

**STANDARDS AND  
GUIDELINES**

**FOR THE**

**NEWPORT LOCAL  
HISTORIC DISTRICT**

**REVISED 4.2016**





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## Foreword



The **Design Guidelines for the Newport Local Historic District** manual is intended to meet several essential needs. Written specifically with property owners, residents, architects and contractors in mind this manual provides the essential guidance for planning projects that are sensitive to the distinctive character of our community's historic district. The application and review procedure can appear daunting to those who are new to it; the goal of this manual is to demystify the process as much as possible.

For Commission members and staff, this manual provides the basis for evaluating proposed changes, aiding in their effort to preserve and protect what makes Newport a special place to live. These guidelines are in place to ensure that consistent procedures and standards are adhered to. In reviewing applications, the Historic District Commission/Historic Preservation Planner considers the property itself, the street context within which it is located, and the special character of the historic neighborhood overall.

The **Introduction** that follows describes in greater detail the purpose and function of the Newport Historic District Commission (NHDC) and outlines the procedures governing application and review of proposed projects within the historic district.

**NOTE:** This manual is not, nor is it intended to be, a comprehensive restoration or rehabilitation manual. Further, this manual does not provide a definitive method for preparing individual applications.



*This manual was written with the primary intent to help property owners plan projects that sustain and preserve the unique character of our city's historic community. These guidelines not only seek to consider individual buildings, but also the neighborhood context – including streets and landscapes – within which they are located.*



*The NHDC seeks to promote responsible change that is sensitive to the special historic character of individual buildings, their surroundings, and neighborhoods.*







## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION





## 1.1 Purpose and Function of Local Historic District Zoning



*Over 50% of Newport is located within the local historic district. That means that chances are pretty good that your property is located within one.*

What is a local historic district? Why does Newport have local historic district zoning? What does it mean for our community? What does it mean for property owners?

The city council passes an ordinance which establishes the Historic District Commission (HDC). The council also selects areas as designated local historic district zones.

A local historic district zone is a special zoning area that is created by a community to...

- ...help save historically significant buildings which define and reflect elements of the City's cultural, social, economic, political and architectural history and to keep the special sense of time and place that exists in some parts of the community.
- ...enhance the traditional qualities and characteristics of the City and create an attractive environment which is conducive to residential, commercial and industrial uses, and tourism.
- ...strengthen the local economy by promoting the use of such districts and outlying properties for the pleasure, education and welfare of the residents of the community.



*The NHDC promotes the preservation of monuments of cultural, social, economic, political and architectural importance, such as the Newport Artillery Company Armory on Newport's Historic Hill.*

When a community adopts historic district zoning, it monitors and guides change in its historic areas. All exterior alterations and new construction within the historic district must be reviewed and approved by the HDC or staff. This review ensures that the historic character of the buildings is maintained when necessary changes are made. The HDC does not require property owners to make changes to their buildings. The commission only reviews changes proposed by the property owner.

## 1.2 Design Review: Acquiring the Certificate of Appropriateness

Historic districts are not created to prevent change. Rather, the intent is to encourage property owners to make changes that are sensitive to the special character of the historic district. The design review process is in place to offer the property owner assistance in planning changes that meet the requirements of the Zoning Code. The Code provides for a process that ensures that property changes are consistent with the spirit and the character of the historic district. In this special



design review process, plans are examined and evaluated before work is begun. Upon approval of the proposed project, the property owner is issued a Certificate of Appropriateness and is therefore allowed to proceed with the project. The following is an enumerated breakdown of the process:



*As long as you are replacing in-kind, that is, using the exact same materials that were already in place, you may repair your existing walkways, driveways, walls, fences or terraces without a hearing. However, if your repair plans involve a change in materials, you must first have it approved by the NHDC.*

1. **Contact the Office of Planning, Zoning, Development and Inspection** to obtain an application and to get information about hearing dates and filing deadlines.
2. **File a complete application**, including the application form, appropriate fees, a detailed written statement describing the proposal, and accurate plans and scaled drawings depicting all proposed alterations (*See the appropriate Documentation Required, on the following page, and, if applicable, the Additional Documentation Required section that accompanies each individual feature in this manual*). To get on the agenda for the next meeting, file your complete application by the third Tuesday of the month.
3. **If your application is complete, it is placed on the NHDC agenda** for review during the next monthly meeting. *If the application is not complete, it cannot be reviewed. Incomplete applications will be returned to the applicant for completion.*
4. **The NHDC members or Staff Preservation Planner will conduct a site visit** . The property owner is not required to be present but often the Staff Preservation Planner will contact the property owner or legally authorized representative before visiting the site.
5. **Attend the NHDC meeting** to answer questions from NHDC members regarding your proposed project.
6. **If the application is approved**, the staff Preservation Planner will issue a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). Failure to adhere to conditions of approval will invalidate the Certificate. If the application is denied, the NHDC will send the applicant a written decision within 45 days explaining its action. No building permit will be issued. The applicant may appeal the decision to the Zoning Board of Review. Contact the Department of Planning, Zoning and Inspections for details.



*Be sure that your application is complete when you submit it to the NHDC. If your application is incomplete, it cannot be reviewed. Submitting a complete application will help ensure a place on the next HDC agenda, which will get your project going!*

## Documentation Required

Your application will be considered for review only if it is complete. Be sure to include all necessary and proper documentation with your application. Certain alterations require additional documentation; this is noted in individual sections of this manual, when applicable. **ALL applications must include ALL of the following items:**





*When a building is no longer suitable or needed for its original use, a new use may be found for it. This firehouse, built in 1887, was successfully converted into domestic living space without compromising the visual integrity of the exterior. There are many examples of converted buildings around Newport, including converted factories, warehouses and even*



*Well-chosen storm windows have minimal visual impact on the original primary windows they are protecting. This example, found on one of Newport's Colonial-Era homes, is a perfect example of a well-fitted and visually harmonious storm window.*

- A completed application form for a Certificate of Appropriateness, signed by the applicant and the property owner, describing existing conditions and the scope of repairs or proposed changes.
- Color or black and white photographs of the building, showing the entire building elevation(s) and closeups of the area where the work will occur. Photos are to be at least 4x6 inches and must be labeled with the street address, compass direction and date. High quality digital photographs are acceptable. Color photocopies may be acceptable if the images reproduce clearly. Photocopied prints and instant (Polaroid) snapshots are not acceptable due to lack of clarity and long-term stability.

### **In Addition to the Above:**

**For all projects: consult individual sections concerning your project for specific documentation instructions.**

- **For minor alterations and construction projects:** the replacement of windows, doors, steps, porches, decks, skylights, roofs, etc., or any new addition smaller than 25% of the square footage of the existing structure required documentation includes the following:
  - Elevations of all sides of new construction at  $\frac{1}{4}'' = 1'$  minimum scale
  - Specifications and drawings of all detailing at  $\frac{1}{2}'' = 1'$  minimum scale
  - Site plans (if considering an addition of less than 25% of the existing structure)
  - Materials list, including manufacturers specifications and product information, specifically noting dimensions, design and finish colors
  - An additional set of the above drawings reduced to  $8\frac{1}{2}'' \times 11''$
  - You may also be asked to submit material samples.

**For major construction projects:** any new addition larger than 25% of the square footage of the existing structure, required documentation includes the following:

- Site plan illustrating the entire property to a scale no smaller than  $1'' = 50'$ , including a footprint of the structure.
- Elevations of all exterior walls/roofs showing existing conditions and proposed changes at  $\frac{1}{4}'' = 1'$  minimum scale
- Details of existing and proposed windows, doors, other details, etc., at a ratio of  $\frac{1}{2}'' = 1'$  minimum scale
- Materials list, including manufacturers specifications and product information, specifically noting dimensions, design and finish colors
- An additional set of the above drawings reduced to  $8\frac{1}{2}'' \times 11''$



- You may also be asked to submit material samples.
- For new construction of a freestanding building, please see the specific documentation required as outlined in Chapter 5: Additions and New Construction.



### 1.3 Exemptions from Review

As outlined in the Historic District Zoning Ordinance, not all projects require a Certificate of Appropriateness and are therefore exempt from the design review process. The property owner should bear in mind, however, that the following suggestions are included to encourage appropriate and sensitive choices. The following listed appurtenant features are generally not reviewed by the NHDC:

*All exterior work to be carried out in the historic district must be reviewed and approved by the NHDC before the project can commence. Some minor projects that do not involve a change in materials or appearance – re-caulking seams or re-pointing masonry, for example – do not require a full hearing, however, the NHDC wants photos documentation of the appearance of your property prior to the minor maintenance work you plan on doing.*

1. **Paint colors, surface preparation or paint composition.** Although the NHDC does not regulate paint color on wood, metal and previously-painted masonry building surfaces, property owners wishing to apply a period paint scheme may seek the assistance of the NHDC in choosing historically appropriate colors and/or surface preparations. See **Section 3.5: Paint and Paint Color** in this manual for more details.
2. **Decorating - holiday or other.**
3. **Normal landscaping** including shrubs, trees, flowers, window flower boxes, and other plantings, as long as historic architectural and/or landscape features are not altered or removed; also, exterior lighting and flags and flag poles, lawn furniture, park benches and birdbaths, as long as historic features are not altered, removed, or obscured.
4. **Repair of any existing walkway, driveway, wall, fence, or terrace** if in the same location and the same materials.
5. **Portable window air conditioning units.**
6. **Temporary structures or signs** used for special events and whose duration will not exceed any guidelines established by the Commission
7. **Reconstruction after disaster.** The NHDC does not review the reconstruction, in the same design, of a building, structure or exterior



*Preservation incentives such as tax credits were designed with a twofold purpose: to help property owners defray the costs of preservation work and to encourage responsible rehabilitation and change.*

architectural feature damaged or destroyed by fire, storm or other disaster, provided such reconstruction is begun within one year and is continued to completion without substantial interruption. Contact the Department of Planning, Zoning and Inspections for more information.

8. **Storm/screen windows and doors.** The goal of any installation of storm/screen windows or doors should be minimal visual impact on the original primary window or door. Frame colors should match those of the window trim.
9. **Ordinary maintenance and repair** of the existing features of a structure or building that does not involve a change in design, materials or outward appearance. However, the NHDC asks that you photo-document the structure (s) or feature(s) you intend to repair and bring them to the Department of Planning, Zoning and Inspections to be put on file.

## 1.4 Preservation Incentives

There is no denying that there is often a high financial cost associated with the responsible preservation, restoration or renovation of your historic building. As of the time of this publication, the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission (RIHPHC) offers the following programs to help you preserve your historic building. Contact the Commission at (401) 222-2678 or visit them at: [www.rihphc.state.ri.us](http://www.rihphc.state.ri.us)

- **The Federal Commercial Properties Tax Credit**  
A 20% federal income tax credit for rehabilitating a commercial, industrial, or residential rental building. To qualify for this tax credit, the building must be listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- **The Rhode Island Historical Preservation Loan Fund**  
Provides low-interest loans to public, non-profit, or private owners. Loan money may be used for needed restoration work or, in some cases, for acquiring and rehabilitating an endangered historic property.
- **The Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission Easement Program**  
Federal income, state and gift tax benefits for donating a preservation easement to protect a historical building, archaeological site, or land.



## 1.5 The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation were first established in 1977 and revised in 1990 as part of the Department of the Interior regulations (36 CFR Pat 67, Historic Preservation Certifications). They pertain to historic buildings of all occupancy and construction types, sizes and materials. The Standards are concerned not only with the historic structures, but also with the landscape features and the building's site and environment, as well as attached, adjacent or related new construction. A basic understanding of each of the following Standards will certainly help you design a good plan for your property. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines may be accessed via the World Wide Web at [www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/tax/rhb](http://www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/tax/rhb)

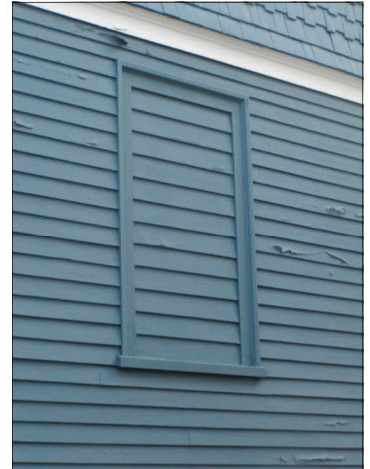
- 1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.***

It is usually best when an historic building is kept in its original use. When an old house is lived in or an old factory is used for manufacturing, fewer changes are needed than would be necessary if a different use were proposed.

If an original use of a building cannot be continued, a new use which required limited changes to the building may be acceptable. Among the factors to be considered when evaluating the feasibility of a new use for an old building is the extent of the physical changes which would be required by the new use.

Local historic district commissions do not regulate the use of buildings, but they do consider physical changes to a historic building which may become necessary when the use is changed. Members of the local commission will need to be aware of the historic function of the building when they evaluate a property owner's proposal to alter a building for a new use.

In planning a project, property owners should keep in mind the extent to which a new use will require physical changes in a building and should use this information in making their decisions.



*Sometimes it is very easy to spot where a window has been filled in. Using other windows as cues, missing windows can often be easily reproduced in-kind and replaced.*





- 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.***

As a general rule, the removal of old materials from a historic building should be avoided. It is the materials and the ways in which they have been crafted and worked which give a building its special identity. When old materials or building features are removed or altered, they are gone for good and cannot be replaced. Even a well-made reproduction of a building component is a poor substitute for the real thing.



*“Gingerbread” vergeboards such as these are typical features of Gothic Revival homes. Usually made of wood, it is important to regularly inspect and maintain features like these to prevent deterioration, making repairs when necessary to conserve historical fabric. Should a character-defining feature need replaced, it should only be replaced in-kind – matching the old exactly – using the same materials and being of the same design, color, texture and other visual qualities.*

When planning a project on a historic building or evaluating a proposal, owners and historic district commission members will want to remember that the goal is the fewest possible changes that will accommodate both the preservation of the building and its intended use.

- 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.***

When planning a rehabilitation project for an old building, it is sometimes tempting to try to make the building look older or “better” than it really is, by using new manufactured parts or, worse yet, pieces of other old buildings.

This temptation should be resisted by property owners who want to do the job right and by historic district commissions who want to protect the historic character of their community.

Following this standard means respecting the special character of each historic building, appreciating each one as a product of its own time and of the people who built it and worked on it over the years. Buildings which date from the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries are expressive of their own times; trying to give such buildings a false “historic” look by the addition of bogus colonial features is a mistake. For the same reason, plain buildings should not be made fancier or more sophisticated.

- 4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.***



The historic buildings in our communities have been used for generations. We are not the first to try to adapt these buildings for our needs. Adaptation of old buildings has been a constant theme of our history.

Sometimes the changes made after a building was constructed are important to the character of the building. These changes may represent important phases of the building's development or express the needs and preferences of later occupants of the building. When these changes are part of a building's historical identity, they should be kept.

At one time, many preservationists thought that when any historic building was restored, it should be returned to the appearance that it had at one specific date and that all later work should be removed. Now, preservationists generally recognize the later changes to a building may have significance in their own right.

**5. *Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.***

The special character of a historic neighborhood or building is a result of its aged and distinctive features and finishes. Such qualities should be respected in planning or evaluating a rehabilitation.

One of the reasons why property owners and historic district commissioners carry out a visual analysis of a building is to determine which features and finishes give the building its particular identity. In planning a project which follows such an analysis, these features and finishes can be protected.

If a brick building, for example, derives its character partly from the pattern, texture and color of the bricks and mortar joints, it would be a mistake to cover this brickwork with stucco. A distinctive finish would be destroyed.

**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.***

This standard explains the rehabilitation rule of thumb: repair rather than replace. The replacement of historic materials, even if undertaken carefully and conscientiously, always diminishes the historic quality of an old building, since that



*This elaborate entryway incorporates many examples of fine craftsmanship which should be carefully maintained and preserved for future generations to enjoy.*



quality comes from the presence of old materials.

