sidewalk or street edge, where there is active engagement with the public realm.

Commercial Corridor Context

- Orient storefronts and facades to be parallel with the street.
- For corner lots, align a sidewall with historic residential buildings located to the rear of the new development. Offset sidewalls built close to the street edge to be in line with historic residential buildings at the rear of the new development.

Interior Neighborhood Context

- Front and side setbacks should be similar to those nearby contributing properties.
- Provide landscaping around a driveway for off-street parking to reflect the typical driveway of historic residential development.



Commercial construction in the Commercial Corridor or Interior Neighborhood Contexts must respect the setbacks and placement of neighboring residential properties. The placement of this commercial structure in Old Dauphin Way overwhelms the neighboring historic home.

MASSING AND SCALE

All Contexts

- New construction should reflect the massing and scale of nearby contributing buildings.
- When new construction has a greater mass than nearby contributing buildings, break down the massing into smaller components.
- Storefronts and facades should reflect the established range of traditional building widths found in Mobile.
- When a façade exceeds the width of what is historically found in Mobile, incorporate vertical and horizontal articulation to break the façade into separate modules.
- Limit the height of new commercial development to be similar to its neighbors. Additional height may be added to the rear of the building to reduce visual impact from the street.
- Commercial buildings should incorporate a traditional base, middle, and cap that is reflective of contributing commercial development.

Main Street Context

- 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, additional wall faces above this height should be set back from the facade to maintain the perceived height of buildings along the street as the underlying zoning permits.

Commercial Corridor Context

- Where a commercial lot is adjacent to a residential lot, step down the height of the commercial building to match that of the adjacent residential property.

Interior Neighborhood Context

- Massing should reflect nearby contributing structures, regardless of use.
- Limit the height of commercial buildings in the Interior Neighborhood Context to be equal or less to that of contributing residential buildings in the district.



An inset courtyard breaks up the massing of this apartment building in Old Dauphin Way. That and consistent setback distances help the multi-family development blend in with historic single-family residences on either side.

BUILDING MATERIALS

All Contexts

- Maintain the distinction between the street level and upper floors on multi-story buildings through the use of architectural details, materials, and fenestration. Belt courses are encouraged to help differentiate the base floor from upper stories.
- A greater proportion of transparent glazing is considered appropriate on ground-floor facades oriented toward streets and sidewalks than on upper stories or facades not facing pedestrian thoroughfares.
- Upper floors should be more opaque than the storefront or façade.
- Use building materials which reflect the surrounding context. Brick, true stucco, and stone are the most appropriate primary materials for new commercial buildings, though wood siding may be appropriate within the Interior Neighborhood Context or where there is a transition between commercial and residential development.
- Brick should be similar in color and texture to what is found on nearby contributing buildings.
- Cast concrete details may be used as accents for brick masonry construction.
- Wood siding or siding that has the appearance of wood should be arranged in a similar pattern and placement to nearby historic buildings and have a similar profile, thickness, and overlap.

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER AND DESIGN

All Contexts

- Compatible design may be achieved through similar massing, scale, proportions, and building forms and the arrangement of building elements that reinforces the visual continuity of the block.
- Use traditional proportions of windows and entrances, either individually or in groups.
- Maintain the traditional placement of window headers and sills relative to cornices and belt courses.
- Look to the surrounding context to identify what types of architectural details may be appropriate for new construction.

Main Street Context

- Traditional storefront elements such as bulkheads, display windows, transoms, and recessed entryways are encouraged on new commercial development.
- Maintain the upper floor building line at the sidewalk edge where entries are recessed.
- Storefront components and upper story windows should be similar in height, width, depth, profile, and proportion to traditional commercial buildings.
- Avoid storefront elements that are over or under sized relative to contributing commercial buildings.

INSTITUTIONAL

This section provides design guidelines for new institutional buildings in locally-designated historic districts. Institutional buildings include churches, schools, museums, hospitals, and government buildings. Institutional buildings are often highly recognizable landmarks that exist both within and outside of Mobile's local historic districts. Some of these buildings are recognized as contributing resources within historic districts, while others may have not yet achieved historic significance.

The previous guidelines in this section related to new construction for all building types should be reviewed closely in addition to this section. **[Click here to be taken to the guidelines applicable to all building types.](#)**

Guidelines for New Institutional Buildings

- Greater flexibility in the placement of institutional buildings on the subject lot is encouraged.
- When using a greater setback than what is found within the context, add additional landscaping, open space, or a public gathering area in the additional setback area.
- The primary entrance of an institutional building should be oriented towards the public realm.
- Off-street parking should be screened.



Church Street East



Old Dauphin Way

DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS OF INSTITUTIONAL BUILDINGS

COMMUNITY LANDMARKS

Whether they exist within historic districts or not, institutional buildings often serve as recognizable focal points and landmarks for the community. Buildings such as Mobile's modern Government Center, Barton Academy, or the Government Street Presbyterian Church act as nodes within neighborhoods. Institutional buildings are typically designed to stand out rather than blend in with the surrounding landscape.

IRREGULAR PLACEMENT

Institutional buildings are often placed on a site differently than the buildings that surround it. Many times an institutional building is set back from the street and the buildings that surround it to reinforce its prominence. Institutional buildings may also be surrounded by curated landscaping which helps to further signify its prominence. Dauphin Way United Methodist Church in the Old Dauphin Way Historic District is a prominent example of this design characteristic.

GREATER MASSING AND SCALE

Institutional buildings often have a greater mass and scale than nearby buildings to further signify their prominence. The greater massing and scale may be both functional and aesthetic—institutional buildings often hold large numbers of people—and the greater massing reflects the importance of the building. In the case of institutional buildings, it is usually appropriate to have a greater mass and scale than surrounding buildings.

