School Street Local Historic District
Design Guidelines

NOTE: These Design Guidelines only apply to exterior changes to houses in the School Street Local Historic District.

I. Guidelines for Rehabilitation of Existing Buildings

The guidelines shall apply to exterior rehabilitation work only.

A. General Objectives

1. Rehabilitation work should maintain and be consistent with the historic architectural styles, date/period and detailing of the structure.

2. Rehabilitation work which is intended to enhance or return the structure to its original historic appearance should be based upon historic, physical, or pictorial evidence, rather than on conjectural designs. Work that has no historical basis and which seeks to create a different appearance is discouraged.

3. Work should first attempt to repair and maintain the existing elements of the structure, whenever reasonably possible. In the event replacement of details and materials is necessary, when possible, these elements should match the elements being replaced in size, shape, materials, pattern, texture and directional orientation of installation.

B. Building Wall Material Requirements

1. Existing wall materials and details shall be retained through repair and maintenance, unless deteriorated beyond reasonable repair.

2. When replacement of existing materials and details is required, the new materials shall be similar in appearance, maintaining the original materials in size, shape, pattern, texture and directional orientation on installation.

3. Masonry walls shall maintain their present or original appearance. Paint may be removed from masonry surfaces to return to the original appearance. The painting of, or the removal of paint, from a masonry surface shall be done only if necessary to preserve deteriorating masonry surfaces and the historic integrity of the structure. To
prevent damage, masonry shall be cleaned by the gentlest means possible. Abrasive cleaning methods, such as sandblasting using sand, shall be avoided.

4. The use of steel, aluminum, manufactured board or vinyl siding as a replacement material for primary walls is discouraged, but may be acceptable if these materials maintain the character of the structure and the original siding shape, pattern, texture and directional orientation. Character defining details and elements such as, but not limited to, window/door trim and detailing, eave brackets, porch columns and railings, and other special elements and details which give the structure its character and appearance, shall be retained when applying steel, aluminum, or vinyl siding. Rear additions, which are often covered with a different siding than the primary structure’s walls, should use a replacement siding that most closely maintains the character of the structure and the original siding shape, pattern, texture and directional orientation. Character defining details should be retained when removing or applying siding materials.

C. Requirements for Windows and Doors

1. Existing windows and doors, their glazing, trim, and the character defining elements shall be retained through repair when reasonably possible.

2. Existing window and door locations shall be retained, not removed, covered or filled in, unless necessary for flood-proofing a structure.

3. Repair of original windows and doors is the preferred option in this historic district. Replacement windows and doors shall be similar in sash design and appearance, maintaining the original size, shape, muntin pattern and size, glazing area and tint, and placement location. Windows and doors on a wall facing a street shall be the primary consideration in review of building permit applications, and shall most closely replicate the originals. Vinyl, vinyl wrapped, or other lower quality windows and doors on walls facing a street shall be discouraged. Windows and doors on rear additions or on walls not facing a street shall maintain the original size, shape, muntin pattern, glazing area and tint, but may be of a different material than the originals (ex.: vinyl wrapped or metal windows may be allowed).

4. Replacement windows having thermal and maintenance reducing qualities may be used, but shall maintain those appearance and character defining elements described above. Ex: laminated glass with a clear low-E coating or double pane windows may be used.
5. New window and door openings shall maintain the building’s façade proportions and rhythms, and shall match the existing window and door design. Where the building code requires egress, larger windows may replace original small windows so long as they are compatible in style with the original windows. Every effort, however, shall be made to place replacement egress windows on secondary or rear elevations.

6. Replacement trim materials shall be similar in appearance, maintaining the original materials’ size, shape, pattern, texture and detailing.

7. Window features and accessories, such as storm windows, screens, awnings, and shutters shall maintain the appearance of the main window and the building’s façade proportions and rhythms.

8. Door features and accessories, such as storm doors, screens, sidelights, and transoms shall maintain the appearance of the main door and the building’s façade proportions and rhythms. Original transoms and sidelights may not be covered or boarded.