With increasing interest in preservation, there are now more talented craftspeople and contractors available who know how to repair historic features. In addition, a variety of building materials are now available to repair old materials, such as modern epoxies which can consolidate wood. The possibility of repair should always be investigated thoroughly before replacement of historic materials is considered.



*Vinyl siding dramatically affects the appearance of historic buildings, and in most cases, vinyl siding virtually destroys all visual integrity. In this extreme case of irresponsibly applied vinyl siding, the integrity of this Mansard-style roof – which, when intact, is almost invariably clad in asphalt or slate shingles – is completely ruined.*

Property owners and historic district commissioners also need to be cautious before assuming that wholesale replacement is necessary. If several clapboards on an exterior wall, for example, are damaged beyond repair, it should not be assumed that the entire wall of clapboards needs replacement. Similarly, if a historic window must be replaced because it is damaged or missing, this does not automatically mean that all the windows in the building should be replaced.

Property owners will be pleased to note that the rule of “repair rather than replace” is not only good preservation, but it often results in a lower cost as well. When damage to an important feature of an old building requires that the feature be replaced, the new work should match the old as closely as possible. *Standard 6 commentary continues on the next page.*

If a feature is missing and requires replacement, special care is needed to avoid guesswork about the appearance of the feature. The replacement of a missing part of a building should come from real evidence about how that part actually looked - not from a guess or assumption.

The evidence for a new part can be documentary, that is, a description in words of the appearance of the feature by someone who built it, or knew it, or saw it in place. Or the evidence can be physical, meaning that the building itself provided the evidence for the replacement - for example, when a “ghost” in old paint reveals that cornice brackets once existed on a house. Or the evidence can be pictorial; an old photograph of a building can provide very useful guidance in replacing features. Property owners planning a rehab and historic district commissioners evaluating their plans for replacement of old features find it very useful to examine old photos for evidence about a building’s appearance. Many historical societies have such collections; the Rhode Island Historical Society’s collection is the largest and most comprehensive in our state, and many local groups have fine collections also.



**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.**

Respect for the historic materials in an old building requires that special care be taken when they are cleaned. Harsh cleaning methods can destroy historic materials.

Sandblasting of brickwork changes its appearance and, even more important, it erodes the surface of the brick and increases the chance that water damage will occur. Once brick has been sandblasted the damage is irreversible.

Harsh abrasives should be just as carefully avoided for wood surfaces - sandblasting, rotary sanding disks, and rotary wire strippers should not be used on historic buildings. They can shred its surface, and leave pits or circular depressions in the wood.

There are effective yet gentle means of cleaning historic buildings, using water or a combination of water and carefully selected chemicals. Planning a cleaning project can be a complex process, and historic district commissions will need to consult an expert when evaluating such a project if none of the commission members have a solid background in such things. The Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission's architects are able to assist.

**8. Significant archaeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.**

Archaeological sites are the underground evidence of the people who lived here before us. Rhode Island is especially fortunate in the richness of our archaeological record. Our state has Native American sites which may be up to thousands of years old; sites which document the first contact between Native Americans and white settlers; sites which explain the early settlement and later development of Rhode Island as an agricultural, maritime and industrial center.

Before ground is broken for new construction or an addition to an existing building, the area should be examined by a trained archaeologist to see if an archaeological site might be located there.



*Paint should be removed from surfaces in the gentlest means possible to avoid damaging the historic material. Several stories above the ground, this man carefully removes paint from the exterior of Trinity Church by hand scraping.*



*Archaeological resources can reveal a great deal about life in the past. If your project may involve disturbing potential archaeological evidence, you should have your property examined by a trained archaeologist.*



In most cases, there will be no archaeological material, but if there is, it would be disturbed when the ground is broken. And once a site has been churned up, its archaeological value is destroyed. The information about our past that it contained will be lost forever. If an archaeological site is found, this does not mean that the proposed work cannot be done. The “mitigation measures” referred to in this standard mean that sometimes the site can be avoided during work or sometimes it will be excavated before construction.

If you are planning or evaluating a project that involves a ground disturbance, The Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission archaeologists can help you determine the likelihood of finding an archaeological site at your project.

- 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.***

New work on an old building (such as an addition to a historic house) or new construction nearby (such as the building of a garage for an old house) should not be allowed to damage this historic building itself. This standard acknowledges that additions and new construction are sometimes necessary, but it also makes clear the principle that new work should not destroy old work.

Additions and new construction in a historic area represent a special challenge for property owners and historic district commission members. The ideal is new work which respects the quality of the old building.

There are two goals for new work. It should both be different from the old and yet compatible with the old.

New work should be clearly differentiated from the old building. This principle reflects the conviction that each generation, including our own, can produce quality buildings that reflect its time.

On the other hand, modern additions and construction must respect the historic character of the nearby buildings and the neighborhood. Compatibility between old and new is evaluated by examining the mass, size, scale and featured of both old and new.



**10. *New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.***

This standard describes the principle of “reversibility.” When planning changes and additions to historic buildings, property owners should be guided by the goal of reversibility - when faced with a choice about how to make a needed change we should opt for the most reversible method - the way of making change which, if later removed, would leave the historic building least damaged.

Even if the addition is never removed, this standard suggests that additions should not overwhelm the original historic building. After construction, it should still be possible to see the size and shape of the original historic building.

#### **1.6 Frequently Asked Questions (F.A.Q.)**

This section attempts to answer the most commonly asked questions about project planning, appropriateness, the design review process, historic preservation tax incentives, etc.

**Q: What kind of work is subject to review by the HDC?**

A: Any project that involves making alterations to a property located in the historic districts must be reviewed before the project commences. This means physical alterations to the exterior of a building or property improvements, such as adding or changing a fence or wall. Also, plans for new additions, new construction, relocation and demolition also must be reviewed by the HDC.

**Q: How do I know if my property is located within a historic district?**

A: Over 50% of Newport is part of a historic district, so chances are that your property falls within one! Please see Chapter 2, An Introduction to Newport’s Local Historic Districts, which includes maps marking the boundaries of the districts. If you are still unsure whether or not your property is located within the historic district, please contact the City Department of Planning, Zoning, Development and Inspection.

**Q: What should I think about when I consider making changes to my historic home?**

A: When considering making changes to your property, try to retain as much of the





original materials, detail, and design as possible. Avoid the addition of modern elements, which would diminish the features that define the historic character of the structure. Avoid removing or altering any historic material or significant architectural features. Rehabilitation work should not destroy the distinguishing character of the property or its environment. Also remember that your home, while historic in and of itself, is located within a larger historic district which has a character of its own. Part of the goal of the HDC is to preserve districts on a whole.

**Q: Can I paint my house any color I want? Do I have to go through design review if I'm painting my house a new color?**

A: You may paint your house any color of your choice. Paint color is not reviewed by the HDC. If, however, you are interested in choosing an historically appropriate paint scheme and are unsure of where to turn, the HDC will assist you in choosing appropriate colors. Also, see **Section 3.5: Paint and Paint Color** in this manual for more details.

**Q: Do I need permission for ordinary maintenance to my house?**

A: Yes and no. Technically, you do not need permission to do ordinary maintenance work on your house. As long as the materials and design are not changed, you do not need permission to paint, make routine repairs, or replace materials in-kind (replacing cedar shingles with cedar shingles, wood siding with the same type of wood siding, etc.). Maintenance in-kind - even when that means using historically inappropriate materials - is acceptable. While this sort of work does not warrant a hearing, the NHDC asks that you photo-document the structure(s) or feature(s) you intend to repair prior to beginning your work and bring them to the City Department of Planning, Zoning, Development and Inspection to be put on file.

**Q: Am I required to make changes to my building?**

A: No. Property owners in the local historic district are not required to make changes to their buildings. The commission only reviews changes proposed by the property owner.

**Q: Must I restore my house to its original condition?**

A: No. Your property may remain as it is and all materials may be replaced in-kind. For example, if your roof is currently clad in asphalt shingles, you may replace them with asphalt shingles of any color when it comes time to re-roof. Of course, restoring your property to its original or historical appearance is always encouraged, but





maintenance in-kind - even when that means using historically inappropriate materials - is acceptable.

**Q: Can I remodel the interior or put up wallpaper without HDC review and Certificate of Approval?**

A: The HDC has no jurisdiction within the interior of historic buildings, only the exterior. The only instance where interior changes may need review by the HDC is when interior changes affect the exterior appearance of the building. If you are unsure whether your interior project may affect the exterior of your building, check with the City Department of Planning, Zoning, Development and Inspection.

**Q: What's all this I keep hearing about tax benefits?**

A: Besides the personal satisfaction that preserving your historic property brings, there may be monetary benefits in it for you as well! Please see **Chapter 1.4** for more information about **Preservation Incentives**.

**Q: Does the Historic District Commission regulate my yard?**

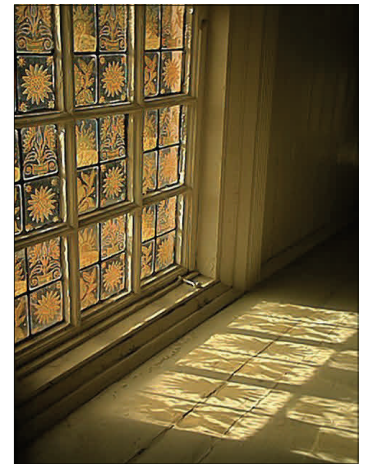
A: Yes and no. The HDC does not regulate normal landscaping. However, something significant such as the removal of a mature tree requires HDC review as such landscape features contribute greatly to the context of the historic district and help to form streetscapes. Also, major excavation projects may need to be reviewed by the HDC. Please see **Chapter 4.1: Site Features and Plantings** for specifics. If you still have questions, please contact the City Department of Planning, Zoning, Development and Inspection.

**Q: Can I put vinyl or aluminum siding on my house?**

A: No. For a variety of reasons, these siding materials are not appropriate for buildings located within the historic districts. Please see **3.7: Exterior Walls** for a more detailed discussion of the reasons why vinyl and aluminum siding are not appropriate materials for historic buildings.

**Q: Can I install vinyl or vinyl-clad replacement windows in my historic building?**

A: No. Again, for a variety of reasons, these window materials are not appropriate for historic buildings. An existing window, when properly repaired and fitted with a storm sash, is just as energy efficient as a new double-glazed unit. Repair of old windows is also far more cost effective than purchasing and installing modern



*The HDC has no power to review changes made to the interior of your home. However, if a change made to the interior affects the exterior's appearance, review is then necessary.*



*You should avoid disturbing mature trees and other plantings whenever possible. Trees are an integral part of the landscape and contribute to the overall "look and feel" of an individual site as well as its neighborhood.*



*This photo shows a case where both vinyl siding and inappropriate replacement windows have compromised the integrity of a building's historic character.*

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replacement windows. Most importantly, the repair of existing windows helps to preserve the historic fabric and therefore, the house maintains a higher degree of historical integrity. Please see **3.8: Windows and Doors** for a more detailed discussion of the reasons why aluminum, vinyl and vinyl-clad windows are not appropriate options for buildings located in the historic districts.

**Q: My neighbor has vinyl siding! Why can't I put it on my house, too? That seems unfair.**

A: It is true that there are several instances of vinyl siding found in Newport's local historic district. However, it is usually the case that the siding was installed prior to the neighborhood's inclusion into the historic district. No new proposals for synthetic siding will be approved.

**Q: Can I put an addition on my historic property?**

A: Yes, usually you can! The HDC encourages people to meet with them early in the design process to get professional feedback and input on the proposed design. The addition should be compatible with your house and appropriate for your streetscape. Additions also must comply with the zoning ordinance and receive building permits. Please see Chapter 5 on Additions to Historic Buildings for specifics. If you still have questions, please contact the City Department of Planning, Zoning, Development and Inspection.

**Q: I know that I am required to get an HDC Certificate of Approval to make changes to my historic house, but I am worried that the procedure will cause a significant delay. Will I be waiting months and months for the HDC to reach a decision?**

A: No. The City of Newport requires the HDC to render a decision within 45 days from the date the complete application is filed. Failure to make a decision by the end of this 45-day period constitutes approval unless an extension is mutually agreed upon by the applicant and the HDC. It should be said that this rule applies only to HDC Certificates of Approval only; other required City permits may take longer to acquire.



Q: I feel as though I did not have a chance to present my case adequately and that the decision made by the HDC was erroneous as a result. Or, after thoroughly reading the section(s) regarding my project, I feel that the HDC has made a decision contrary to its own guidelines. Is there anything that I can do to get a second chance to be heard?

A: If you feel as though you were not given an adequate chance to present your case, or if you think that a procedural error has occurred, you may appeal your case to the Zoning Board. In this case, contact the City Department of Planning, Zoning, Development and Inspection.



*It is part of the HDC's job to see that everyone receives a fair chance to present their proposals at their hearing.*



CHAPTER 2:  
**NEWPORT  
HISTORIC  
DISTRICT  
BACKGROUND**



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Approximately 55% of the physical area of Newport is under jurisdiction of the Historic District Commission. Unlike some cities, Newport does not have distinct individual districts managed by separate commissions. Instead, the HDC considers all of the applications within all historic districts collectively. Within the historic district Newport does, however, have five distinct areas with different histories and trajectories of architectural development. These areas include the Point, the Historic Hill, the Kay-Catherine neighborhood, Bellevue Avenue (including Ochre Point and the Cliffs) and the Ocean Drive.

Some familiarity with the diversity of architectural styles and the materials characterizing those styles is useful to the applicant. Although your application doesn't have to "copy" elements from nearby houses, it does have to be *contextual*- it should try to be compatible with what surrounds it. Before contemplating additions or new construction, potential applicants are encouraged to walk around their neighborhood, using existing architecture as a guide and an inspiration for their own designs.

This chapter reviews briefly the history of the five major components of the Newport Historic District. It is by no means meant to be comprehensive or all-inclusive. Applicants who can argue that the massing, style, and materials proposed for their projects are compatible with the historical and architectural development of their neighborhoods are better prepared than applicants who cannot make those arguments.

**The Point Neighborhood.** Bounded roughly by the harbor front on the west, the Gateway Center on the south, America's Cup Avenue on the east, and Van Zandt Avenue on the north, the Point neighborhood is one of Newport's oldest neighborhoods. With the exception of Kingston Avenue in Kerry Hill, the Point is the only example of a planned development on a grid pattern. Laid out by members of the Society of Friends in the early 1760s, the Point has a street pattern including north-south streets named by numbers (First Street was renamed Washington Street in the early nineteenth century) and east-west streets named for trees.

For more than two centuries Newport's artisans, small-scale merchants and fishermen all called the Point home. Consequently, the architecture is relatively modest in scale. With some exceptions, the houses of the Point are vernacular in nature- they were built by builders and house wrights, not formally designed by architects. Houses were constructed on lots measuring 50 feet wide on the street and 100 feet deep. Consequently they tended to have a relatively modest street presence, with sequences of additions made to the rears of structures in linear patterns.

Like most neighborhoods, the Point has no single defining architectural style. You can walk down a street and find examples from the late 17th century through the early 20th century, often juxtaposed next to one another. Thus when you are planning a project in this neighborhood, look to the relatively subtle massing of the structures for some inspiration. Two-story additions are relatively rare; one-story gabled or flat-roofed additions are much more common. Covered porches across the front of the first floor are common; porches across the second floor and the first floor, as well as roof decks, are not (nor are they appropriate). For all projects in this neighborhood, keep in mind the relatively modest scale of the neighborhood and plan your project accordingly. Keep in mind too that you will need to consider architectural elements appropriate to the period of your house. A Palladian window might look appropriate on a high-style Georgian house, but not on a Gothic revival property.

**The Historic Hill.** Like the Point, the Historic Hill contains a diversity of architectural styles. Bounded by Thames Street on the west, Memorial Boulevard on the south Bellevue Avenue on the east and Touro Street on the north, this is one of Newport's most urban neighborhoods. Houses tend to be located directly on the street, occasionally forming an unbroken street front. This neighborhood also contains some of Newport's exceptional public spaces, especially Touro Park and the Old Stone Mill.