ACCESSORY STRUCTURES

In addition to the guidelines found here within this section, new accessory structures should follow the guidelines for new construction depending on the type of construction that is proposed (residential, commercial, institutional) where applicable. New accessory structures should reflect the context in which they are found and not detract from the character of surrounding buildings. **[Click here to be taken to the guidelines applicable to all building types.](#)**

Guidelines for New Accessory Structures

- New accessory structures should be subordinate in scale to the primary building.
- For larger accessory structures, break up the size and massing of the structure into smaller modules that reflect what is typically found with historic accessory structures.
- New accessory structures should be located at the rear of the lot behind the primary building to the greatest extent possible.
- Materials for new accessory structures should be compatible with the primary building and other buildings found within the area context.

MATERIALS

New Accessory structures should be constructed of the same approvable materials for new construction in Mobile's historic districts.

[Click here](#) to be taken the section of the guidelines for appropriate new construction materials.



This carport is compatible in size, placement, and materials with its associated historic residence.



This concrete-block is out of scale and character with its associated historic residence

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CHAPTER 4 : GUIDELINES FOR DEMOLITIONS AND RELOCATIONS



The U. S. Custom House and Post Office at Royal and Saint Francis Streets was constructed in 1856 and demolished in 1963

OVERVIEW

- Demolitions
- Relocations

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GUIDELINES FOR DEMOLITIONS AND RELOCATIONS

This chapter provides overarching principles regarding the demolition and relocation of contributing structures in Mobile's locally designated historic districts. Over the last century, many of Mobile's structures have been demolished. The losses of the 1960s especially remain an especially regrettable time in the city's architectural history and are often cited in discussions about the importance of preservation and the dangers of unchecked urban renewal. Demolition is irreversible. Once a building is gone it also removes an integral component of a historic district. Property owners must fully consider alternatives to demolition in coordination with the ARB and HDD. Detailed requirements for the demolition of any building in a locally designated historic district are prescribed in Mobile's historic preservation ordinance, Sec. 44-80. The guidelines in this section should be applied in conjunction with the criteria set forth in the code. Consult HDD staff regarding any questions or clarifications concerning demolition or relocation.



The U. S. Post Office Building at Saint Joseph and Saint Michael Streets was constructed in 1914 and demolished in 1968

MOBILE'S WIDESPREAD DEMOLITIONS

In the 1960s, Mobile, Alabama, saw widespread demolition of historic buildings due to urban renewal—a movement aimed at modernizing cities by replacing older structures with new development. Significant losses included the Bienville Hotel, Old City Market, and numerous nineteenth century homes and theaters. Many of these buildings were torn down to make way for roads, parking lots, modern offices, and the Civic Center. While the goal was economic progress, much of Mobile's architectural heritage was lost to the wrecking ball. The backlash from these changes later inspired stronger preservation efforts and led to the creation of locally designated historic districts.



The Bienville Hotel, first opened in 1901, was demolished around 1965.

DEMOLITION GUIDELINES

An application must be submitted for the demolition of a building within a historic district. The demolition of a historic structure is generally not allowed unless there are extraordinary circumstances. When considering demolition, consider the following general guidelines.

Significance

As an initial step, determine the significance of the historic structure. It should be examined to determine whether it retains its integrity. In some cases, a property previously determined to be contributing to a historic district may no longer retain its integrity due to changes to the structure since it was originally determined to be contributing. The ARB will evaluate the significance of the building to the local historic district as one of its required findings prior to allowing a demolition.

Condition

The physical condition of the historic structure should be considered when determining whether or not a structure may be demolished. Demolition may be more appropriate when a building is deteriorated or in poor condition.

Impact on the Street and District

Consider the impact that demolition will have on the surrounding structures, including neighboring properties, properties on the same block or across the street, or properties throughout the district. Take into account whether the building is part of an ensemble of historic buildings that create a neighborhood. Demolition may be more appropriate where the removal of the structure does not significantly impact the perception of the block as viewed by the street.

Required Information

The ARB will require certain information before considering a demolition application. The applicant must show their authorization to demolish the property, including any additional potential owners or heirs. Other information required includes, but is not limited to:

- The date the owner acquired the property, purchase price, and condition on date of acquisition.
- Whether the property has been listed for sale, prices asked and offers received, if any.
- Plans for construction of a replacement building on the site, amounts expended upon such plans, and the dates of such expenditures.

RELOCATION GUIDELINES

While relocation is discouraged, it may be preferable to demolition when the new location would be compatible with the character of the building.

New Location

If relocation of a structure is proposed, first consider the new location in question. 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

Where possible, relocate a building to a site that is similar in size as perceived from the street as its original location. Ideally the new location will be among buildings of similar massing and site arrangement as its original location and its general placement and orientation on the new site will reflect its original placement. However, it is important that the new building be in character with its surroundings on its receiving lot.

Required Information

As with demolitions, applicants for relocation of a structure in a locally designated historic district must provide specific information to for the consideration of the ARB. This information includes a detailed post-relocation plan, as well as financial proof of the ability to complete the relocation and replacement project.

APPENDICES: ARCHITECTURAL STYLES OF MOBILE



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FEDERAL (1780-1835)

Federal style architecture dates to the early American Republic and is an extension of older Georgian style that was popular throughout colonial America in the eighteenth century. Federal buildings have symmetrical facades and classical details. They are also defined by fine details like fanlights, sidelights, and Palladian windows (windows in sets of threes with an arched center window). Symmetry is important in Federal style buildings, with central entryways and equal numbers of windows on either side of the building center mass. Windows often have heavy lintels.