D. Requirements for Roofs

1. Roof forms and architectural features such as, but not limited to, dormers, chimneys, overhangs, eaves, eave brackets or lookouts, and fascia, which give the roof its essential character, shall be retained through repair when reasonably possible.

2. Replacement materials shall maintain the original materials’ size, shape, pattern, texture and directional orientation of installation when reasonable possible. If a roof has standard tab asphalt shingles, the same type of replacement shingles should be used. If architectural shingles have been used on a roof, architectural shingles may be used as a replacement, even if this would not have been the original roof style.

E. Requirements for Porches

1. Existing porches and their architectural elements such as, but not limited to railings, columns, brackets and steps shall be retained through repair. Addition of wood epoxy to make small repairs to damaged elements shall be allowed. Wooden porch elements shall be painted.

2. Should one or more of these elements be deteriorated enough to warrant replacement, replacement materials shall maintain the original materials’ size, shape, pattern, texture and directional orientation or installation. Treated wood may be used for replacement of porch elements, but must be painted after being allowed to weather for a period of at least six months, not exceeding 12 months.
F. Requirements for Engineering Systems: Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing

1. Engineering systems and their associated elements such as, but not limited to, air conditioning and heating units, flues, conduits, cables, electrical boxes, meters, ventilators, and lovers shall, when feasible, be placed on the side or rear facades of the structure.

II. Guidelines for Additions to Existing Structures

A. General Objectives

1. Additions should be located on side or rear facades where the character defining elements and visual appearance of the front façade of the structure will not be obscured, damaged or destroyed, when reasonably possible.

2. Additions to existing structures that are visible from the street should maintain and not detract from the appearance and character defining elements of the existing structure, their scale and proportions.

3. Additions should provide consistency and continuity through the use of similar forms, massing, rhythms, details, height, directional orientation of building, element lines and materials.

4. Vertical additions should maintain the established height of the structures along the same street. These additions shall maintain the established rhythms and proportions that are established by the lower portions of the structure and shall maintain the structure’s architectural integrity.

5. If possible, additions should be designed so that they can be removed in the future without damaging the existing building.

B. Building Site Requirements

1. Additions shall maintain the building setbacks from the street and for side yards as defined by the other buildings along the same streets. When the setback pattern varies, the addition shall be maintained between the minimum and maximum setbacks that are defined by the other buildings along the same side of the street, established as follows: (a) Front yard setbacks shall be established by averaging the existing front yards along the street frontage in the same block and on the same side of the street; (b) Side and rear yard setbacks shall be as required by the Zoning Code.
2. Subject to the provisions of Paragraph 3 below, paving within the front yard shall be limited to primary driveways and sidewalks. The surface area of driveways and sidewalks shall not exceed 30% of the front yard lot area. Parking areas shall be located behind the front plane of the building in the side or rear yard or inner courtyards, except as provided for allowable parking lots as described in this section.

3. Allowable parking lots for land uses requiring ten (10) or more spaces may be located in the front yard provided the parking lot is a minimum of 30 feet from the front property/right-of-way line. Parking lots shall be screened from view along the front and side property lines with a perimeter strip containing a combination of medium-to-large canopy (deciduous) trees and evergreen trees, planted three (3) trees per 100 linear feet; plus a barrier feature such as a hedge, berm, fence, wall or combination of such features, with minimum height of three (3) feet. Up to ten percent (10%) of the length of a screen may be interrupted for access to the property, however, at least one driveway access shall be permitted for each development. All plants shall be selected from the Approved Planting List, on file in the Department of Planning and Code Enforcement. Parking lot design and landscaping shall comply with the provisions of the Zoning Code.

4. Addition of landscaping features such as, but not limited to, walls, fencing, lighting and planters shall be consistent with the appearance and general character of those same elements that exist along the same street and neighborhood.