The Point and Hill are similar in that they evolved organically over time. When you walk down a street in the neighborhood, you are seeing a long-running process of construction, demolition, and new construction that evolved over more than three centuries. Consequently, it is difficult to make prescriptions about a prevailing style of architecture. Each style has its own important character defining features that must be respected when contemplating additions or changes. One consistent aspect, in addition to the relatively modest scale of buildings, is the reliance on materials of the highest quality. A second aspect of great importance is the relatively dense urban fabric of the neighborhood. Again this is a matter of contextuality. A 3,500-square foot house on a lot in the Hill would likely overwhelm neighboring properties and the surrounding streetscape. Conversely, the same house might actually seem small in portions of a neighborhood like Ocean Drive (see below).

**Kay-Catherine.** Kay-Catherine has a completely different feeling from the previous two neighborhoods, a difference that is attributable largely to its more recent historical development. From the time of Newport's establishment in 1639 until the mid-nineteenth century, this was a relatively outlying district characterized by pasture and small farms. Newport's reinvention of itself as a summer resort in the 1840s and 1850s changed this landscape completely.

The creation of Kay Street from the site of a former ropewalk, and the street's gradual extension north created the opportunity to create a network of streets running from Kay Street east to Memorial Boulevard (once Bath Road). Along this crisscrossing (but not gridlike) pattern of streets developers of the time created more substantial estates of one to five acres, suitable for hotels, boarding houses and summer homes. The end of the Civil War in 1865 marked the acceleration of construction in the Kay-Catherine neighborhood. Wood-framed "villas" in a rich diversity of styles set the architectural tone for the day. The architectural fabric of this portion of the district is eclectic encompassing a wide-range of revival styles. The so-called "stick" style, for which Newport is famous, was employed by eminent architects like Richard Morris Hunt and local luminaries like Dudley Newton. BelAir, an estate set on the corner of Old Beach Road and Catherine Street, has distinct elements of the Flemish revival; other houses have elements of Greek revival, Tuscan revival, and even onion domes borrowed from travelogues on Eastern architecture. Later infill construction, largely of Colonial revival style, respected this pattern and provided an appropriate, well-detailed counterpoint to these earlier efforts.

Houses in the Kay-Catherine neighborhood share some important characteristics. They tend to date from approximately 1850-1950. Compared with the Point and the Historic Hill, houses are set on roomy, well-landscaped lots. Even houses of more recent vintage are often set on the remnant of former estates, and thus display elements of designed, picturesque landscapes. Applications contemplating projects in Kay-Catherine must be particularly cognizant the conjunction of house and landscape to create designs that respect both elements of the historic district.

### **Bellevue and Ocean Drive**

Until the middle of the nineteenth century, Newport more or less stopped at what is now the busy intersection of Bellevue Avenue of Bellevue and Memorial Boulevard. A little-used dirt land ran from this intersection south toward what is now Ledge Road and the ocean.. Late nineteenth century developers like Alfred Smith seized the opportunity to create a showcase avenue lined with prominent estates. This pattern spread east to Ochre Point and eventually south along abandoned farmland to form Ocean Drive.

The scale of houses along Bellevue Avenue and Ocean Drive is admittedly monumental. But there is more than the matter of size. The houses of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century were building exacting and meticulous standard of craft and skill not easily duplicated in the twenty first century. Nonetheless the protection of the qualities that make this area special is of great concern to the HDC and to the great variety of stakeholders in this portion of the district.

Simply proposing a massive new house on a grand scale is not adequate. Although the HDC certainly does not expect everyone to building to the scale of the Vanderbilts



and Berwinds, it does require a very high level of design, craft, and material for projects in this portion of the district. Synthetic materials (asphalt roofing shingles or cast stone) are not good substitutes for true materials like wood or stone. Review for new construction can be especially detailed because of the potential effects of major changes or new construction on nationally significant architectural landmarks. As with all portions of the Historic District, applicants are encouraged to seek thoughtful professional advice from architects who are trained in working within historic districts.

### **What Applicants Can Do to Prepare Themselves**

Applicants are encouraged to educate themselves as completely as they can about the age of their house, its architectural style or styles, and its character-defining features (see Chapters 3 and 4). Virginia and Lee McAlester's *Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf) remains an essential practical guide to the vagaries of architectural style and detail. The book is especially good on separate elements like window patterns, porch posts, and other ornamental elements appropriate for specific styles of houses. Those who wish to read more about the ways in which architectural style in Newport evolved could consult two additional books that are widely available: *The Architectural Heritage of Newport, Rhode Island, 1640-1915* by Antoinette F. and Vincent J. Scully, Jr. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press) and *The Early Architecture and Landscape of the Narragansett Basin* by Myron O. Stachiw (Vernacular Architecture Forum).

Finally, as noted above applications are strongly advised to see professional help in conceiving of and preparing their applications. Newport's architectural heritage is one of world-class quality. Although popular culture exults in the sense of "do-it-yourself", exterior change or new construction in a district in which the world's most renowned architects have practices is not something to be undertaken lightly. Applicants who are knowledgeable about their house and neighborhood and armed with appropriate plans will find the HDC process more satisfying than those who have not considered the compatibility of their project with the house and the neighborhood.







CHAPTER 3:  
**CHANGES  
TO THE  
BUILDING  
EXTERIOR**





## 3.1 General Guidelines and Definitions



*A regular maintenance program has kept this unique stone home in top shape though the years. Inspect regularly for cracks, settlement, vegetation, moisture damage, deteriorating mortar, and loose or missing masonry units.*

Proper, regular maintenance is encouraged for all structures in a local historic district; indeed, proper maintenance is the key to extending the longevity of your historic building. All exterior repairs, no matter how minor, are subject to review and require a Certificate of Appropriateness from the NHDC, regardless of whether or not a building permit is required. Repairs ordered by another regulatory agency (e.g. repairs ordered by the Department of Inspection to correct housing code violations) are also subject to review.

As a general rule, deteriorated architectural elements or features should be repaired rather than replaced whenever possible. Repair is often more cost effective than replacing an entire feature, and this approach also helps to conserve the original historical fabric.

When an architectural feature is deteriorated beyond repair, replacement is necessary. In such a case, the replacement feature should match the existing as closely as possible in materials, dimensions, design, color, texture and other visual qualities. Replacement in-kind of inappropriate features (such as asphalt shingles) is permitted, but property owners are certainly encouraged to seek more appropriate solutions.

In some cases, an architectural feature that was formerly an integral part of a structure is missing or has been replaced with an inappropriate replacement feature. Restoration of missing historic features or of original or historical conditions is encouraged, but should be substantiated by documentation (drawings, plans, historical photographs) or physical evidence. Where existing features are not appropriate to the historic structure and documentation exists as to the original condition, restoration is encouraged and permitted, though not required.

### Definitions

#### Repair

Work that remedies damage or deterioration of a structure or its appurtenances, which will involve no change in materials, dimensions, design, configuration, texture or visual appearance.

#### In-kind Replacement

Replacement of an architectural feature, damaged or deteriorated beyond repair, where the new feature will match the feature being replaced in design, materials, dimensions, configuration, texture and visual appearance. (*Replacement features*

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which will differ from the existing shall be reviewed by the NHDC in design, materials, dimensions, configuration, texture and other visual qualities shall be reviewed by the NHDC as an alteration. Please see the appropriate section that relates to your project.)



### Restoration

Re-creating an original architectural element with like-kind materials so that it closely resembles the appearance it had at some previous point in time, based on historical, documentary, physical or pictorial evidence.

## 3.2 Wood

Because of its availability and versatility, wood was the most commonly used building material in early Newport. Wooden clapboards, flush siding, board and batten, or textured siding (patterned wooden shingles) were applied to the exterior. Depending on the styles of the era and the taste and the financial resources of the owner, decorative trims and details were also often added. For example, decorative wooden moldings, brackets, pediments, balustrades, and columns embellish many of Newport's historic buildings.

Even in commercial or residential buildings constructed or clad in masonry, wooden details such as trim, sashes, and doors are typical. Porches, fences, and storefronts were often constructed of wood as well.

### Things to Consider As You Plan

#### Maintenance and Preservation Strategies:

- A regular inspection and maintenance program involving caulking and sealing, cleaning, and painting will help to keep problems with wooden features and surfaces manageable.
- Wooden surfaces and features on a building should be maintained and repaired in a manner that enhances their inherent qualities and maintains as much of their original material and character as possible.
- Wood features should not be stripped of paint to bare wood if they were painted historically; paint protects the surface from deterioration due to moisture and light. If a wooden feature or surface remains damp for extended periods of time, the possibility of mildew, fungal rot, or insect infestation increases dramatically.
- Wooden elements such as siding and trim should be repaired whenever possible.
- Flexible sealants and caulking protect wooden joinery from moisture penetration as the wood shrinks and swells.



*Wooden clapboards are the most common exterior treatment on Colonial-Era homes in Newport. With proper care and maintenance, wooden clapboards can last for generations.*



*Wooden features such as this exquisitely detailed carved shell motif should be carefully maintained and preserved. Such skilled craftsmanship like this is very rare today.*





## Replacement:



*This wooden fencing, although clearly modern, is harmonious with its surroundings in its neighborhood, and should be properly maintained.*



*Modern siding stripped away to reveal older wooden clapboards. Depending on their condition, the newly-uncovered clapboards might be sound enough to be refinished and repainted, restoring this home to how it looked at one time in the past.*



*Wood is the most common material adorning exterior walls.*

- Selective in-kind replacement of deteriorated portions is encouraged when necessary. Wooden trim elements such as corner boards, brackets, belt courses, door surrounds, moldings and other decorative features should likewise be repaired or replaced to match. Using decay-resistant wood species for replacement of deteriorated wooden elements and surfaces may prevent future deterioration. The application of wood preservatives or the use of pressure-treated wood (wood chemically treated with preservatives during manufacture) can also extend the life of wooden elements and surfaces. However, some pressure-treated wood must be allowed to weather for six to twelve months before it is primed and painted. New wood should have a moisture content of less than 20% before installation and finishing to minimize the chances of uneven shrinkage, warping, splitting, checking or failure of finishes.

### A Note about the application of Artificial Siding:

- Resurfacing a wooden building with synthetic siding materials, such as aluminum, vinyl, asbestos, asphalt, or other synthetic materials is usually a shortsighted solution. In fact, they may hide signs of damage or deterioration, preventing early detection and repair. At their best, synthetic sidings conceal the historic fabric of a building, and at their worst, they remove or destroy the historic materials and the craftsmanship that reflect America's cultural heritage and allow for new rot to go undetected. Because the application of synthetic sidings does grave damage to the character of most historic buildings, it is not appropriate in the historic districts.
- The removal of existing artificial siding material and restoration of original siding and details, while not required, is certainly encouraged.

## 3.2 Wood: Guidelines

1. Retain and preserve wooden features that contribute to the overall historic character of a building and a site, including such functional and decorative elements as siding, shingles, cornices, architraves, brackets, pediments, columns, balustrades, and architectural trim.
2. Protect and maintain wooden surfaces and features through appropriate methods:
  - A. Inspect regularly for signs of moisture damage, mildew, and fungal or insect infestation.



- B. Provide adequate drainage to prevent water from standing on flat, horizontal surfaces and collecting on decorative elements.
- C. Keep wooden joints properly sealed or caulked to prevent moisture infiltration.
- D. Treat traditionally unpainted, exposed wooden features with chemical preservatives to prevent or slow their decay and deterioration.
- E. Retain protective surface coatings, such as paint, to prevent damage from ultraviolet light and moisture.
- F. Clean painted surfaces regularly by the gentlest means possible, and repaint them only when the paint film is damaged or deteriorated.



*A low wall constructed of granite with wooden gates provides privacy*

3. Repair historic wooden features using recognized preservation methods for patching, consolidating, splicing, and reinforcing.
4. If replacement of a deteriorated detail or element of a wooden feature is necessary, replace only the deteriorated detail or element rather than the entire feature. Match the original detail or element in design, dimension, texture, and material. Consider compatible substitute materials only if using the original material is not technically feasible.
5. If replacement of an entire wooden feature is necessary, replace it in kind, matching the original in design, dimension, detail, material, and texture. Consider compatible substitute materials only if using the original material is not technically feasible.
6. If a wooden feature is completely missing, replace it with a new feature based on accurate documentation of the original feature or a new design compatible in scale, size, material, texture, and color with the historic building and district.
7. It is not appropriate to clean wooden features and surfaces with destructive methods such as sandblasting, power washing, and using propane or butane torches. Clean using gentle methods such as low-pressure washing with detergents and natural bristle brushes. Chemical strippers can be used only if gentler methods are ineffective.
8. It is not appropriate to strip historically painted surfaces down to bare wood and apply clear stains or finishes to create a natural wood appearance.
9. It is not appropriate to replace painted wooden siding that is sound with new siding to achieve a uniformly smooth wooden surface.



*Paint removal in progress at a home on Historic Hill. Only remove paint until you come to the first sound layer. Avoid taking off too many layers. Stripping a feature to bare wood destroys its record of historical paint schemes.*



*A large late Victorian Era home with unique brickwork patterns, now converted into a funeral home.*

10. It is not appropriate to replace or cover wooden siding, trim, or window sashes with contemporary substitute materials such as aluminum, masonite, vinyl, or other synthetic, non-historic material.
11. It is not appropriate to introduce wooden features or details to a historic building in an attempt to create a false historical appearance.

### 3.3 Masonry

Site features as well as building elements, surfaces, and details executed in masonry materials contribute to the character of Newport Historic Districts. A variety of historic masonry materials, such as brick, limestone, granite, stucco, terra-cotta, slate, concrete, cement block, and clay tile, are employed for a range of district features, including sidewalks, driveways, steps, walls, roofs, foundations, parapets, and cornices.

A few clay tile roofs and a number of slate roofs, occasionally embellished by patterns created through variations in color and shape, distinguish some of our historic buildings. Stone or brick foundations are quite common in the districts. Although clapboard siding is more typical in residential districts, some brick and stone are also found there. Original granite curbing and patterned brick sidewalks contribute to the character of some district streets as well.

#### Things to Consider As You Plan

Maintenance and Preservation Strategies:

- Masonry surfaces require minimal maintenance and are known for their durability. They develop the patina of age over time and should be cleaned only when heavy soiling or stains occur.
- Usually, gentle cleaning using a low-pressure water wash with detergent and the scrubbing action of a natural bristle brush will accomplish the task. Occasionally, a chemical masonry cleaner may be necessary. In that case it is important to select a chemical cleaner that is appropriate for the specific masonry material, to test the solution on an inconspicuous sample area in advance, to follow recommended application procedures, and to neutralize and rinse the surface thoroughly to prevent any further chemical reaction.
- The use of abrasive methods such as sandblasting or power washing is destructive to historic masonry surfaces and not appropriate.
- The painting of unpainted masonry surfaces is not considered appropriate because it conceals the inherent color and texture and initiates a continuing cycle of paint maintenance. However, the repainting of previously painted



*It is also important to maintain your chimneys. Chimneys are often prominent features of historic homes in Newport, and great care should be taken to ensure they last for hundreds more years. This unique chimney is on a colonial-era home located on The Point.*





masonry is encouraged over attempts to remove the paint films chemically or abrasively.

- Moisture penetration, with subsequent damage to a masonry wall, is often the result of open or deteriorated mortar joints. The wall can be repaired through skillful repointing of the joints with new mortar. Before repointing, any loose or deteriorated mortar must be removed with hand tools, taking care not to chip or damage the surrounding masonry. In a proper repointing, the new mortar will match the visual and physical properties of the original mortar, including its strength. Mortar high in portland cement content exceeds the strength of historic brickwork and will deteriorate it. The new mortar joint should match the original in width and profile. Moisture damage may also cause a stucco coating to separate from its masonry backing. To repair it, any loose or deteriorated stucco should be removed, and the area should then be patched with new stucco to match the original in composition, texture, color, and strength.