GREEK REVIVAL (1830 - 1860)

Greek Revival architecture derived from a renewed American interest in ancient Greece as a great historical democracy. Inspired by Greek temples, it symbolized democracy and Classical ideals, making it popular for both residential and public buildings. Greek Revival buildings of this period featured pediments and porticoes supported by columns of the Classical Doric, Ionic, or Corinthian order. Columns could be grand and detailed, or stylized pilasters on smaller homes. Symmetry was important to the style, as was elongation of features such as floor-to-ceiling windows and low-pitched gable roofs with corniced eaves. As a prosperous antebellum port city, Greek Revival architecture was popular in Mobile before the Civil War. Many homes in Oakleigh Garden and De Tonti Square districts reflect this style.





GOTHIC REVIVAL (1840-1880)

Gothic Revival architecture was popular in both the United States and England in the mid- to late- nineteenth century. Inspired by Gothic cathedrals and castles, the style was popularized around 1940 through the publication of house plan books. It is defined by steeply pitched roofs with decorative vergeboards, decorative tracery, and ornate woodwork. Pointed arches, most often in window shapes, are also a defining element. The style was incorporated into church buildings and public institutions constructed of both masonry and frame.

In Mobile, the style is most visible in religious architecture. One notable residential example, however, is the R. C. Macy House, which is located in Old Dauphin Way. The Macy House is an example of the Carpenter Gothic subtype, which utilizes milled wood details like brackets, finials, and vergeboards with vertical emphasis.







ITALIANATE (1850-1890)

As the name suggests, the Italianate architectural style was inspired by Italian villas in the mid- to late-nineteenth century. The versatile style features low-pitched or flat roofs, wide eaves with decorative brackets, tall narrow windows with rounded or arched tops, and elaborate cornices. Often symmetrical, Italianate homes may have square towers, cupolas, or belvederes. Façades also feature quoins, cast-iron balconies, and decorative moldings. Italianate buildings can be of frame or masonry construction.

Many Mobile Side Hall and Side Halls with Wing adopted Italianate details and constructions. Among the most well-known of Mobile's Italianate dwellings are the Richards DAR house in De Tonti Square and the Horst House in Church Street East. However many vernacular examples are present in Mobile as well.





QUEEN ANNE (1880-1910)

The Queen Anne style was the most popular style for houses in America between 1880 and 1900. The style is characterized its elaborate form, rich details, and use of multiple surface materials such as brick and wood. Like the Folk Victorian style, Queen Anne was proliferated across the country by the railroad and mass production of decorative elements. Buildings with Queen Anne style often feature steeply pitched cross gabled roofs, partial or full width porches, masonry chimneys, and corner towers. Though the style was most popular for residences, it is found in churches, institutional buildings, and offices.





ROMANESQUE REVIVAL (1880-1930)

Romanesque Revival architecture was inspired by the buildings of the Romanesque period in Europe, which spanned the tenth through twelfth centuries. Romanesque Revival is characterized by thick masonry walls, rounded arches, and heavy, solid proportions. Brick and stone are most common exterior materials, as are small, recessed windows and decorative arcading. The style became popular in the late nineteenth century, particularly for institutional buildings, as it conveyed a sense of stability. In Mobile's locally-designated historic districts, the style is most often seen in churches.



FOLK VICTORIAN (1880-1910)

Folk Victorian is a simplified version of Victorian architecture, blending ornate decorative elements with straightforward folk house forms. The style features symmetrical facades, gabled roofs, and frame construction. Decorative trim, spindles, and brackets—often inspired by Queen Anne or Italianate styles—adorn porches and eaves. Unlike high-style Victorian buildings, Folk Victorian houses are more restrained and have simpler layouts and minimal ornamentation. Builders often mass-produced decorative details to embellish otherwise plain structures. These homes provided an affordable way for middle class families to emulate the high styles of the time.



COLONIAL REVIVAL (1880-1950)

Colonial Revival refers to the style influenced most heavily by residential and governmental architecture of the American and European colonies of the late 1700s and early 1800s. The Colonial Revival style was initially influenced by the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial. The event sparked a new interest in the American colonial past, in contrast to earlier decades when colonial architecture had been dismissed as antiquated or obsolete.

By 1900, the Colonial Revival emerged as the dominant style for domestic buildings nationwide and remained popular through World War II. Colonial Revival buildings are often one- or two-story in height with a symmetrical and rectangular massing, often with gable or gambrel roofs. A common trait of this style is symmetrically placed windows on each story, with arched windows on the first story and large double-hung rectangular windows on the second story. Other traits common to Colonial Revival Style buildings include full Doric or Ionic columns, concrete pilasters or entryway pediments, cupolas, and one or two (symmetrical) masonry chimneys. This style is often clad in brick or wood siding.







NEOCLASSICAL REVIVAL (1895-1955)

The Neoclassical Revival style evolved from a renewed interest in the architectural forms of the ancient Greeks and Romans. Some of the notable characteristics of this style include a symmetrical facade dominated by a full-height or half-height porch with classical columns (most often Doric). Roofs with this style are often gable or hip with boxed eaves and are frequently found with dentils or modillions beneath the roof. The entryways of Neoclassical Revival buildings often feature decorative pediments, fanlights, or sidelights. Windows on residential Neoclassical Revival buildings tend to be six or nine panes per sash.





AMERICAN CRAFTSMAN (1900-1930)

The American Craftsman was the dominant style for smaller homes built throughout the country during the early 1900s. The style originated in southern California and quickly spread throughout the nation. Modest bungalow forms of the style were common in America's early suburbs, popularized by pattern books and magazines which provided craftsmen and contractors with schematics that could easily be replicated without the expertise of a professional architect.