C. Requirements for Building Materials and Elements

1. Building materials shall create a visual consistency and continuity between the existing structure and the addition. This may be achieved, first, through the continued use of materials that are present on the existing structure or, secondly, through the use of different materials that maintain the same scale, proportions, rhythms, and directional orientation as those present on the existing structure.

2. Building elements, their location, and the sight lines that they establish shall be continued to the addition to create a visual consistency and continuity. This may be achieved through maintaining such elements, details and building lines as the established height of windows and doors, the repetition of window glazing patterns, the continuance of the roof forms, eave lines and overhangs, the continuance of special detailing present on the existing structure.

3. Design the foundation height and the eave lines of additions generally to align with those of the existing buildings, unless elevation of a structure is required for flood-
proofing. Interior floor-to-ceiling heights on the front elevation shall not be less than nine (9) feet, with a maximum story height of 12 feet. Additions to front facades shall have the appearance of having no more than two and one-half (2-1/2) stories and be limited to 35 feet in height. Where front setbacks greater than 35 feet are possible, the differential height.

4. For the purposes of this section, “building height” shall be the vertical distance from the grade within 10 feet of a building to the (a) highest point of a flat roof; (b) the dock line of a mansard roof; or (c) the average height between eaves and ridge for gable, hip, and gambrel roofs, as averaged from around the building.

D. Requirements for Roofs

1. New roof features, such as dormers, may be added to the existing roof, if such elements maintain the structure’s established rhythms, scale, proportions, and architectural appearance and character.

2. Roof forms on additions shall maintain the existing structure’s appearance and character through similar roof forms, slope and detailing.

E. Requirements for Porches

1. Enclosure of porches and entries shall maintain the structure’s existing rhythms, scale, proportions, appearance and character.

2. When required to achieve access to the first floor level, handicapped ramps may be installed and shall be constructed so that in the future, the ramp may be removed without significantly altering the original structure.

III. Guidelines for New Construction

A. General Objectives

1. Designs for new construction need not duplicate existing styles within a district, but should draw upon common characteristics of structures in the approximate neighborhood to provide a continuity and consistency. Characteristics, such as, but not limited to, porches, entries, roof slope and form, and window/door styles, maintain the continuity and consistency of new construction within the district.

2. New construction should respect the established area’s scale, proportions, rhythms, and relationships of both principal and accessory structures.
B. Building Site Requirements

1. Keep the orientation of the proposed building’s front elevation to the street consistent with the orientation of existing buildings’ front elevation to the street.

2. New secondary structures, such as detached garages, shall maintain the secondary relationship with the primary structure.

3. Subject to the provisions of Paragraph 4 below, paving within the front yard shall be limited to primary driveways and sidewalks. The surface of driveways and sidewalks shall not exceed 30% of the front yard lot area. Locate new parking areas as unobtrusively as possible behind the front plane of the building in the side or rear yard or inner courtyards, except as provided for allowable parking lots as described in this section.

4. Allowable parking lots for land uses requiring ten (10) or more spaces may be located in the front yard provided the parking lot is a minimum of 30 feet from the front property/right-of-way line and is screened from view along the front and side property lines with a perimeter strip containing a combination of medium-to-large canopy (deciduous) trees and evergreen trees, planted three (3) trees per 100 linear feet; plus a barrier feature such as a hedge, berm, fence, wall or combination of such features, with minimum height of three (3) feet. Up to ten percent (10%) of the length of a screen may be interrupted for access to the property, however, at least one driveway access shall be permitted for each development. All plants shall be selected from the Approved Planting List, on file in the Department of Planning and Code Enforcement. Parking lot design and landscaping shall comply with the provisions of the Zoning Code.

5. Use driveways and alleys to access side and rear parking areas and garages. Attached garages shall not be located on the front façade of a new building unless incorporated into the mass of the building, with the garage doors oriented to the side or rear. “Snout houses” where a garage projects form the front façade shall not be permitted.