Replacement:

- If masonry units themselves are damaged or missing, replacement units should match the original as closely as possible in design, material, dimension, color, texture, and detail. Given the selection of brick and stone units available today, replacement in kind is generally not an issue. Consequently, substitutions of materials or masonry systems, such as concrete units for brick or exterior insulation systems for traditional stucco, are not appropriate.
- Beyond the individual units, any bond pattern or detailing of the original feature should be duplicated.

### 3.3 Masonry Guidelines

1. Retain and preserve masonry features that contribute to the overall historic character of a building and a site, including walls, foundations, roofing materials, chimneys, cornices, quoins, steps, buttresses, piers, columns, lintels, arches, and sills.
2. Protect and maintain historic masonry materials, such as brick, terracotta, limestone, granite, stucco, slate, concrete, cement block, and clay tile, and their distinctive construction features, including bond patterns, corbels, water tables, and unpainted surfaces.
3. Protect and maintain historic masonry surfaces and features through appropriate methods:
  - Inspect surfaces and features regularly for signs of moisture damage,



- vegetation, structural cracks or settlement, deteriorated mortar, and loose or missing masonry units.
- Provide adequate drainage to prevent water from standing on flat, horizontal surfaces, collecting on decorative elements or along foundations and piers, and rising through capillary action.
  - Clean masonry only when necessary to remove heavy soiling or prevent deterioration. Use the gentlest means possible.
  - Repaint painted masonry surfaces when needed.
4. Repair historic masonry surfaces and features using recognized preservation methods for piecing-in, consolidating, or patching damaged or deteriorated masonry. It is not appropriate to apply a waterproof coating to exposed masonry rather than repair it.
  5. Repoint masonry mortar joints if the mortar is cracked, crumbling, or missing or if damp walls or damaged plaster indicate moisture penetration. Before repointing, carefully remove deteriorated mortar using hand tools. Replace the mortar with new mortar that duplicates the original in strength, color, texture, and composition. Match the original mortar joints in width and profile.
  6. If replacement of a deteriorated detail, module, or element of a masonry surface or feature is necessary, replace only the deteriorated portion in kind rather than the entire surface or feature. Consider compatible substitute materials only if using the original material is not technically feasible.
  7. If replacement of a large masonry surface or entire feature is necessary, replace it in kind, matching the original in design, detail, dimension, color, pattern, texture, and material. Consider compatible substitute materials only if using the original material is not technically feasible.
  8. If a masonry feature is completely missing, replace it with a new feature based on accurate documentation of the original feature or a new design compatible with the scale, size, material, and color of the historic building and district.
  9. Test any cleaning technique, including chemical solutions, on an inconspicuous sample area well in advance of the proposed cleaning to evaluate its effects. It is not appropriate to clean masonry features and surfaces with destructive methods, including sandblasting and power

washing.

10. Repaint historically painted masonry surfaces in colors that are appropriate to the historic material, building, and district. It is not appropriate to paint unpainted masonry surfaces that were not painted historically.



### 3.4 Architectural Metals

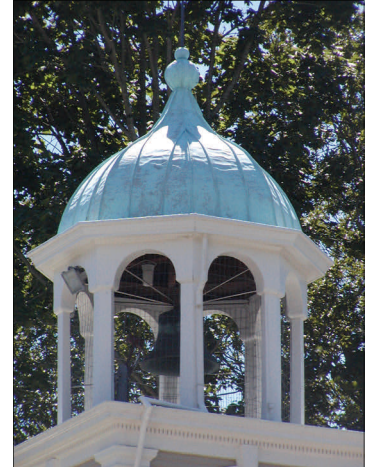
A variety of architectural metals are employed in the detailing and the surfacing of buildings, street elements, and site features in the historic districts. Architectural metals are commonly used for numerous roofing and guttering applications, including roofing, flashing, gutters, downspouts, finials, cornices, copings, and crestings. Beyond those building features, other architectural elements often crafted or detailed in metal include storm doors and windows, vents and grates, casement windows and industrial sash, railings, storefronts, hardware, and trim work. Architectural metals also appear throughout the districts in the form of fences, gates, streetlights, signs, signposts, site lighting, statuary, fountains, and tree guards and grates.

Traditional architectural metals, such as copper, tin, terneplate, cast iron, wrought iron, lead, and brass, and more contemporary metals, such as stainless steel and aluminum, are all to be found. The shapes, textures, and detailing of these metals reflect the nature of their manufacture, whether wrought, cast, pressed, rolled, or extruded.

#### Things to Consider As You Plan

##### Maintenance and Preservation Strategies:

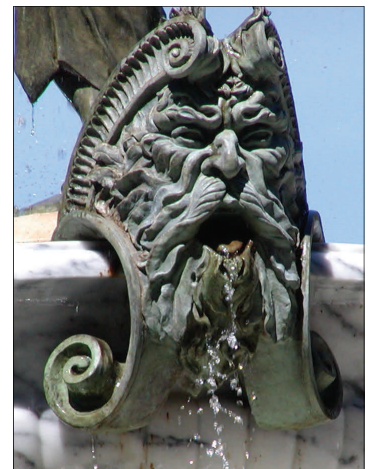
- The preservation of architectural metal surfaces, features, and details requires regular inspection and routine maintenance to prevent their deterioration due to corrosion, structural fatigue, or water damage.
- Corrosion (oxidation) of metal surfaces is a chemical reaction usually resulting from exposure to air and the moisture it contains, but corrosion can also result from galvanic action between two dissimilar metals. With all ferrous (iron-containing) metal surfaces, maintaining a sound paint film is critical in protecting the surfaces from corrosion. If the paint finish fails, leaving a ferrous metal unprotected, corrosion begins. The subsequent removal of all rust and immediate priming with a zinc-based primer or other rust-inhibiting primer is critical to halt the deterioration and prevent future corrosion. Copper and bronze surfaces develop a distinctive patina and should not be painted. The patina - the thin greenish layer that forms with age on copper or copper alloys, such as bronze - should be preserved and not disturbed.
- The cleaning of architectural metals varies, depending on how soft, or malleable, the metals are. Soft metals, such as lead, tin, terneplate, and



*Aged metal glowing with patina graces the top of this bell tower.*



*It is important to maintain a sound paint film on features such as cast-iron gates and fences in order to prevent corrosion. Cast iron fences are common in many of Newport's historic neighborhoods.*



*Decorative metal spout adorning a fountain on the grounds of The Elms on Bellevue Avenue.*



corrosion.

- Clean when necessary to remove corrosion or to prepare for recoating. Use the gentlest effective method.
  - Repaint promptly when paint film deteriorates.
4. Repair deteriorated architectural metal features and surfaces using recognized preservation methods for splicing, patching, and reinforcing.
  5. If replacement of a deteriorated detail or element of an architectural metal feature is necessary, replace only the deteriorated portion in kind rather than the entire feature. Match the original detail or element in design, dimension, texture, and material. Consider compatible substitute materials only if using the original material is not technically feasible.
  6. If replacement of an entire architectural feature is necessary, replace it in kind, matching the original feature in design, dimension, detail, texture, and material. Consider compatible substitute materials only if using the original material is not technically feasible.
  7. If an architectural metal feature is completely missing, replace it with a new feature based on accurate documentation of the original design or a new design compatible in scale, size, material, and color with the historic building and district.
  8. Repaint architectural metal surfaces and features in colors that are appropriate to the historic building and district. See Section 3.4 for guidance.
  9. Clean soft metals, including lead, tin, terneplate, and copper, with chemical solutions after testing them to ensure that they do not damage the color and the texture of the metal surface. It is not appropriate to clean soft metal surfaces with destructive methods like grit blasting.
  10. Clean hard metals such as cast iron, wrought iron, and steel using the gentlest means possible. Consider low-pressure glass bead blasting only if hand-scraping and wire brushing have been ineffective.
  11. It is not appropriate to introduce architectural metal features or details to a historic building in an attempt to create a false historical appearance.
  12. It is not appropriate to patch metal roofs or flashing with tar or asphalt



copper, are best cleaned with chemical cleaners that will not abrade their soft surface texture. However, any chemical cleaner should always be tested on an inconspicuous sample area in advance to determine if it will discolor or alter the metal itself. Abrasive cleaning techniques such as grit blasting are too harsh for soft metals and should never be used on them. Once cleaned, unpainted soft metal elements like brass or bronze hardware may be protected from corrosion with a clear lacquer. Cleaning hard metals, such as cast or wrought iron and steel, is best accomplished by hand scraping or wire brushing to remove any corrosion before repainting. In extreme cases a low-pressure (80-100 lbs. per square in.) glass bead abrasive cleaning may be necessary if wire brushing has proven ineffective.

- Asphalt products such as roofing tar corrode metals and should never be used to patch flashing or other metal surfaces.

#### Replacement:

- It is always preferable patch or replace deteriorated metal in kind instead of using substitute materials. Corrosion due to galvanic reaction between dissimilar metals limits the options of patching one metal with another. If a detail of a painted metal feature such as a decorative cornice is missing or deteriorated, replacement in kind may not be feasible, and the replication of the detail in fiberglass, wood, or aluminum may be appropriate.

### 3.4 Architectural Metals: Guidelines

1. Retain and preserve architectural metal features that contribute to the overall historic character of a building and a site, including such functional and decorative elements as roofing, flashing, storefronts, cornices, railings, hardware, casement windows, and fences.
2. Retain and preserve architectural metals, such as copper, tin, brass, cast iron, wrought iron, lead, and terneplate that contribute to the overall historic character of the district.
3. Protect and maintain architectural metal surfaces and features through appropriate methods:
  - Inspect regularly for signs of moisture damage, corrosion, structural failure or fatigue, galvanic action, and paint film failure.
  - Provide adequate drainage to prevent water from standing on flat, horizontal surfaces and collecting on decorative elements.
  - Clear metal roofs and gutters of leaves and debris.
  - Retain protective surface coatings, such as paint and lacquers, to prevent



*Metal cresting atop a tower on a Second Empire style home. Such architectural elements can be hard to get to for inspection, but features such as this are crucial to defining a building's individual character.*



*Some metals are both decorative and functional, such as this copper flashing and downspout. Copper develops a distinctive patina with age which is prized for its beauty, and should not be disturbed.*





products.

### 3.5 Paint, Paint Color, and Issues Regarding Lead Paint



*Great care should be taken when removing old paint, especially if you suspect that there is lead in it. This man, working high above the ground on Trinity Church, is taking proper precautions while removing old paint by wearing a face mask and gloves. Using a hand-scraping technique is the best way to remove paint to minimize the chance of damaging historic*

It should first be said that the NHDC does not review paint color choices. You may paint your house any color that you want. If, however, you happen to be interested in choosing an historically appropriate paint scheme and are unsure of where to turn, the NHDC will be happy to assist you in choosing appropriate colors. Please contact the Department of Planning, Zoning and Inspections for assistance.

That said, a well-executed exterior color combination can dramatically alter the appearance of a building. Likewise, the application of garish colors on a building has the potential to overpower its architectural character and compromise its integrity. Although an exterior paint job is an easily reversible change to a building, it is a highly visible and relatively expensive one, so a careful study of the style of the building, the surrounding streetscape, and the region's climatic conditions makes sense.

Historically, house colors were affected by changing technology, cultural attitudes, and social conditions. Individuals interested in reproducing a building's original color scheme can have paint scrapings analyzed to determine its color history. Architectural conservators and professional preservationists can assist in this process. If a building's original color scheme is unknown or not pleasing to its owner, then considering other color combinations is appropriate. Property owners are encouraged to take advantage of the many excellent resources now available that describe historic color palettes and appropriate combinations. The commission has many of these in its library for reference and will be happy to assist you.

#### Things to Consider As You Plan

##### Maintenance and Preservation Strategies:

- Routine cleaning of painted surfaces is an important maintenance step. Often, washing of a previously painted exterior with a garden hose will reveal that the paint film is intact under the surface dirt or mildew. However, power washing can damage intact paint layers and force water into the wall itself, which can lead to much worse things.
- Repaint when necessary. A sound paint film helps to protect and preserve the underlying materials. Cracking or peeling paint allows moisture to seep in, which may lead to destructive deterioration.

##### Repainting Advice:

- The success and longevity of any paint job depends primarily on the quality of the surface preparation and the type and quality of the paint. Proper preparation includes removing all loose or peeling paint down to the first sound



paint layer. Often, only hand-scraping and hand-sanding are necessary for removing loose paint.

- Stripping underlying intact layers of paint is unnecessary and undesirable from both a practical and historical standpoint; stripping paint can damage wood and masonry materials and remove evidence of early paint schemes, resulting in a loss of important information about the history of the structure. Furthermore, paint removal can also contribute to lead contamination, especially in the case of historic buildings (see the below box on **Special Notes about Lead Paint**).
- From the perspective of environmental safety and historic preservation, the least damaging method of preparing a painted surface for repainting is to wet the surface with water and then to hand-scrape and hand-sand failing paint layers, down to a sound layer (dry manual scraping and sanding are not permitted).
- Other acceptable methods of paint removal include heat guns or heat plates (temperatures not to exceed 1000 degrees F.), non-flammable chemical paint removers (strippers containing methylene chloride or hydrochloric acid are not permitted). **Thermal methods should only be used by experienced personnel due to the fire hazard.**
- Chemical paint removers should be tested in an inconspicuous location to make sure the solution will not burn, stain or otherwise damage the underlying surface.
- Mechanical and abrasive removal techniques, including grit blasting, high-pressure water and rotary disc and wire sanders are not permitted. They can severely damage wood and masonry substrates; however, abrasive methods may be used on cast iron and other metals in conjunction with required vacuum equipment and High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filters. In all cases, dust and debris must be contained and disposed of properly.
- Once wooden surfaces have been cleaned, scraped, and sanded, any exposed surfaces should be primed with a high-quality exterior primer, and all open joints should be re-caulked (but not the horizontal lap seam of clapboard siding) before repainting with a compatible paint.
- Although the color is more uniform and less translucent than the early, less homogeneous oil paints, today's high-quality latex and acrylic semi-gloss paints provide a similar appearance.
- Preparation for painting stucco and previously painted brick or stone is similar to that for painting wooden surfaces. The guidelines for architectural metals address the painting of metals.



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## Special Notes on Lead Paint

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Lead in water, dust, soil, and paint is hazardous to adults and children, particularly pregnant women and children under the age of six. Lead was a common ingredient in paints until 1978. In response to the Lead Poisoning Prevention Act of 1991, the R.I. Department of Environmental Management has developed Air Pollution Control Regulation No. 24, "Removal of Lead-Based Paint from Exterior Surfaces." The regulation, designed to reduce environmental lead levels, requires that exterior surfaces painted with lead-based paint be maintained or encapsulated to prevent peeling, flaking and chalking; that lead-based paint be eliminated from exterior friction surfaces of windows and doors; and that precautions be taken when removing lead-based paint. *It is important to note that Regulation No. 24 does not require that all lead-based paint be removed from the exterior of a historic structure.* Compliance with Regulation No. 24's requirements for notification, site preparation, approved removal techniques and site clean-up is required of all persons conducting any lead-based paint removal. Contact DEM's Division of Air Resources for more information. For information about removal of lead-based paint from interior surfaces, contact the R.I. Department of Health, Office of Environmental Health Risk assessment)



*Second Empire style home with a lively and contrasting paint scheme; a different color is for chosen for different levels of trim to create a vibrant effect, which was popular when this home was built.*

### 3.5 Paint, Paint Color, and Issues Regarding Lead Paint: Guidelines

1. Preserve and protect original exterior building surfaces and site features that were painted by maintaining a sound paint film on them.
2. Protect and maintain previously painted exterior surfaces in appropriate ways:
  - Inspect painted surfaces regularly for signs of discoloration, moisture damage, mildew, and dirt buildup.
  - Clean painted surfaces regularly to avoid unnecessary repainting. Use the gentlest means possible.
  - Remove deteriorated and peeling paint films down to the first sound paint layer before repainting. Use the gentlest means possible, such as hand-scraping and hand-sanding. Use electric heat guns and plates with caution and only if gentler methods are ineffective.
  - Ensure that surfaces to be repainted are clean and dry, and that any exposed wood or metal surface has been primed so that new paint will bond properly.
  - Repaint previously painted surfaces with compatible paint.