Craftsman houses are commonly defined by a broad front porch, low-pitched gable roofs with overhanging eaves, exposed rafter tails, and multi-pane windows. Their porches can often feature tapered or square columns with brick or stone supports.





TUDOR REVIVAL (1910-1940)

The Tudor Revival style originated when Tudor style architecture received a revitalization in Europe during the early nineteenth century. The trend toward revivalist architecture gained momentum from the 1893 Chicago World's Fair and the Columbian Exposition, where historical interpretations of European styles were encouraged. This style was originally used both commercially and residentially but became especially popular for 1920s suburban residential development. The style is a romanticized revival of timber-frame buildings of the Tudor Period. However, many examples of this architectural style lack the exterior timber framing iconic of a traditional Tudor style building.

Residential buildings associated with Tudor Revival tend to be one or two stories and consist of asymmetrical design plans, including window placement. Cross-gable, steeply pitched roofs of this style often feature clipped gables. If chimneys are found on these buildings, they often feature stone over-scaled types. Brick-clad versions of these buildings can be found with decorative brickwork or brick rows as part of their exterior design.





SPANISH & MISSION REVIVAL (1915-1940)

Both Spanish and Mediterranean Revival styles were popular in the early twentieth century, especially in warm climates like the Gulf Coast, California, and the Southwest. Both styles share many similarities and sometimes overlap. Spanish and Mediterranean Revival styles both feature stucco exteriors and tile roofs reminiscent of Spanish colonial architecture. Spanish Revival emulates other Spanish Colonial features more strongly, giving buildings of this style a “Mission” feel, with arched windows and doorways, wrought iron detailing, and carved wooden doors. Mediterranean Revival is a broader style that incorporates not only Spanish but Greek, Italian, and French elements like Moorish or Venetian stucco details, spires, balconies, and columns.





MINIMAL TRADITIONAL (1935-1950)

The Minimal Traditional style emerged in the wake of the Great Depression around 1935. In 1934 the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) was created with the purpose of regulating interest rates on home mortgages. The Minimal Traditional home was created in response to this crisis and the formation of the FHA. Minimal Traditional homes could be financed with FHA loans and could be constructed quickly. The proliferation of the Minimal Traditional home continued in to the 1940s as soldiers returned home from World War II and the United States experienced a postwar development boom. The style would eventually evolve into the Ranch style in the 1950s and 1960s.

Minimal Traditional style is distinguished by a small scale, simple form. It typically has little to no ornamentation, with narrow eaves, simple hipped or gable roofs. If a Minimal Traditional style home has a porch at all, it is very simple, usually just a landing at the front door. Most dwellings of this type are single story.





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APPENDICES: BUILDING TYPOLOGIES



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CREOLE COTTAGE

The Creole Cottage style is distinct to the Gulf Coast and derives from French and Spanish colonial architectural traditions. The design is adaptive to the hot, humid Gulf Coast climate, with building features to promote cross-breezes and heat displacement via high ceilings and rooflines. The Creole Cottage is distinguished by a steep side-gable roof, often with dormer windows, with a centered entryway shaded by a full-width porch. Windows, especially on the front of the house, are often the same height as the doors, with double hung windows and louvered shutters. Creole Cottages are frequently of frame construction situated atop masonry piers to allow airflow beneath the structure.





GULF COAST COTTAGE

The Gulf Coast Cottage style is similar to the Creole Cottage with a few important distinctions. While the Creole Cottage derives from French and Spanish colonial building traditions, the Gulf Coast Cottage is influenced more by Anglo-American styles like Folk Victorian and Gothic Revival. Whereas the Creole Cottage is distinguished by a side gable roof, Gulf Coast Cottages are often front-gabled or hipped roofs. Both styles have broad front porches, but the Gulf Coast Cottage is more likely to have a wraparound porch. Gulf Coast Cottages are also defined by double-hung windows and center hall or shotgun plans.



SIDE HALL / SIDE HALL WITH WING (1840-1870)

Side Hall dwellings were the principle residential typology of nineteenth century America. They comprise a form and mode of construction rather than a style and thus can take on many different architectural details. In Side Hall houses, the main entrance is located on one side of the primary façade, leading directly into a hallway that runs along one side of the house. Side Halls can have different architectural styles such as Federal, Greek Revival, Italianate, or Victorian. Mobile is also known to have a distinctive subtype of the Side Hall known as the Side Hall with Wing. These buildings are an expansion on the basic Side Hall townhouse which accommodate entertaining space as well as private space for their residents.

The Side Hall with Wing was the preferred housing type of Mobile's civic-commercial elite during the middle third of the nineteenth century. By 1900, there were over 400 Side Hall with Wing houses in Mobile. In the present day, less than 40 of Mobile's most distinctive dwelling types survive. The Richards DAR, Bernstein House (Carnival Museum), St. John-Rutherford, and Hamilton-Snider houses are notable surviving examples.



SHOTGUN (1855-1945)

Shotgun houses are located across the American South. The earliest versions of the form in Mobile date to the mid-nineteenth century. Shotguns were built frequently in the 1880s, near the rail yards and the river, and exploded in popularity in the first decades of the twentieth century and continued to be built up to World War II. Shotguns are long and rectangular in form, with aligned rooms directly connected by aligned doors and no hall or passageway. The name “shotgun” derives from the alignment of the doors, making it possible for a bullet shot through the front door to exit out the rear door without obstruction.