6. For new parking areas, use paving material that is compatible with traditional paving materials for driveways in the district. Parking areas and driveways shall be designed in accordance with standards of the Department of Public Works. Acceptable paving materials include pavers, concrete, textured-concrete, aggregate, asphalt, and other paving material approved by the Department of Public works. Gravel shall not be utilized.
7. Existing large trees and other significant landscape features shall be incorporated into places for additions and new construction. Where existing trees and other significant landscape features cannot be retained, new trees and landscape features shall be incorporated into the plans and installed on the site. Outside of parking lot landscape areas, trees used to replace existing trees which must be removed shall have a minimum diameter/caliper of one and one-half inches (1-1/2”) measured six inches (6”) above the ground.

8. Existing historic site features such as retaining walls, gate posts and tree guards shall be retained, replaced in kind, or similar features incorporated in the design.

9. New landscaping features such as, but not limited to, walls, fencing, lighting, and planters, shall be consistent with the general character of those same elements that exist along the same street and approximate neighborhood.

C. Requirements for Building Materials

1. Design the height of the proposed building to be compatible with the height of existing buildings in the School Street Historic District. Minimum setbacks for new construction shall be established by averaging the existing front yards along the street frontage in the same block and on the same side of the street; (b) Side and rear yards shall be as required by the Zoning Code.
   (a) Interior floor-to-ceiling heights on the front elevation shall not be less than nine (9) feet, with a maximum story height of 12 feet.
   (b) Except as provided in the Differential Height/Setback Schedule, new buildings constructed shall have the appearance from the front street line, of having no more than two and one-half (2-1/2) stories, and be limited to 35 feet in overall height.

2. Design the proportion (the ratio of the height to the width) of the proposed building’s front elevation to be compatible with the proportion of existing front elevations in the district.

3. Utilize new windows and doors that are compatible in proportion, shape, position, location, pattern, and size with windows and doors of existing structures in the district. On the facades visible from the front street line, individual window units shall not exceed 48 inches. Compatible groupings of double hung windows are acceptable. The separation between individual windows in these groupings shall not be less than four (4) inches. Use of more than three (3) single window units in a grouping is not appropriate. New windows shall follow the traditional proportion of being taller than they are wide.
4. Keep the roof shape of the proposed building consistent with roof shapes in the
district: gable and hip. Roof pitch shall be consistent with other existing structures in
the district.

5. Keep the predominant material of the proposed building consistent with historic
materials in the district: brick, stone, stucco, and wooden clapboard siding. Use of
synthetic materials is discouraged, however synthetic materials may be substituted
for historic materials if approved on a case by case basis. Synthetic materials shall be
specifically identified and approved on an individual basis by the Department of
Planning and Code Enforcement.

6. Make the scale (the relationship of a building’s mass and details to the human
figure) of the proposed building compatible with the scale of existing structures in
the district.

7. Ensure that the architectural details of the proposed building complement the
architectural details of existing structures in the district.

8. Contemporary construction that does not directly copy from historic buildings in the
district but is compatible with them in height, proportion, roof shape, material,
texture, scale, detail, and color, is strongly encouraged.

9. New single family structures shall maintain the traditional neighborhood scale.

10. New non-single family structures shall (a) include architectural details on the
building facades visible from the street which complement the existing residential
architecture in the district; and (b) shall be divided into smaller modules that are
similar in size and scale to traditional single family houses in the district.

11. New non-single family structures with front building facades of 100 feet or more in
width which are parallel with E. McCarty and Lafayette Streets or within 30 degrees
of being parallel with this street shall incorporate the following design detail into the
front building facades: (a) each module width shall not exceed 20 percent (20%) of
the width of the front façade, and (b) each module shall be off-set from the front
façade a minimum of five percent (5%) of the total width of the façade.

12. For the purposes of this section, “building height” shall be the vertical distance from
the grade within ten (10) feet of the building to the (a) highest point of a flat roof;
(b) the dock line of a mansard roof; or (c) the average height between eaves and
ridge for gable, hip, and gambrel roofs, as averaged from around the building.