3. When repainting, you may want to select paint colors appropriate to the historic building and district. Enhance the features of a building through appropriate selection and placement of paint color consistent with its architectural style. In particular, the foundation color is usually darker than the body of the building in order to visually anchor it to the ground.
4. It is not appropriate to paint brick, stone, copper, bronze, concrete, or cement block surfaces that were historically unpainted.
5. It is not appropriate to strip wooden surfaces that were historically painted down to bare wood and apply clear stains or sealers to create a natural wood appearance.
6. It is not appropriate to replace painted wooden siding that is sound with new siding to achieve a uniformly smooth wooden surface.
7. It is not appropriate to remove paint films before repainting through destructive methods such as sandblasting, waterblasting, power washing, or the use of propane or butane torches.
8. Comply with all standards of lead paint removal.



## 3.6 Roofs, Roofing and Gutter Systems



*The configuration of a building's roofline is one of the key features that contribute to a structure's unique character. To change the appearance or configuration of a building's roof could destroy the integrity of this key component. For example, by adding a roof deck (where there never would have been on historically) makes a huge impact on the visual*

The roof form and pitch are among the major distinguishing characteristics of historic buildings. Roofs can be flat, pitched, hipped, curved, or arranged in various combinations of these forms. Certain architectural styles are clearly distinguished by roof types. For example: Second Empire-style buildings always display some form of a mansard or curved roof; classical buildings usually feature simple hipped or pitched roofs; and many Gothic Revival and picturesque adaptations display steep-pitched, complex arrangements of roofs and gables. Commercial buildings often exhibit decorative copings along the façade parapet. Roofing materials as well contribute to the character of historic buildings. Depending on the age and the style of the building, the original roofing may have been any of a variety of materials, including wood or metal shingles, slate, clay tiles, and standing-seam metal. Asphalt and asbestos shingles became popular roofing materials in the twentieth century both for new construction and for re-roofing of earlier buildings. Historic roofing materials were usually dark in color.

### Things to Consider As You Plan

#### Maintenance and Preservation Strategies:

- It is particularly important to retain and preserve historic roofs that create distinctive effects through shapes or color, because to alter or remove them would result in the loss of a significant architectural feature.
- Routine care and maintenance of a roof are critical. A leaky roof allows water damage to the structure and detail elements of a building. It is wise to keep a roof free of leaves and other debris and to inspect it regularly for leaks, checking for loose or damaged shingles, slates, or tiles and repairing them immediately.
- Metal flashing around chimneys and at the juncture of roof planes must be maintained and replaced as necessary.
- Gutters, scuppers, and downspouts must be cleaned out often and kept in good repair if they are to successfully carry water off the roof. Distinctive built-in gutters that are incorporated into the roof and concealed from view within a boxed cornice are important to retain wherever possible, as they are character-defining features of certain architectural styles, such as Greek Revival, Italianate, and Mansard. However, they must be kept properly functioning to avoid undetected damage to the structure. The distinctive shape of half-round gutters is typical for exposed gutters and preserves cornice crown molding.
- Coating valleys or roofing materials with roofing tar should never be done.

#### Replacement:

- If a roofing material must be replaced and is not readily available, a property owner should identify a compatible substitute material that closely resembles the original.
- When a roofing material is clearly distinctive to a building's architectural style, retaining or replacing it in kind is important. For example, an Italianate-style building that features a clay tile roof should not be re-roofed with fiberglass shingles.





4. If replacement of a partially deteriorated roof feature is necessary, replace only the deteriorated portion in kind to match the original feature in design, dimension, detail, color, and material. Consider compatible substitute materials only if using the original material is not technically feasible.
5. If full replacement of a deteriorated historic roofing material or feature is necessary, replace it in kind, matching the original in scale, detail, pattern, design, material, and color. Consider compatible substitute materials only if using the original material is not technically feasible.
6. If a roof feature is completely missing, replace it with a new feature based on accurate documentation of the original feature or a new design compatible in scale, size, material, and color with the historic building and district.
7. It is not appropriate to remove a roof feature that is important in defining the overall historic character of a building, rather than repair or replace it.
8. If new gutters and downspouts are needed, install them so that no architectural features are lost or damaged. Select new gutters and downspouts that match trim color, unless they are copper. Retain the shape of traditional half-round gutters and downspouts if replacing them.
9. It is not appropriate to replace concealed, built-in gutter systems with exposed gutters.
10. It is not appropriate to introduce new roof features such as skylights, dormers, or vents if they will compromise the historic roof design, or damage character-defining roof materials or the character of the historic district.
11. It is not appropriate to install ventilators, solar collectors, antennas, skylights, or mechanical equipment in locations that compromise character-defining roofs or on roof slopes prominently visible from the street.
12. It is not appropriate to install exposed tarpaper rolls as a finished roofing material or roofing tar as a replacement for valley flashing.
13. It is not appropriate to patch any roofing or flashing with tar or asphalt products.



*As with everything else, roofing materials should be replaced in-kind. In this particularly sad example, vinyl siding was used to cover this mansard roof that, when intact, would have almost certainly had slate (or even asphalt) shingles. The original design intent is lost completely.*



*Asphalt shingles are okay on roofs where they already exist, but they certainly are not okay for whole houses! This house is otherwise intact despite being clad in entirely in roofing shingles.*

### 3.7 Exterior Walls

Through their shape, features, materials, details, and finishes, exterior walls contribute to the form and the character of historic buildings. They also provide opportunities for stylistic detailing and ornamentation. Features such as projecting bays, chimneys, towers, and pediments boldly manipulate the shapes of exterior walls. In addition, quoins, cornerboards, cornices, brackets, entablatures, and skirtboards all embellish the connections between wall planes or from exterior walls to other building elements. Variations in exterior wall materials contribute further to the pattern, texture, scale, color, and finish of the building exterior.



- Slate and clay tiles are extremely durable but brittle. They can last more than a century, but their fasteners, flashing, and sheathing may not. However, if they are carefully reset, they may last another lifetime.
- Metal roofs, if kept painted, can last more than a century as well.
- By contrast, a good-quality fiberglass shingle roof will only last twenty to thirty years.
- If a Mansard roof is decorated with polychromatic slates, their removal would compromise the building's architectural character.
- Using terne-coated metal (which requires paint), copper, or rolled aluminum with a factory-applied finish to construct valleys is far more authentic in appearance and longer lasting than weaving asphalt shingles.

#### Changes to the Roof:

- When contemporary roof features such as skylights and imprudently placed solar collectors compromise the character of a building and damage historic roof features and materials, they are discouraged.
- Other proposed alterations to roof forms, and the installation or removal of cresting rails, balustrades, finials, cupolas, monitors, chimneys, head-houses, roof decks and other rooftop elements will be reviewed by the NHDC. If they are proposed, it is important to ensure that they will not damage or diminish the historic character of the building or the district.

### 3.6 Roofs, Roofing and Gutter Systems: Guidelines

1. Retain and preserve roofs and roof forms that contribute to the overall historic character of a building, including their functional and decorative features, such as roofing materials, cresting, dormers, chimneys, cupolas, and cornices.
2. Protect and maintain the metal, wooden, and masonry elements of historic roofs through appropriate methods:
  - Inspect regularly for signs of deterioration and moisture penetration.
  - Clean gutters and downspouts to ensure proper drainage.
  - Replace deteriorated flashing as necessary.
  - Reapply appropriate protective coatings to metal roofs as necessary.
  - Maintain adequate ventilation of roof sheathing to prevent moisture damage.
  - Ensure that roofing materials are adequately anchored to resist wind and water.
  - Re-fasten loose (or replace damaged) shingles, slates, or tiles.
3. Repair historic roofs and their distinctive features through recognized preservation methods for resetting or reinforcing.



Within Newport's residential historic communities, exterior walls clad in horizontal, lapped wooden siding are most typical, although walls surfaced with wooden shingles, brick, stone, or stucco are found as well. Combinations of materials, including brick with stone details or lapped siding with wooden shingles, are also found. Exterior walls of brick or stone are more typical of commercial or public buildings in the districts than they are of residences, though they are to be found there, as well.

The foundations of early Newport buildings are generally differentiated from the rest of the wall by a change in material, plane, and/or color. Brick foundations are the most common for residential structures, but foundations of stone or masonry coated with stucco are not unusual.

### **Things to Consider As You Plan**

#### **Maintenance:**

- Routine inspection, maintenance, and repair of exterior walls should follow the guidelines for the specific wall materials (see 3.2 for Wood, 3.3 for Masonry). The guidelines for paint and paint colors (3.5) apply to wooden exterior walls and trim and some masonry walls.

#### **Replacement:**

- Replacement of deteriorated exterior wall materials and details requires careful attention to the scale, texture, pattern, and detail of the original material. The three-dimensionality of wood moldings and trim, the distinctive texture of weatherboards, and the bonding pattern of masonry walls are all important to duplicate when replacement is necessary.
- Generally, replacement or concealment of exterior wall materials with substitute materials is not appropriate. For example, the application of synthetic sidings or contemporary stucco-like coatings in place of the original materials results in a loss of original fabric, texture, and detail. In addition, such surfaces may conceal moisture damage or other causes of structural deterioration from view.

#### **Changes to Exterior Walls:**

- The loss of a distinctive exterior wall feature such as a projecting chimney or window bay would compromise the character of a historic building. Similarly, the introduction of a new feature, such as a window or door opening, can also compromise the integrity of the original wall. Alterations such as these require a clear understanding of the significant characteristics of the original wall and also the wall's role in creating the building's significance. Using that



knowledge, a compatible change that will not diminish the building's architectural character may be developed.



*This entry porch is a characterizing feature of this home's front façade. To remove or dramatically alter its form or appearance would be a mistake.*



*The last vestige of this modest house's former identity is found in its sole surviving wooden crossbracing. The rest of the decorative elements that this house may have once had have been removed, probably because the vinyl siding could not fit such details. There is a chance, however, that wooden clapboards still exist underneath the vinyl; and example of this was shown in the section on Wood.*

### 3.7 Exterior Walls: Guidelines

1. Retain and preserve exterior walls that contribute to the overall historic form and character of a building, including their functional and decorative features, such as cornices, foundations, bays, quoins, arches, water tables, brackets, entablatures, and storefronts.
2. Retain and preserve exterior wall materials that contribute to the overall historic character of a building, including brickwork, stucco, stone, wooden shingles, wooden siding, asbestos siding, and metal, wooden, or masonry trimwork. Consult the appropriate section for guidelines relating to your material(s).
3. Protect and maintain the material surfaces, details, and features of exterior walls through appropriate methods:
  - Inspect regularly for signs of moisture damage, vegetation, fungal or insect infestation, corrosion, and structural damage or settlement.
  - Provide adequate drainage to prevent water from standing on flat, horizontal surfaces and collecting on decorative elements or along foundations.
  - Clean exterior walls as necessary to remove heavy soiling or to prepare for repainting. Use the gentlest methods possible.
  - Retain protective surface coatings, such as paint or stain, to prevent deterioration.
  - Reapply protective surface coatings, such as paint or stain, when they are damaged or deteriorated.
4. Repair exterior wall surfaces, details, and features using recognized preservation repair methods for the surface material or coating.
5. If replacement of a deteriorated detail or element of an exterior wall is necessary, replace only the deteriorated portion in kind rather than the entire feature. Match the original in design, dimension, detail, texture, pattern, color, and material. Consider compatible substitute materials only if using the original material is not technically feasible.
6. If replacement of an entire exterior wall or feature is necessary because of deterioration, replace it in kind, matching the original in design, dimension, detail, texture, color, and material. Consider compatible substitute materials only if using the original material is not technically feasible.
7. If an exterior wall or feature is completely missing, you may replace it with a new wall or feature based on accurate documentation of the original or a new

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design compatible with the historic character of the building and the district.

8. It is not appropriate to introduce new features such as window or door openings, bays, vents, balconies, or chimneys to character-defining exterior walls if they will compromise the architectural integrity of the building.
9. It is not appropriate to remove or cover any material detail associated with exterior walls, including decorative shingles, panels, brackets, bargeboards, and corner boards, unless an accurate restoration requires it.
10. It is not appropriate to cover historic wall material, including wooden siding, wooden shingles, stucco, brick, and stonework, with coatings or contemporary substitute materials.
11. It is not appropriate to introduce features or details to an exterior wall in an attempt to create a false historical appearance.



*A finely-detailed and well-preserved second story balcony overlooking Kay Street.*

### 3.8 Windows, Shutters and Doors

The various arrangements of windows and doors, the sizes and the proportion of openings, and the decorative elements associated with them are used to achieve architectural stylistic effects on buildings. Although many types of windows are found in early Newport buildings, a majority of those found in early houses are wooden double hung windows. Each sash, depending on the style and the age of the house, may be divided, usually by muntins that hold individual panes in place. Doors with a variety of panel configurations as well as a combination of solid panels and glazing are found throughout the historic districts. Stained, beveled, and etched glass is sometimes found, often in entry sidelights and transoms or an individual fixed sash.

More so than houses, commercial and institutional buildings often established a hierarchy through the placement, size, and scale of windows and doors. The front facade, particularly its first floor, was usually distinguished from the less significant facades with larger, more decorative windows and doors.

Shutters are found on many historic buildings around Newport, particularly on buildings dating from the Colonial era, or on later buildings executed in the Greek Revival or Colonial Revival styles. Nowadays we tend to think of shutters simply as decorative features, but we should not forget that they were originally highly functional components of a building: they “shut out” unwanted heat, sun, wind, rain, and snow. Since glass was expensive and hard to replace, shutters were closed during stormy weather to protect windows from damaging wind and wind-driven debris. Louvered shutters provided for some ventilation and light when closed. Shutters also provided an element of security from would-be intruders. Beyond function, they embellished the building exterior and contributed to its architectural character.



*Distinctive features, such as the transom lights above this colonial doorway, should be kept intact whenever possible. Many colonial-era homes in Newport feature elaborately carved ornamental crowns and door surrounds.*





Many people do not realize that installing modern replacement windows in old buildings is not only damaging to the historic visual character of the structure, it is usually an unnecessary expense. Repair of old windows is far more cost effective than purchasing and installing modern replacement windows. Most importantly, the repair of existing windows helps to preserve the historic fabric and therefore, the house maintains a higher degree of historical integrity. Also, an existing window, when properly repaired and fitted with a storm window, is just as energy efficient as a new double-glazed unit.

### Things to Consider As You Plan

#### Maintenance and Preservation Strategies:

- The number, location, size and glazing patterns of original windows, as well as unique features such as curved or bent glass, stained glass, leaded glass and unusual shapes, should be retained and preserved wherever possible.
- Inspect windows, shutters and doors on a regular basis for deterioration, moisture damage, air infiltration, paint failure, and corrosion.
- Clean all window, shutter, and door surfaces using the gentlest means possible.
- Repaint when necessary to maintain a sound protective paint film; be careful when removing paint and reapply protective coatings (see **Chapter 3.5 Paint, Paint Color and Issues Concerning Lead Paint** for paint guidelines).
- The inherent imperfections in historic glass give it a visual quality not replicated by contemporary glass manufacturing. Consequently, preserving such glazing on an early Newport building is always desirable.
- Weatherstrip windows and doors to reduce air infiltration and increase energy efficiency.

#### Repair vs. Replacement:

Improper or insensitive treatment of the windows and the doors of a historic building can seriously detract from its architectural character. Usually, repairing the original windows in an older building is more appropriate (and cost-effective) than replacing them with new ones.