The form’s simplicity was attractive to mill owners and real estate speculators who erected them in large numbers. Shotguns are a form and thus can take on many styles such as Italianate, Greek Revival, Victorian varieties like Eastlake or Queen Anne, and even Bungalows. Shotguns are one-story structures as a rule, but can have second story additions at their rear, known as “camelbacks.”



AMERICAN FOURSQUARE (1890-1930)

The American Foursquare was a practical house form that emerged as a reaction to ornate Victorian era styles. Its name derives from its typical floor plan of four principal rooms on the first floor and usually four on the second as well. It features a simple, boxy shape, typically two or two-and-a-half stories tall, with a square floor plan maximizing interior space. The style typically includes a pyramidal or hip roof with a central dormer window, a wide front porch with columns, and minimal ornamentation. The form could incorporate elements of other contemporary styles like Craftsman, Colonial Revival, and Neo-Classical details. American Foursquare houses are common in Mobile. Georgia Avenue in Oakleigh Garden, for example, features a number of examples of the form.



BUNGALOW (1905-1940)

The Bungalow is a vernacular architectural type that was most popular in the United States between 1900 and 1920. Characterized by their small size, one- to one-and-one-half story height, and prominent front porches, Bungalows were a predominantly working-class architectural type. At a modest cost, the small and practical homes of the Bungalow type offered simplicity and quality construction. The form first gained popularity in the East and soon spread to the West Coast, where it became popularized as the Craftsman Bungalow. In this form, Craftsman characteristics of style were applied to the Bungalow type, resulting in a more ornate home style.



RANCH

The Ranch home emerged around the same time as the Minimal Traditional during the wake of the Great Depression. In the postwar development boom, the Minimal Traditional phased out of style and was overtaken by Ranch style as restrictions on home loans were lifted. Ranch style homes can be found across the country and are characterized by their horizontal emphasis in form and detail, along with a variety of window sizes, usually including a large picture window. They also feature built-in carports or garages and low pitched hipped and gable roofs.



COMMERCIAL BUILDING TYPES

Commercial buildings are often defined by their type or form, rather than their style. Building type is characterized by the arrangement of a building's layout and the massing of its separate components. Many commercial buildings, especially those found in Mobile, are designed in styles that are also found in residential buildings. An understanding of building type is important to making sensitive alterations to commercial buildings that preserve the architectural character of the historic district.

One-Part Commercial Block

Both the one and two-part commercial block types are commonly found on historic main streets across the United States. The one-part commercial block is a commercial building that usually centers around a storefront or entrance and is usually only a single story. In many cases the sides of a one-part commercial block may be directly adjacent to another building. Due to their use as retail spaces, one-part commercial block buildings tend to have a lot of detail on the primary street facade. The area above the storefront may be used for advertising purposes and signage, though in more contemporary commercial structures the storefront might encompass the entire height of the facade.



Two-Part Commercial Block

Like the one-part commercial block, the two-part usually centers around a highly visible storefront. Two-part commercial block structures are typically limited to structures between two and four stories. With two-part commercial block buildings there is a clear horizontal division between the ground level and upper stories, reflecting the division of uses. Upper stories are rarely dedicated to commercial space and are most often used for offices and residential dwellings.



Two-Part Vertical Block

A two-part vertical block is a two-part block with an upper block that is four or more stories in height.



Three-Part Vertical Block

A three-part vertical block has a distinct upper block that is between one and three stories in height. Horizontal breaks between the three blocks create a clear base, middle, and cap.



Other Commercial Types

Several other subsets of the one and two-part commercial block type are found in Mobile's historic commercial areas, especially Lower Dauphin and Church Street East districts:

- Arcaded block describes a structure typically one to three stories in height with a series of tall, evenly-spaced arched openings across a wide facade.
- Enframed window wall describes a structure where the majority of the facade consists of a large storefront or window wall recessed behind sidewalls and a soffit that create a continuous solid frame.
- **Temple front** may be one or more stories and is derived from classical architecture, often featuring columns and pilasters around an entrance that dominates the facade. This type was common for banks and movie theaters.



DRAFT

APPENDICES: MOBILE'S HISTORIC DISTRICTS



[CLICK HERE TO
RETURN TO THE
SECTION FOR
ADDITIONS TO
HISTORIC BUILDINGS](#)



ASHLAND PLACE

Ashland Place Historic District is a residential neighborhood located over two miles west of downtown Mobile on Spring Hill Avenue and bounded by Old Shell Road, Ryan Avenue, and Levert Avenue. It is significant as an early “streetcar suburb” of Mobile, established around 1908 along a streetcar line. The large lots, verdant landscaping, and grand houses of Ashland Place provided professional and upper class Mobilians with attractive and exclusive surroundings while allowing them to commute to work downtown. Ashland Place is distinguished by its wide streets, overhanging live oaks, as well as its entrance gates on Old Shell Road and Spring Hill Road. It is the smallest district in Mobile, with less than 100 buildings, most of which were built between 1908 and 1940.

Ashland Place is rich with grand architecture significant to the early twentieth century, including many Revival styles: Georgian, Colonial, Mediterranean, and Tudor Revival styles mixed with Craftsman and Neoclassical houses. Ashland Place embodies an early twentieth century suburban feeling and maintains a sense of exclusivity paired with arboreal tranquility.

Character defining features:

- Medium to large building footprints
- One- and Two-story single family residences
- Early twentieth century Revival styles
- Prevalence of front porches
- Deep and uniform front setbacks
- Service alleyways with matching accessory structures





CHURCH STREET EAST

Church Street East is one of three local historic districts that embody Mobile's downtown core (the others are Lower Dauphin and De Tonti Square). 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. Government Street cuts through the district and acts as its primary thoroughfare. The district embodies Mobile's present and historic civic center, and includes Mobile's former city hall (today the Museum of Mobile History), churches, libraries, a cemetery, commercial blocks, and historic residences.

Significant buildings in Church Street East range from 1830 to the early twentieth century and embody a variety of architectural styles that were prominent throughout that more than 100 year period. Governmental, religious, and institutional buildings feature high Italianate and Greek Revival style, such as the Baron Academy on Government Street. Residences include Gulf Coast cottages and varieties of Victorian styles including ornate Queen Anne Style residences. The feel of the district is of a historic civic center, with imposing temple fronts communicating institutional permanence, paired with smaller scale residential streets with minimal setbacks that place houses in intimate relation to each other and to the street.

Character defining features:

- Variety in building types, uses, and footprint sizes
- Variety of building styles from Federal to Modern
- Prevalence of front porches
- Prevalence of front yard fences and walls
- Shallow setbacks
- Moderate landscaping





DE TONTI SQUARE

De Tonti Square Historic District comprises nine blocks north of Dauphin Street and is Mobile's oldest extant neighborhood. Its oldest buildings include masonry townhouses in varieties of the Federal style from the 1830s as well as Coastal and Creole Cottages. The masonry buildings of De Tonti Square often feature historic brick details such as struck or tooled joints and wire-cut brick laid with thin "butter" joints. Frame cottages feature side gables, turrets, and porches supported by columns. In addition to Federal, Greek Revival, Queen Anne, and vernacular style buildings, De Tonti Square is distinctive for its prominent use of ornamental cast iron, which is visible on one- and two-story porches and balconies as well as fences.

In the present day, the neighborhood is mixed residential, with many dwellings converted for professional office use. The streets of De Tonti Square are narrow and lined with mature live oaks. De Tonti maintains its neighborhood feel and human scale while also being close to downtown.

Character defining features:

- Variety of building setbacks
- Medium to large building footprints
- Primarily two-story residential buildings
- Architectural styles ranging from Federal to Victorian with some later styles
- Moderate landscaping
- Significant use of ornamental cast iron





LEINKAUF

Leinkauf Historic District developed in response to the expansion of public transportation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The district is large, comprising more than 700 historic buildings bounded by Government, S. Ann, Virginia, and Houston Streets. The NRHP listed portion of the district includes all or part of nine planned subdivisions platted between 1890 and 1919. The locally designated Leinkauf district is even larger and includes mid 20th-Century architectural styles, as well.

Like Ashland Place, Leinkauf was first settled by upper class professionals, but Leinkauf evolved to include middle class dwellings. Distinctly residential except for its Government Street boundary, Leinkauf includes many late Victorian homes. Elements such as raised brick foundations, large recessed or projecting porches, low pitched roofs with wide eaves and walk-through windows are found in this “core” NRHP district. In other parts of Leinkauf, large numbers of Bungalows, Minimal Traditional cottages, and early Ranch houses are to be found.

Character defining features:

- Uniform setback depths
- Primarily one- and two-story residential buildings (with some commercial along corridors)
- Architectural styles ranging from Folk Victorian and Queen Anne to Bungalow, Craftsman, and Minimal Traditional
- Moderate landscaping





LOWER DAUPHIN STREET

Lower Dauphin Street Commercial District comprises approximately 21 blocks along or adjacent to its namesake commercial street. The district dates to 1839 when Mobile's commercial districts were destroyed by fire. It is distinguished by its commercial buildings as well as two parks and institutional buildings like the Cathedral-Basilica of the Immaculate Conception and the Scottish Rite Temple. Though commercial in character and feel, there are also 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 nineteenth and early twentieth century styles including Federal, Italianate, Victorian revival styles, and Art Deco. There are several early skyscrapers in the district, including the 23 story Merchants National Bank Building and the 11 story Van Antwerp Building.

Character defining features:

- One- to three-story commercial buildings
- Uniform lack of setbacks, buildings built to sidewalk edge
- Strong pedestrian orientation
- Minimal to no landscaping
- Variety of building detail and ornamentation
- Wide range of construction dates and building styles, from Federal to Modern





OAKLEIGH GARDEN

Oakleigh Garden Historic District is so named for Oakleigh, the 1833 home of cotton merchant James Roper. The Greek Revival house remains extant in the district as a house museum. The area remained rural through the mid-nineteenth century when its current street plan was laid out and its earliest homes constructed. The street plan included a central green space, named Washington Square park, which remains a prominent landscape feature of the district.

Greek Revival residences were later followed by homes with grand Queen Anne details as well as Bungalows and Craftsman homes, many of which fit the Coastal Cottage or Shotgun forms. Oakleigh Garden is described as having a “sylvan” feel, with a rich landscape of historic live oaks shading most streets.

Character defining features:

- One- to two-story single family residences
- Uniform setbacks within neighborhood blocks, mostly moderate
- Primarily small building footprints (with larger along Government Street)
- Significant landscaping, particularly live oaks and crape myrtles
- Rich variety of high architectural styles mixed with vernacular styles





OLD DAUPHIN WAY

Old Dauphin Way Historic District is the largest district under ARB protection. Consisting of approximately 3,000 buildings, the district is primarily residential, with green lawns and numerous live oak canopied streets. Old Dauphin Way includes Mobile's earliest streetcar suburbs, developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Most buildings in the district are small-scaled residential structures of one or two stories, with similar setbacks, materials and scale. Significant collections of Victorian, Neoclassical, American Four Square, Bungalow, and various Revival styles are represented, superimposed on scattered mid-nineteenth century Gulf Coast and Greek Revival cottages. Buildings are mostly single family residential, but there are notable examples of apartments, schools, churches, and commercial buildings within the district.