- Peeling paint, high air infiltration, sticking sash, or broken panes are all repairable conditions and do not necessitate replacement. Wooden-framed windows are generally easy and inexpensive to repair. For example, changing a sash cord is relatively simple, and lightly coating a window track with paste wax may allow the sash to slide smoothly.
- Replacement of an entire window or door should be considered only if repair is not feasible.

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### Replacement Windows and Doors:



- Replacement units should match the original in dimension, material, configuration, and detail. A compatible substitute material should be considered only if replacement in kind is not technically feasible. Because the replacement unit should fill the original opening, it may have to be custom-made; today's open-stock windows and doors may not match the dimensions of the existing opening. Fortunately, custom-made wooden window sashes to match many original windows can be ordered at most lumberyards. If the details of a window or a door, such as casing, muntins, or tracery, are deteriorated and must be replaced, the original character of the building and the window or the door should be a guide.
- Where replacement is necessary due to deterioration, new windows, shutters and doors should match the originals in materials, design, dimensions, configuration and number of panes. Avoid replacement windows that don't fit the original window openings.
- Wooden framed screen or storm windows and doors painted to match or complement the colors of the existing sash and doors are appropriate choices for most early Newport buildings.



*A unifying façade rhythm is created by the pattern of entries, display windows and retractable awnings of this sensitively rehabilitated commercial building.*

### Changes in Window and Door Openings:

- Changing existing window and door openings, closing existing openings, or adding new openings on an early Newport building should be very carefully considered and undertaken only for compelling reasons.
- Changes to original openings on a character-defining facade should never be considered. For less significant facades the pattern of proposed openings should be characteristic of and complementary to the historic building and the historic district context.

### Concerning Shutters:

- Existing shutters on historic buildings should be maintained and repaired or replaced in kind as necessary.
- It is also appropriate to reintroduce shutters on early buildings when there is clear evidence of earlier shutters. The new shutters should be operable, as were the earlier shutters.
- Introducing shutters on a building that did not have them historically would compromise the building's architectural character and is not appropriate in the historic districts.



### 3.8 Windows, Shutters and Doors: Guidelines



*Historic windows have true divided lights and the glass is usually irregular, which gives it its distinctive appearance. Historic windows should be maintained whenever possible as windows are another truly key component when it comes to the total visual integrity of a building.*

1. Retain and preserve windows that contribute to the overall historic character of a building, including their functional and decorative features, such as frames, sash, muntins, sills, heads, moldings, surrounds, hardware, shutters, and blinds.
2. Retain and preserve doors that contribute to the overall historic character of a building, including their functional and decorative features, such as frames, glazing, panels, sidelights, fanlights, surrounds, thresholds, and hardware.
3. Protect and maintain the wood and metal elements of historic windows and doors through appropriate methods:
  - Inspect regularly for deterioration, moisture damage, air infiltration, paint failure, and corrosion.
  - Clean the surface using the gentlest means possible.
  - Limit paint removal and reapply protective coatings as necessary.
  - Re-glaze sash as necessary to prevent moisture infiltration.
  - Weatherstrip windows and doors to reduce air infiltration and increase energy efficiency.
4. Repair historic windows and doors and their distinctive features through recognized preservation methods for patching, consolidating, splicing, and reinforcing.
5. If replacement of a deteriorated window, shutter or door feature or detail is necessary, replace only the deteriorated feature in kind rather than the entire unit. Match the original in design, dimension, and material. Consider compatible substitute materials only if using the original material is not technically feasible.
6. If replacement of a deteriorated window, shutter or door unit is necessary, replace the unit in kind, matching the design and the dimension of the original sash or panels, pane configuration, architectural trim, detailing, and materials. Consider compatible substitute materials only if using the original material is not technically feasible.
7. It is not appropriate to introduce aluminum, vinyl or vinyl-clad replacement windows or doors into buildings in the historic district.



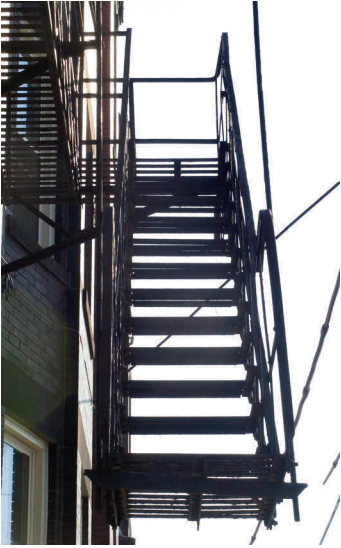
8. If a window, shutter, or door is completely missing, replace it with a new unit based on accurate documentation of the original or a new design compatible with the original opening and the historic character of the building.
9. Replace deteriorated or missing wooden shutters in kind with wooden shutters sized to fit the opening. Shutters must not be permanently fixed to the exterior wall and must be operable. It is not appropriate to introduce shutters on a historic building if no evidence of earlier shutters exists.
10. If additional windows or doors are necessary for a new use, install them on a rear or non-character-defining facade of the building, but only if they do not compromise the architectural integrity of the building. Design such units to be compatible with the overall design of the building, but not to duplicate the original.
11. If desired, introduce narrow-profile exterior or interior storm windows so that they do not obscure or damage the existing sash and frame. Select exterior storm windows with a painted or baked-enamel finish color that is compatible with the sash color. For double-hung windows, operable storm window dividers should align with the existing meeting rail.
12. If desired, introduce full-light storm doors constructed of wood or aluminum that do not obscure or damage the existing door and frame. Select storm doors with a painted, stained, or baked-enamel finish color that is compatible with the color of the existing door. Bare aluminum storm doors are not appropriate.
13. If desired and where historically appropriate, install fabric awnings over window, door, storefront, or porch openings with care to ensure that historic features are not damaged or obscured.
14. It is not appropriate to remove original doors, windows, shutters, blinds, hardware, and trim from a character-defining facade.
15. It is not appropriate to remove any detail material associated with windows and doors, such as stained glass, beveled glass, textured glass, or tracery, unless an accurate restoration requires it.
16. It is not appropriate to use snap-in muntins to create a false divided-light appearance.



17. It is not appropriate to replace clear glazing with tinted or opaque glazing.

### 3.9 Entrances, Porches and Balconies

Entrances and front porches often distinguish the street facades of historic buildings and provide highly visible opportunities for stylistic embellishments. The prominent, character-defining role of front entrances, porches, and balconies for most historic buildings makes their preservation of primary importance. Balconies, side porches, mudrooms, back porches, and rear entries offer additional outdoor access and living space. In Newport, most porches are constructed and detailed in wood and include a variety of functional yet decorative features such as columns, pilasters, rails, latticework, balustrades, soffits, steps, brackets, beaded board ceilings, and tongue-and-groove flooring. Entrances themselves draw attention to a front doorway with such features as sidelights, transoms, pilasters, architraves, and pediments.



*Fire escapes are important safety features. In the interests of good preservation, it is always best when fire escapes and other safety features can be installed in a way that least compromises the integrity of the historic building, its character-defining features or its site.*

#### Things to Consider As You Plan

##### Maintenance and Preservation Strategies:

- Entrances, porches, and balconies often weather rapidly from exposure to the elements and require regular inspection for signs of deterioration due to moisture damage, fungal or insect infestation, or structural settlement.
- Keeping gutters and downspouts maintained and ensuring that all flooring slopes away from the building for proper drainage will help protect entrances and porches from moisture damage.
- Routine maintenance of wooden features includes caulking joints to prevent water or air penetration and repainting as necessary to maintain a sound, protective paint film.
- The repair of traditional entrance and porch materials, such as wood, masonry, and architectural metals, is addressed in the pertinent guidelines.
- Original features, elements, and details should always be preserved unless they are damaged or deteriorated beyond repair.

##### Replacement of and Change to Entrances:

- The removal or improper replacement of entrance or porch elements is not appropriate as doing so compromises the architectural integrity of a historic building.
- Introducing architectural trim or stylistic details to an entrance or a porch in an attempt to create a false historical appearance is not appropriate.
- When an entrance, or its porch, or balcony features and details are deteriorated and require replacement, it is important to match the original features and details in design, dimension, detail, texture, material, color and other visual qualities.





- The design of a new entrance, porch, or balcony for one that is lost should be an accurate reproduction of the original or a design that is compatible with the historic character of the building and its site. Compatibility of a new design should be reviewed in terms of proportion, height, roof shape, material, scale, texture, detail, and color.
- The introduction of a new entrance, porch, or balcony on a secondary facade may be appropriate if it does not diminish the building's architectural character and the design is compatible with the building and the site.
- Occasionally, the enclosure of a side or rear porch will be considered to accommodate a change in use or a need for space.
- Railings for steps should have a molded cap and balusters inserted between a top and bottom rail; pressure treated wood should not be used for railing balusters because of its tendency to warp and twist. Nosing profiles on original stair treads should be retained. Pressure treated wood may be used for substructures, porch decks and steps; exposed elements should be painted or stained as soon as possible.
- The enclosure of a front entrance, porch, or balcony is not considered appropriate given their prominence. A sensitively designed enclosure of a side or rear porch may be appropriate if the building's architectural integrity is not compromised and the character of the porch is retained.

### **3.9 Entrances, Porches and Balconies: Guidelines**

1. Retain and preserve entrances, porches, and balconies that contribute to the overall historic character of a building, including such functional and decorative elements as columns, pilasters, piers, entablatures, balustrades, sidelights, fanlights, transoms, steps, railings, floors, and ceilings.
2. Protect and maintain the wood, masonry, and metal elements of entrances, porches, and balconies through appropriate surface treatments:
  - Inspect regularly for signs of moisture damage, rust, structural damage or settlement, and fungal or insect infestation.
  - Provide adequate drainage to prevent water from standing on flat, horizontal surfaces and collecting on decorative elements or along foundations.
  - Clean soiled surfaces using the gentlest means possible.
  - Re-caulk wooden joints properly to prevent moisture penetration and air infiltration.
  - Retain protective surface coatings, such as paint or stain, to



prevent damage from ultraviolet light or moisture.

- Reapply protective coatings, such as paint or stain, when they are damaged or deteriorated.
3. Repair historic entrances, porches, and balconies and their distinctive features and materials using recognized preservation methods for patching, consolidating, splicing, and reinforcing.
  4. If replacement of a deteriorated detail or element of an entrance, porch, or balcony feature is necessary, replace only the deteriorated detail or element in kind rather than the entire feature. Match the original in design, dimension, and material. Consider compatible substitute materials only if using the original material is not technically feasible.
  5. If replacement of an entire entrance, porch, or balcony feature is necessary because of deterioration, replace it in kind, matching the original in design, dimension, detail, texture, and material. Consider compatible substitute materials only if using the original material is not technically feasible.
  6. If a feature or an entire entrance, porch, or balcony is missing, replace it with a new feature based on accurate documentation of the original or a new design compatible with the historic character of the building and the district.
  7. Consider the enclosure of a historic porch to accommodate a new use only if the enclosure can be designed to preserve the historic character of the porch and the building. It is not appropriate to enclose a front porch or a front balcony.
  8. It is not appropriate to remove any detail material associated with entrances and porches, such as graining, spindlework, beveled glass, or beaded board, unless an accurate restoration requires it.
  9. It is not appropriate to remove an original entrance or porch or to add a new entrance or porch on a primary facade.
  10. It is not appropriate to introduce features or details to a historic entrance, porch, or balcony in an attempt to create a false historical appearance.



*A well-maintained traditional storefront.*



*A popular modern clothing chain occupies an old space gracefully.*

### 3.10 Storefronts

For many historic commercial buildings the storefront is the most prominent architectural feature. Although a storefront is often stylistically and visually tied to the street facade, it is usually differentiated from the upper facade by large display windows flanking the main entry and by a change in materials. Typical functional and decorative features of a storefront include display windows, doors, transoms, signs, awnings, columns, pilasters, entablatures, and bulkhead panels. Storefronts with recessed entrances also incorporate an exterior ceiling area and an extension of the sidewalk sometimes surfaced with decorative floor tiles.



Most historic commercial buildings in Newport are two to four stories in height, and their street facades are vertical in proportion. Typically, storefront display windows rest on low wooden recessed panels or on bulkheads constructed of masonry or faced in ceramic tile. Some storefronts use recessed entries to draw the pedestrian into the store and maximize the display window area.

### **Things to Consider As You Plan**

Storefronts require the same sort of regular inspections and routine maintenance that other window and door components do. Repair or replacement of deteriorated storefront features and materials requires careful attention to retaining or matching the original design in detail, dimension, material, and color. The loss of distinctive storefront features can seriously compromise the architectural integrity of the entire historic building. Similarly, the substitution of inappropriate contemporary materials, such as vinyl or aluminum panels, for traditional storefront materials, such as wood or tile, diminishes the storefront's contribution to the building's architectural character.

Because the storefront is such a prominent feature for most commercial buildings, it was frequently modified or altered by business owners in an effort to make a new or more modern visual statement. When later modifications conceal original storefront features, such as transoms, bulkheads, or display windows, their removal, while not required, should be considered. For example, the removal of later signage may reveal the original textured glass transom still intact. Any changes that have reduced the size of an original storefront opening in the building facade or filled in the opening completely are inappropriate, and their removal should also be considered.

If an inappropriate storefront has completely replaced the original storefront, a new storefront based on accurate documentation of the original is preferred. If accurate documentation is not available, then a new design compatible with the building in scale, size, material, and color is appropriate. Compatible, contemporary signage can often be successfully incorporated on a new or existing storefront, in traditional signage locations, including the mid-cornice, the awning, the display windows, or the tiles of the recessed entry. See Section 4.5 for guidelines relating to signage in the historic district.

## **3.10 Storefronts: Guidelines**

1. Retain and preserve storefronts that contribute to the overall historic character of a building, including such functional and decorative features as transoms, display windows, doors, entablatures, pilasters, recessed entries, and signs.



2. Protect and maintain historic storefront features and materials through appropriate methods:
  - Inspect regularly for signs of moisture damage, rust, fungal or insect infestation, cracked glass, and structural damage or settlement.
  - Provide adequate drainage to prevent water from standing on flat, horizontal surfaces and collecting on decorative elements.
  - Clean painted surfaces regularly using the gentlest means possible, and repaint only when the paint film is damaged or deteriorated.
  - Retain protective surface coatings, such as paint or stain, to prevent damage to storefront materials from moisture or ultraviolet light.
3. Repair historic storefront features using recognized preservation methods for patching, consolidating, splicing, and reinforcing.
4. If replacement of a deteriorated detail or element of a storefront feature is necessary, replace only the deteriorated detail or element in kind rather than the entire feature. Match the original detail or element in design, dimension, color, and material. Consider compatible substitute materials only if using the original material is not technically feasible.
5. If replacement of an entire storefront feature is necessary, replace it in kind, matching the original feature in design, dimension, detail, texture, color, and material. Consider compatible substitute materials only if using the original material is not technically feasible.
6. If a storefront feature or an entire storefront is missing, replace it with a new feature or storefront based on accurate documentation. If accurate documentation is not available, then utilize a new design compatible with the building in scale, size, material, and color.
7. Repaint storefront features in colors that are appropriate to the building and the district.
8. If desired, introduce new signage that is compatible with the storefront in material, scale, and color. It is not appropriate to install signage that damages, obscures, or diminishes the character-defining features of the storefront. See Section 2.8 for further guidance.
9. If desired and historically appropriate, introduce fabric awnings that are compatible with the storefront in scale, form, and color. It is not appropriate to install awnings that damage or compromise the storefront's character-defining features.
10. It is not appropriate to clean storefronts with destructive methods such as sandblasting, power washing, and using propane or butane torches. Clean using gentle methods such as low-pressure washing with detergents and natural bristle brushes. Chemical strippers can be used only if gentler methods are ineffective.