Character defining features:

- One- to two-story single family residences punctuated by religious, institutional, and commercial buildings
- Medium to large building footprints
- Uniform setbacks within single blocks
- Varied levels of landscaping throughout district
- Rich variety of high architectural styles mixed with vernacular styles



TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

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 molded 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 Course: flat trim running horizontally in the wall to denote a division in the wall plane or a change in level.

Bargeboard (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 reinforcement is not used.

Bracket: a symbolic cantilever, usually of a fanciful form, used under the cornice in place of the usual motile 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 molding, framing, or lining around a door or a window, may be either flat or molded.

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 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 molded 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.

Facade: 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.

Guttae: 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 molding on its base and two raking (sloping) moldings 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 or process of applying measures to sustain the existing form, integrity 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 Hipped Roof: a pyramid-shaped roof with four sides of equal slope and shape.

Reconstruction: the accurate recreation of a vanished, or irreparably damaged structure, 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 usable condition through repair, alteration, 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 under-surface 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 molded 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.

MOBILE CODE FOR PRESERVATION

Chapter 44 - Planning and Development - Article IV. Historic Development

Sec. 44-70. Findings and purpose.

- a. The city has long counted its historical, cultural and aesthetic heritage among its most valued assets. Mobile was the first city in Alabama; and among the first in the nation, to create a historic development commission (“commission”) and to adopt laws recognizing and protecting historic structures and historic neighborhoods.
- b. In 1989, the state enacted legislation authorizing all municipalities to adopt ordinances to establish historic development commissions and architectural review boards, and to promote educational, cultural, economic and general welfare of Alabama municipalities through preservation and protection of historic resources. (Code of Ala. §§ 11-68-1 through 11-68-15).
- c. Code of Ala. § 11-68-14 additionally authorizes the city to grant the commission and architectural review board (“board”) additional powers set forth in Code of Ala. title 11, chapter 68.
- d. The city council also finds and determines that:
 1. Many significant historic structures in the city have been lost and the continued preservation of these properties promotes the public health, safety, and welfare of the city;
 2. Preservation of the city’s historical, cultural and aesthetic heritage is essential to the promotion of the health, prosperity and general welfare of the people;
 3. Historic preservation stimulates revitalization of the business districts; protects and often increases property values in historic neighborhoods; and protects and enhances local historical and aesthetic attractions for residents and tourists, thereby promoting and stimulating commerce; and
 4. The designation, protection, preservation and rehabilitation of historic properties and historic districts enables Mobile’s citizens to participate in federal and state programs and enhances opportunities for federal and state tax benefits.
- e. The city council hereby adopts a new chapter 44, article IV of the City Code to supersede and replace the current version.

(Ord. No. 01-023-2023, 5-9-23)

Sec. 44-71. Definitions.

Board or *ARB* means the architectural review board established pursuant to this chapter.

Board member means a person appointed to the architectural review board pursuant to this chapter.

Building inspector means the city’s designated building inspector or his or her designee.

Certificate of appropriateness means a document evidencing approval by the architectural review board to make a material change or repair in the appearance of a designated historic property or of a property located within a designated local historic district. A certificate of appropriateness is also required for demolition of a structure within a historic district.

Certificate of economic hardship means a document evidencing approval of an owner's application for relief from the application of this chapter as provided in section 44-80.

Certified local government (CLG) means a local government certified by the National Park Service and the Alabama Historical Commission to participate in the federal historic preservation program and eligible to receive federal technical assistance and funding for preservation activities. The city is a certified local government.

City means the City of Mobile, an Alabama municipal corporation.

City council means the elected members of the city council of Mobile, Alabama.

Commission means the Mobile Historic Development Commission as established pursuant to this chapter.

Commissioner or commission member means a person appointed to the commission pursuant to this chapter.

Conflict of interest means a conflict on the part of a board member or commissioner between his or her private interest and the responsibilities imposed by this chapter. A conflict of interest involves any action, inaction, or decision by a commissioner or board member in the discharge of his or her duties which would materially affect his or her financial interest or those of his or her family members or any business with which the person is associated in a manner different from the manner it affects the other members of the class to which he or she belongs.

Contributing property means a building, structure, site, or object recognized as adding to the historic significance of a district.

Exterior architectural features means the architectural style, general design and general arrangement of the exterior of a building or other structures, including but not limited to the kind or texture of the building material, and the type and style of all windows, doors, signs and other appurtenant architectural fixtures, features, details or elements relative to the foregoing.

Exterior environmental features means all aspects of the landscape or the development of a site which affect the historical character of the property such as walks, drives, outbuildings and landscaping.

Family members means the spouse, a dependent, an adult child and his or her spouse, a parent, a spouse's parents, a sibling and his or her spouse, of a commission or board member.

Guidelines means the design standards adopted pursuant to this chapter in compliance with, but not limited to, the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration and Reconstruction.

Local historic district means a geographically definable area designated by the city council as a local historic district, including any such districts existing as of the date of this chapter and any districts subsequently designated by the city council as a local historic district.

Historic property means an individual building, structure, site, or object, including the adjacent area, necessary for the proper appreciation thereof listed in the National Register of Historic Places, located in a local historic district or designated by the city council as a historic property.

Historic site means a parcel of real property listed in the National Register of Historic Places, located in a local historic district or designated by the city council as a historic property.