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11. At time it is appropriate to remove objects and later renovations to reveal original storefront openings obscured by the changes.
  12. It is not appropriate to strip wooden storefront surfaces that were historically painted down to bare wood and apply clear stains or sealers to create a natural wood appearance.
  13. It is not appropriate to replace or cover wooden storefront and entry elements with contemporary substitute materials such as aluminum or vinyl.
  14. It is not appropriate to introduce storefront features or details to a historic building in an attempt to create a false historical appearance.



### **3.11 Utilities and Energy Retrofit**

Energy conservation, replacement or upgrading of inadequate utility service, and introduction or upgrading of mechanical systems are typical concerns of property owners today. In the historic district it is important to ensure that such concerns are addressed in ways that do not damage or diminish the historic character of the building, the site, or the district.

A variety of energy-conserving site and building features illustrate the sensibility of an earlier era to climate and energy efficiency. Thoughtfully located shade trees buffer residences and sidewalks from the hot summer sun. Projecting porches provide shaded outdoor space and lessen the impact of harsh sunlight on the building's interior. Operable windows, shutters, and awnings allow occupants to control the introduction of sunlight and breezes within the building. Commercial buildings often capture daylight through storefront transoms, lightwells, and skylights. An understanding of how such historic features enhance energy efficiency is critical to maximizing the energy efficiency of historic buildings.

As the nation moved into the modern era, the new and improving technology made its way into Newport's historic communities.

#### **Things to Consider As You Plan**

In considering energy retrofit options, the property owner should be sure that the inherent energy-conserving features of the building are being used and maintained. Consideration should also be given to the replacement of lost shade trees or the introduction of other carefully located new shade trees. Beyond those steps, typical retrofit measures include introduction of storm windows, storm doors, additional weatherstripping, insulation, and more energy-efficient mechanical systems. All retrofit measures must be reviewed with their impact on the historic character of the building and the district in mind.





Although utility lines and poles have long been a part of the districts, attention should also be given to consolidating old and new utility and communication lines where possible to avoid overpowering the landscape with additional overhead wires. If a new or upgraded power supply will necessitate an additional pole and overhead wires, the use of underground cables may be preferable to prevent visual intrusion.

New mechanical or communication systems that include outside units or equipment, such as condensers, ventilators, solar collectors, satellite dishes, and large antennas, should be located and installed so that they do not damage or diminish the historic character of the building, site, or district. An inconspicuously located outdoor unit can often be screened by plantings or fences.

### **3.12 Accessibility, Health and Safety Considerations**

A need for public access to, a change in use of, or a substantial rehabilitation of a historic building may necessitate compliance with current standards for life safety and accessibility.

#### **Things to Consider As You Plan**

When changes to a building are necessary, the property owner must give careful consideration to how the changes can be incorporated without compromising the integrity of the historic building, its character-defining features, or its site. The commission staff should be consulted early in the planning stages for assistance on such projects.

Because of the characteristic raised foundation of many early Newport buildings, accessibility for persons with disabilities often requires the introduction of a ramp or a lift to the first-floor level. Safety codes may also dictate additional exits and/or a fire stair. The introduction of railings, handrails, or other safety features may be needed as well. Complying with such requirements in ways that are sensitive to the historic character of the building and the site demands creative design solutions developed with input from local code officials, representatives of local disability groups, and historic preservation specialists. Whether the modifications are large or small, however, with respect to the long-term preservation of the historic building, temporary or reversible alternatives are preferable to permanent or irreversible ones.



Following any necessary repair of windows to ensure their weather tightness, additional efficiency may be realized with the introduction of exterior storm windows. Relatively unobtrusive, narrow-profile exterior storm windows that do not obscure the window itself, that are carefully installed to prevent damage to the sill or the frame, and that are finished in a painted or a baked-enamel color compatible with the sash color are fairly common in the historic districts.

To retain the opportunity to open the windows, the property owner should remember to select operable storm units that align with the meeting rails of the window. Before bare aluminum storm sash is painted, it should always be primed with a zinc chromate primer to ensure that the finish paint will bond. If a property owner chooses interior storm windows, they should be tension-mounted with airtight gaskets. On both exterior and interior storm windows, the ventilating holes must be kept open to prevent condensation from damaging the window or the sill. Selection and installation of new screen or storm doors should follow the guidelines for exterior storm windows.



## Chapter 4: SITE AND SETTING





## 4.1 Site Features and Plantings



*This house's lawn and plantings frame it nicely.*



*The only truly acceptable case for the removal of a mature tree is when it becomes significantly damaged or diseased.*

Site features and plantings not only provide the context for the buildings of the historic districts, they also contribute significantly to the districts' overall character, that is, the general "look and feel." The elements of district setting include **features that form spaces**, including topography, building setback and siting, vistas and views, and plantings such as hedges, foundation plantings, lawns, gardens, and tree canopies; **features that define circulation**, such as walkways, streets, alleys, driveways, and parking areas; and **features that articulate or develop a site**, such as accessory buildings, fences, walls, lighting, terraces, waterways, fountains, patios, sculptures, arbors, pergolas, pools, furniture, and planters.

Landscaping and plantings play a significant role in creating the character of most of the historic districts in Newport. Mature gardens, grassy lawns, shrubs, climbing vines, ornamental and specimen trees, and tree canopies are typical of the residential historic districts. Historically, large shade trees, carefully located, were an important means of providing summer cooling. Many specimen trees are to be found all around the city, especially in and around the large Bellevue estates and on Ochre Point. Today they still contribute shade as well as distinctive character to the historic districts. Landscaped public spaces such as Washington Square and Queen Anne Square continue to serve as points of orientation in the downtown while providing the amenity of open green space within an urban environment.

### Things to Consider as You Plan

The character, pattern, and rhythm of plantings and other site features within a historic district should be preserved through proper maintenance and the introduction of compatible new or replacement features. When developing a landscape plan, you should consider the special characteristics of the specific site as well as those of the historic district. Selecting wisely from the existing vocabulary of distinctive site features to define circulation, create site spaces, or otherwise articulate and develop sites within a district is central to preserving the district's character. Removal of mature, healthy trees should be considered only for absolutely compelling reasons. Whenever a tree is removed, whether it is diseased, storm damaged, or healthy, the district's distinct character is diminished. The planting of a similar replacement tree in its place or nearby helps perpetuate the tree canopy that is so important to the landscape as well as the individual building sites. Long-lived hardwoods are excellent replacement choices for street canopies.

Whenever construction or site work is undertaken, large trees and other signifi-

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cant site features should be protected from immediate damage during construction or delayed damage resulting from construction work, including compaction of the soil by equipment or loss of root area. The critical root zone of a threatened tree must be surrounded by temporary fencing to prevent any construction activity or equipment from endangering it. The introduction of an intrusive contemporary site feature or item of equipment, such as a parking lot, a swimming pool, freestanding mechanical equipment, or a satellite dish, must be carefully reviewed to determine if it will compromise the historic character of the site and the district. Although the impact of intrusive contemporary site features or equipment can often be diminished through careful siting and screening (often through the introduction of new plantings), in some cases it may be so detrimental to the character of the site or the streetscape that the alteration cannot be accommodated. Such might be the case if the bulk of a residential rear yard were paved for parking or if required the removal of several healthy, mature shade trees.



*The magnificent lawns and gardens behind The Elms, with its fountains and outbuildings, place the mansion within a distinct context.*

#### **4.1 Site Features and Plantings: Guidelines**

1. Retain and preserve the building and landscape features that contribute to the overall historic character of the district, including trees, gardens, yards, arbors, ground cover, fences, accessory buildings, patios, terraces, fountains, fish ponds, significant vistas and views, etc.
2. Retain and preserve the historic relationship between buildings and landscape features of the district setting, including site topography, retaining walls, foundation plantings, hedges, streets, walkways, driveways, and parks.
3. Protect and maintain historic building materials and plant features through appropriate treatments, including routine maintenance and repair of constructed elements and pruning and vegetation management of plantings.
4. Replace missing or deteriorated site features in-kind with new features that are compatible with the character of the site and the historic district.
5. Replace a seriously diseased or severely damaged tree or hedge with a new tree or hedge of a similar or identical species. It is not appropriate to remove healthy, mature trees.





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6. Design new construction or additions so that large trees and other significant site features (such as vistas and views) are preserved.
  7. Protect large trees and other significant site features from immediate damage during construction and from delayed damage due to construction activities, such as loss of root area or compaction of the soil by equipment. It is especially critical to avoid compaction of the soil within the drip line of trees.
  8. In the residential historic districts, it is not appropriate to alter the residential character of the district by significantly reducing the proportion of built area to open space on a given site through new construction, additions, or surface paving.
  9. It is not appropriate to introduce contemporary equipment or incompatible site features, including satellite dishes, solar collectors, playground equipment, mechanical units, storage units, and swimming pools, in locations that compromise the historic character of the building, site, or the district. Locate such features unobtrusively, and screen them from view.
  10. It is not appropriate to introduce features or objects that are similar in appearance, material, and scale to historic elements but are stylistically anachronistic with the character of the building or historic district.
  11. It is not appropriate to alter the topography of a site substantially through grading, filling, or excavating, nor is it appropriate to relocate drainage features, unless there is a specific and significant problem.
  12. It is not appropriate to use heavy machinery or equipment on sites where doing so may disturb significant archaeological resources.

## 4.2 Fences and Walls

Fences and walls were common site features in Newport's early neighborhoods. They served both decorative and utilitarian functions and were constructed

from a variety of building materials, including wooden pickets, cast iron, lattice, brick and stone. Decorative fences and walls reflected popular architecture styles and were often an integral part of the site plan. Decorative corner posts and gateways embellished some fences and walls. In tandem with constructed elements or standing alone, hedges were cultivated for both decorative and screening purposes. Utilitarian fences and walls served to secure boundaries, to confine animals, to protect planted areas, and to provide visual privacy. They were generally used in rear yard locations and were not usually visible from the street. Traditionally, utilitarian fences were constructed of vertical wooden slats or pickets.

Simple wooden picket fences with shaped or squared-off tops usually about 3 feet in height were popular fixtures in early Newport neighborhoods. They generally followed the property line or were inset slightly. By the turn of the century, domestic cast-iron fences that followed the same proportions as older, more common picket fences were popular in some neighborhoods as well. Trimmed hedges of plant varieties typical in the region were common too. In other parts of town, along Bellevue Avenue for instance, higher walls were constructed for privacy purposes to screen their luxurious properties from the street.

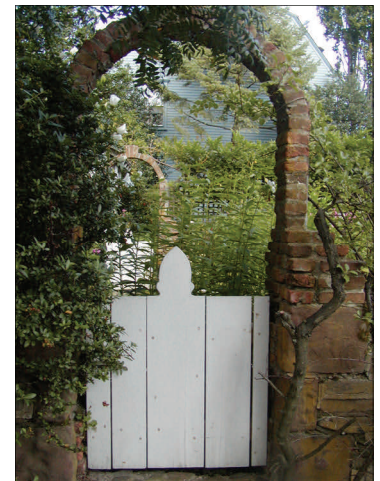
Low masonry walls, many times combined with low hedge material, were used to define some front lawns or property lines. Masonry or stone retaining walls were occasionally employed to accommodate a significant shift in grade between the street and the front lawn.

### Things to Consider As You Plan

Preservation of existing historic fences and walls requires routine maintenance and repair when necessary. Keeping the bottom edge of wooden fence lines raised slightly above the ground and protected by a sound paint film, opaque stain, or wood preservative will significantly extend their life span. When deteriorated pickets or boards must be replaced, decay-resistant or pressure-treated wood should be selected. Cast iron fences require similar separation from ground moisture and protection with a sound paint film to prevent corrosion. Removal of all rust and immediate priming with an appropriate metal primer are critical to the repainting process. If replacement is necessary, a variety of traditional and contemporary cast-iron fencing is manufactured today. Masonry walls, except those that are stucco coated, are usually unpainted. The structural integrity of a masonry wall can be compromised by deteriorated mortar joints, vegetation, and improper drainage of ground or surface water. Repointing as necessary and maintaining or introducing drainage weep holes near the base of masonry walls are advisable. Coating uncoated masonry walls with paint or sealants instead of



*Wooden picket fences have been a common element of Newport yards for ages.*



*A brick arbor with climbing vines and flowers add a picturesque quality to this side yard on The Point.*



properly repairing them may exacerbate any moisture problems and diminish their historic character. The guidelines for wood, architectural metals, and masonry provide additional information on proper maintenance and repair of traditional fence and wall materials.

A need for security or privacy or the desire to enhance a site may lead to a decision to introduce a new fence or wall. Within the historic districts any proposed new fence is reviewed with regard to the compatibility of location, materials, design, pattern, scale, spacing, and color with the character of the principal building on the site and the historic district. Bear in mind that site features such as fences and walls can significantly contribute to or alter the “look and feel” of a site, and therefore can certainly affect the district as a whole. Although visually compatible contemporary fence and wall designs constructed in traditional materials are appropriate in the districts, new fencing or wall systems constructed of incompatible contemporary materials such as vinyl or chain-link fencing and imitation stone or stucco are not considered appropriate.



*A variety of fences and walls in a variety of materials are found throughout the district. Decorative gates embellish some.*

### 4.3 Fences and Walls: Guidelines

1. Retain and preserve fences and walls that contribute to the overall historic character of a building or a site, including such functional and decorative elements as gates, decorative rails and pickets, pillars, posts, and hardware.
2. Retain and preserve exterior fence and wall materials that contribute to the overall historic character of a building or a site, including brickwork, stucco, stone, concrete, wood, cast iron, and wrought iron.
3. Protect and maintain the wood, masonry, and metal elements of fences and walls through appropriate surface treatments:
  - Inspect regularly for signs of moisture damage, corrosion, structural damage or settlement, vegetation, and fungal or insect infestation.
  - Provide adequate drainage to prevent water from standing on flat, horizontal surfaces and collecting on decorative elements or along wall foundations.
  - Clean fences and walls as necessary to remove heavy soiling or corrosion or to prepare them for repainting. Use the gentlest means possible to preserve the historical fabric.
  - Retain protective surface coatings such as paint to prevent deterioration or corrosion.

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- Reapply protective surface coatings such as paint when they are damaged or deteriorated. Follow the guidelines for masonry, architectural metals, and wood where applicable.



4. Repair fences and walls using recognized preservation repair methods for the material or the surface coating.
5. If replacement of a deteriorated detail or element of a fence or a wall is necessary, replace only the deteriorated portion in kind rather than the entire feature. Match the original in design, dimension, detail, texture, pattern, material, and color. Consider compatible substitute materials only if using the original material is not technically feasible.
6. If replacement of an entire fence or wall is necessary because of deterioration, replace it in kind, matching the original in design, dimension, detail, texture, pattern, material, and color. Consider compatible substitute materials only if using the original material is not technically feasible.
7. If a fence or wall is completely missing, replace it with a new wall or feature based on accurate documentation of the original or a new design compatible with the historic character of the building and the district.
8. Introduce compatible new fences and walls constructed of traditional materials only in locations and configurations that are characteristic of the historic district. Keep the height of new fences and walls consistent with the height of traditional fences and walls in the district.
9. It is not appropriate to cover historic fence or wall material, including wood, stone, brick, stucco, concrete, or cement block, with contemporary substitute coatings or materials.
10. It is not appropriate to introduce vinyl or metal chain-link fencing.
11. It is not appropriate to introduce walls or fences taller than 42" or that are more than 65% solid into the front yard area (and/or street side yard area of a corner lot).



#### 4.4 Walkways, Driveways and Off-Street Parking

Walkways, driveways, and off-street parking areas are all circulation site features that contribute to the character of the individual building site and the historic district. The consistency and the repetition of walkway and driveway spacing,



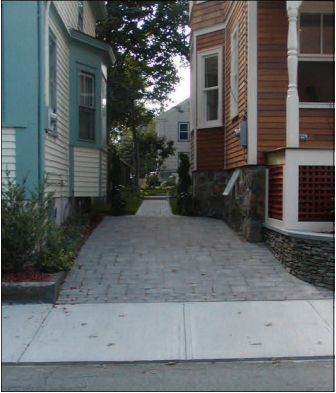


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placement, dimensions, materials, and design create a rhythm to the street in historic districts.