Material change means a change in appearance that will affect either the exterior architectural or environmental features of a historic property or any building, structure, site, object, or landscape feature of a property within a local historic district, or designated by the city council as a historic property including, but not limited to:

1. Reconstruction or alteration of the size, shape or elevation of a historic property, including, but not limited to, relocation or replacement of any doors or windows removal or alteration of any architectural features, details or elements; including selection of paint colors;
2. Demolition or relocation of a historic property;
3. Commencement of excavation for construction purposes;
4. A change in the materials, size or location of advertising visible from the public right-of-way;
5. The erection, alteration, restoration or removal of any building or other structure within a local historic district, including walls, fences, steps, drives and pavements or other appurtenant features;
6. Any exterior work that must be permitted by the city; or
7. The painting of originally unpainted surfaces.

Mayor means the mayor of the City of Mobile.

Non-contributing property means a building, structure, site, or object not recognized as adding to the historic significance of a district.

Owner means the holder of the fee simple title as revealed on the relevant property tax rolls and in probate court records, and any person (natural, legal or corporate) or groups of persons, companies, associations, corporations, or partnerships who, alone or jointly or severally with others:

1. Shall have legal title to any property, with or without an accompanying right of possession; or
2. Shall have charge, care or control of any property as owner, executor, executrix, administrator, trustee, guardian of the estate owner, mortgagee or vendee in possession, or assignee of rents, lessee, or other person, firm or corporation in control of a property.

Staff means city employees designated by the mayor who provide technical assistance and support to the commission and board in the carrying out of their duties and responsibilities as set out in this chapter.

Substantial economic hardship means a hardship so great that:

1. The owner will effectively be deprived of all reasonable and beneficial use of or return from the property; and
2. The owner would be unfairly penalized given that the owner did not create the conditions at issue.

(Ord. No. 01-023-2023, 5-9-23)

Sec. 44-72. Historic preservation commission created.

- a. *Creation of the commission.* Pursuant to Code of Ala. § 11-68-1, et seq. (1975) there is hereby created a commission that shall be named the Mobile Historic Development Commission. The commission shall constitute a non-profit governmental agency whose funds shall be used exclusively for public purposes as provided.
- b. *Tax-exempt status.* The commission shall have tax-exempt status. The properties of the commission and the income therefrom, together with all leases, agreements, and contracts made by it shall be forever exempt from any and all taxation by the state and any political subdivision thereof, including, but not limited to, sales and use tax, gross receipts tax, income, admission, amusement, excise, and ad valorem taxes.
- c. *Commission membership.* The commission shall consist of thirteen (13) members. Commissioners shall be bona fide residents of the city and shall have demonstrated training or experience in the fields of history, architecture, architectural history, urban planning, archaeology, or law, or who shall be residents of a local historic district. No elected official shall serve on the commission. A minimum of seven (7) members of the commission shall reside or own property in a local historic district. The remaining six (6) members of the commission may reside or own property in a local historic district but such shall not be required for their nomination by the mayor. Members of the commission shall be nominated by the mayor, with the mayor to nominate one (1) commissioner from each of the local historic districts existing from time to time, with representation of the local historic districts not to exceed seven (7) in total, and shall be appointed by the city council. Nomination and appointment of members of the commission shall be made so as to ensure that the commission will be composed of persons with as much of the training and experience identified in this section as is possible. In making such appointments, the mayor shall solicit non-binding recommendations of potential commissioners from the following:

Recommendations of additional commission members:

American Institute of Architects, Mobile Chapter
Architectural Review Board of the City of Mobile
Ashland Place Historic District
Bragg Mitchell Mansion
Church Street East Historic District
Church Street East Historic District Neighborhood Association
City of Mobile Department of Urban Development
De Tonti Square Historic District
De Tonti Square Neighborhood Association
Friends of Magnolia Cemetery, Inc.
Friends of Mobile Historic Development
Friends of Museum of Mobile
Friends of Old Mobile, Inc.
Historic Mobile Preservation Society

Leinkauf Historic District
Leinkauf Historic District Neighborhood Organization
Lower Dauphin Street Commercial Historic District
Main Street Mobile, Inc.
Mobile Area Association of Realtors, Inc.
Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce
Mobile Medical Museum
National Society of Colonial Dames of America in Alabama
Conde/Charlotte Museum
Oakleigh Garden District Society
Oakleigh Garden Historic District
Old Dauphin Way Association
Old Dauphin Way Historic District
Richards DAR House Museum

Such additional local historic districts as shall be created after the effective date.

- d. Terms.* Members of the commission shall serve three-year, overlapping terms, with two (2) members to be initially appointed for a one-year term, two (2) members to be initially appointed for a two-year term and the remaining initial members to be appointed for a three-year term; thereafter, as terms expire for such initial members, subsequent members shall be appointed for full three-year terms. All appointments shall be made per subsection 44-72(c). Terms shall begin on January 1 of the appointment year and end on December 31 of the termination year. Upon expiration of the term of a commissioner, that commissioner shall not be allowed to continue to serve and shall have no further powers or duties hereunder. Members of the commission may be reappointed to the commission.
1. If a member is absent, without excuse, from three (3) regular meetings of the commission in the calendar year, the Mayor and City Council shall be notified so that a qualified replacement may be appointed as per subsection 44-72(c).
 2. Any vacancy occurring on the commission other than by expiration of term shall be filled for the unexpired term of such member as provided in subsection 44-72(c).
 3. Members of the commission may be removed for cause by the city council.
- e. Compensation.* Members shall serve without compensation, but may be reimbursed for expenses incurred on behalf of the commission in accordance with the rules and regulations for the reimbursement of expenses adopted by the commission.

- f. Conflict of interest. No member shall vote, present, discuss or participate in any matter in which the member has a conflict of interest or in which the member or any family member has any financial gain or interest.
- g. Officers. Members of the commission shall elect a president and a vice president and such other officers as the commissioners deem necessary.

(Ord. No. 01-023-2023, 5-9-23)

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