In Newport's early neighborhoods, front walks usually led directly to the front door from the sidewalk. Depending on the topography, the walkways might have incorporated steps and, sometimes if the front yard was fenced, a decorative gateway may have been in place. Traditional paving materials include brick or stone pavers or concrete. Plantings sometimes lined the walkways.



Not all residential sites included driveways in Newport's early neighborhoods. Driveways usually led directly to the back yard, sometimes to a carriage house, garage or other accessory building. Occasionally, and especially in the case of the upscale Gilded Age mansions, porte cochères provided a covered parking space attached to the main building. Driveways were typically made of gravel or compacted soil. Sometimes a grass median separated two gravel or aggregate textured concrete runners. Occasionally, more decorative brick or stone pavers were used.

Historically, off-street parking areas for multiple cars were not common historically in the residential neighborhoods or commercial areas. On-street parking initially met the demand for parking spaces, even in the commercial districts.

#### **Things to Consider As You Plan**

The preservation of existing walkways and driveways through routine maintenance and replacement of deteriorated surfaces in kind is essential to preserving the character of individual building sites and the district. When new walkways or driveways are proposed in a historic district, they should be designed to be compatible in location, patterns, spacing, configurations, dimensions, and materials with existing walkways and driveways.

If a parking lot must be located in a historic district, it should be located as unobtrusively as possible and must be screened from street view by a substantial planting strip or a combination of plantings and fencing. As many existing trees as possible should be saved and new trees should be planted to maintain or enhance the tree canopy. This not only helps integrate parking lots into the historic district; it also helps reduce the glare and the heat associated with parking lots and keeps the interiors of parked vehicles cooler in the summer months. Large off-street parking lots should be subdivided by planting strips to diminish the impact of the surface paving. In the historic districts of primarily commercial or institutional character, increased demand for parking has led to the construction of some parking decks as well as numerous off-street parking areas. Accommodating expanded parking needs within these districts demands thoughtful design solutions based on a thorough un-



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derstanding of the significant characteristics of the districts.



Parking areas should be gravel, brick, or paved with an aggregate-textured asphalt. In residential districts, new paved areas should never directly abut the principal site structure, significantly alter the site topography, or overwhelm in area the landscaped character of a backyard. Care must be taken that paved areas do not injure nearby trees by intruding onto their root areas.

### **4.3 Walkways, Driveways and Off-Street Parking: Guidelines**

1. Retain and preserve the topography, patterns, configurations, features, dimensions, materials, and color of existing walkways, driveways, and off-street parking areas that contribute to the overall historic character of individual building sites, the streetscape, and the historic district.
2. Protect and maintain existing walkways, driveways, and off-street parking areas through routine inspection and appropriate maintenance and repair procedures.
3. If replacement of a deteriorated section or element of an existing walkway, driveway, or off-street parking area is necessary, replace only the deteriorated portion in kind rather than the entire feature. Match the original section or element in design, dimension, texture, color, and material.
4. If a walkway or a driveway is completely missing, replace it with a new feature based on accurate documentation of the original design or a new design compatible in location, configuration, dimension, scale, materials, and color with the historic building site, streets, and district.
5. Design new walkways, driveways, and off-street parking areas to be compatible in location, patterns, spacing, configurations, dimensions, materials, and color with existing walkways, driveways, and off-street parking areas that contribute to the overall historic character of the district.
6. Locate new walkways, driveways, and off-street parking areas so that the topography of the building site and significant site features, including mature trees, are retained.
7. It is not appropriate to locate a new off-street parking area in a district with



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residential character where it is visible from the street, where it will significantly alter the proportion of built area to yard area on the individual site, or where it will directly abut the principal structure.

8. Maintain the continuity of sidewalks in the public-right-of-way when introducing new driveways.
9. Protect large trees and other significant site features from immediate damage during construction and from delayed damage due to construction activities, such as loss of root area or compaction of the soil by equipment. It is especially critical to avoid compaction of the soil within the drip line of trees.
10. Introduce perimeter plantings, hedges, fences, or walls to screen and buffer off-street parking areas from adjacent properties. Subdivide large parking areas with interior planting islands to break up any large paved area.
11. In choosing lighting for walkways, driveways, and off-street parking areas, follow the guidelines for lighting (**Section 4.5**)

## **4.4 Garages and Other Accessory Structures**

A number of original garages, carriage houses, storage buildings, and sheds have survived in Newport Historic Districts. Like other early site features, they contribute to the historic character of individual sites and a district as a whole. In some cases the garage or the accessory building echoes the architectural style, materials, and details of the principal structure on the site. Others are more modest, vernacular structures. Most early garages were sited in the rear yard and accessed either by a linear driveway leading from the street. Corner lots sometimes oriented garages toward the side street. Smaller storage buildings and sheds were also typically located unobtrusively in the rear yard.

### **Things to Consider As You Plan**

Routine maintenance and repair of early garages and other accessory structures are essential to their preservation. Just as with primary structures, exterior alterations to accessory structures must be reviewed by the HDC. Additional information on the appropriate rehabilitation of roofs, walls, windows, doors, and materials of garages and accessory structures can be found in the pertinent portions of these guidelines included in Chapter 3, Changes to the Building Exterior.

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building should be reviewed in terms of location, orientation, form, scale, size, materials, finish, and details. It is also important to consider the impact of the proposed construction on the existing site and site features. Please also review **Chapter 6: New Construction** for further details on planning new construction that is appropriate in historic districts.



## 4.5 Garages and Other Accessory Buildings: Guidelines

1. Retain and preserve garages and accessory structures that contribute to the overall historic character of the individual building site or the district.
2. Retain and preserve the character-defining materials, features, and details of historic garages and accessory buildings, including foundations, roofs, siding, masonry, windows, doors, and architectural trim.
3. Maintain and when necessary repair the character-defining materials, features, and details of historic garages and accessory buildings according to the pertinent guidelines.
4. If replacement of a deteriorated element or detail of a historic garage or accessory building is necessary, replace only the deteriorated portion in kind rather than the entire feature. Match the original element or detail in design, dimension, texture, color, and material. Consider compatible substitute materials only if using the original material is not technically feasible.
5. If a historic garage or accessory building is missing or deteriorated beyond repair, replace it with a design based on accurate documentation or a new design compatible in form, scale, size, materials, and finish with the principal structure and other historic garages and accessory buildings in the district. Maintain the traditional height and proportion of garages and accessory buildings in the district.
6. Locate and orient new garages and accessory buildings in locations compatible with the traditional relationship of garages and accessory buildings to the main structure and the site in the district.
7. It is not appropriate to introduce a prefabricated accessory building if it is not compatible in size, scale, form, height, proportion, materials, and details with historic accessory structures in the historic district.





*Gaslights can be found illuminating many streets and parks in Newport. Their human scale makes them especially desirable in the historic district.*

8. It is not appropriate to introduce an accessory building that is similar in appearance, material, and scale to historic accessory structures but is stylistically anachronistic with the character of the primary structure on the parcel or with historic accessory structures in the historic district.
9. It is not appropriate to introduce a new garage or accessory building if doing so will detract from the overall historic character of the principal building and the site, or require removal of a significant building element or site feature, such as a mature tree.
10. It is not appropriate to introduce features or details to a garage or an accessory building in an attempt to create a false historical appearance.

## 4.6 Lighting

Electric lighting was first introduced in Newport in the late nineteenth century and by the turn of the twentieth century had become commonplace, largely replacing gaslight fixtures. The styles of the exterior and interior fixtures reflected the styles of the buildings as well as the economic strata of the occupants. Early twentieth century photographs reveal that porch lighting was minimal or nonexistent. Depending on their location, streetlights ranged from elaborate designs, such as translucent globes mounted on cast-iron poles capped with decorative finials, to simple, bracketed globes mounted on utility poles. The light cast by these early fixtures was described as a soft yellow-toned glow rather than the harsher bluish tone light cast by contemporary mercury vapor streetlights.

### Things to Consider As You Plan

Today, issues of light pollution, safety, and security require careful forethought about the quantity and the location of exterior lighting. Considerations in reviewing any proposed lighting fixture for compatibility should include location, design, material, size, color, scale, and brightness. For major lighting proposals, such as those for large parking areas or streetlights, installing a sample fixture may be warranted. It is always preferable to retain and maintain original lighting fixtures; however, if fixtures are missing or damaged, alternatives exist. Antique or reproduction lighting fixtures of a similar design and scale may be installed, or reproduction fixtures that reflect the design of the building may be selected. For example, it would be appropriate to select a pendant or a bracketed fixture with a stylized scrollwork or a floral motif for an Eastlake cottage. Fixtures for a bungalow from the era of the Craftsman movement or the Art Deco period could also reflect those designs. Selecting a fixture style in contrast

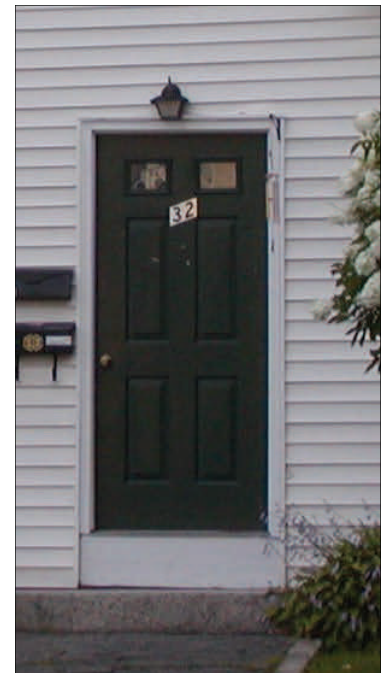


*Foot height lighting is a very discreet way to illuminate pathways and steps, increasing safety with minimal visual compromise to the site.*

to the building style is not recommended. In the 1950s, reproduction fixtures designed in colonial Williamsburg motifs became popular, but such fixtures are anachronistic and not compatible with early Newport buildings. Contemporary fixtures that are inconspicuous or that complement the style and the character of the building may be selected for historic buildings. Simple, discreet styles and materials are usually successful. If more illumination is desired than the original fixtures provide, unobtrusively located contemporary recessed lights may be appropriate.



Additional lighting may be desirable on a particular site because of concerns for safety or security. Careful consideration should be given to where supplemental lighting is needed and in what quantity. Adequate lighting can often be introduced through lights on residential-scale posts, recessed lights, footlights, or directional lights mounted in unobtrusive locations. Such solutions are far more in keeping with the historic character of the districts than harsh floodlights and standard security lights mounted on tall utility poles. However, even compatible fixtures may compromise a building or a site if they are improperly spaced or located. For example, lining a front walk with multiple footlights may create a runway effect that detracts from the character of the house and the district.



*A poorly-chosen light fixture that does nothing for this already neglected entrance.*

When selecting specific fixtures and locations, it is also important to consider the impact of site lighting on adjacent properties. The introduction of motion sensors or indiscriminate area lighting on one site may result in the undesired lighting of surrounding sites. To minimize the intrusion of lighting for institutional or commercial buildings and related parking areas in primarily residential neighborhoods, and to save energy, the lighting may be connected to timers that automatically shut it off when it is not needed.

## 4.7 Lighting: Guidelines

1. Retain and preserve exterior lighting fixtures that contribute to the overall historic character of a building, site, or streetscape.
2. Maintain and repair historic exterior lighting fixtures through appropriate methods.
3. If replacement of a missing or deteriorated historic exterior lighting fixture is necessary, replace it with a fixture that is similar in appearance, material, and scale to the original, or with a fixture that is compatible in scale, design, materials, color, finish, and historic character with the building and the streetscape.



*Historic light fixtures should be retained and preserved whenever possible.*





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4. Introduce new site and street lighting that is compatible with the human scale and the historic character of the district. Consider the location, design, material, size, color, finish, scale, and brightness of a proposed fixture in determining its compatibility.
  5. In the residential historic districts, introduce low-level lighting to provide for safety and security where needed. Install recessed lights, footlights, lights on posts of human scale, or directional lights in unobtrusive locations.
  6. Locate low-level or directional site lighting and motion detectors with care to ensure that the light does not invade adjacent properties.
  7. It is not appropriate to introduce indiscriminate area lighting in the historic districts.
  8. It is not appropriate to introduce new security lighting on standard-height power poles in the residential historic districts.
  9. It is not appropriate to illuminate the facades of houses in the residential historic districts with harsh floodlights.
  10. It is not appropriate to introduce or eliminate exterior lighting fixtures if doing so will detract from the overall historic character of the building, site, or streetscape.
  11. It is not appropriate to introduce period lighting fixtures from an era that predates the structure in the historic district in an attempt to create a false historical appearance, or that are stylistically inappropriate or anachronistic.
  12. It is not appropriate to diminish the historic character of a site by introducing incongruous lighting, such as creating a runway effect with multiple footlights along front walks.

## 4.8 Signage

Turn of the century photographs of Newport show that the designs for lettering on signs were straightforward and informative. In the case of commercial signs, many times the lettering was painted directly onto the window glass. Lettering designs were usually in sans serif typefaces or in typefaces with simple serifs,

and were styled in all capital letters. Fancy lettering, such as italics or ornate Gothic styles, was used as an accent or an emphasis in combination with plain lettering.



Signboards that hung over the sidewalk or were affixed to buildings were generally rectangular in shape with various corner treatments such as rounded, concave, or simple squared-off corners. As a general rule, signboards were simple shapes that conveyed a message. If a building had a transom over the main entrance, street address numbers were usually painted on the glass in that area. The Victorian builders' favorite method of announcing the name of a commercial or institutional building was to display it in relief on the pediment of the frieze over the main entrance. The date of the construction was often included as well.

### Things to Consider As You Plan

Significant historic signs and landmark signs within the districts should be preserved and maintained. Original signage incorporated into the architectural detail of commercial buildings should also be preserved.

The compatibility of new signage in the districts should be reviewed in terms of location, size, materials, color, scale, and character. All new signage must comply with current Newport sign ordinances as well.

For commercial adaptive uses in a historic district with residential character, small simple signs constructed of traditional sign materials and affixed flush to the body of the building near the front door are considered appropriate. Alternatively, the sign might be applied to the glazing of a storm or front door. For historic institutional uses within predominantly residential districts, simple signs constructed of traditional sign materials should be discreetly located. Small historic plaques and markers are usually mounted near the entrance on the exterior wall in a location where no architectural detail is damaged or concealed.

Signs in commercial districts can reflect the era and the character of the building and the historic district. Early photographs of Newport's commercial districts show a great variety of commercial signs, some of which may serve as prototypes for new commercial signage. Occasionally an antique sign may even be restored for contemporary use. Awnings provide an opportunity for commercial signage, as do storefront display windows and transoms. New signage on commercial and institutional buildings should be compatible with and enhance the architectural style and details of the building facade and never obscure or damage significant building features or detail



A variety of signs potentially found on historic buildings: a hanging sign to advertise a business, a sign giving the name of the first owner and approximate date of construction, and a "sign" not only telling the year that of construction, but also serving as ornament.



*In earlier times, it was not uncommon for shopkeepers to have signs painted in their front windows, as this modern shop on Thames Street has done.*

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### Additional Documentation Required

Scaled elevation drawing (for wall signs, freestanding signs and awnings), section drawing (for projecting signs and awnings) and/or site plan (freestanding signs) showing the proposed sign(s) in place on the building on in relationship to the building and other site features, including the property line. Please submit 3 copies of each drawing.

- A scaled drawing (3 copies) of the sign, including its type, dimensions, materials, colors, graphics and lettering, method of attachments and any illumination; samples may also be requested.
- Written confirmation of zoning status and any variances granted by the Zoning Board of Review.

## 4.9 Signage: Guidelines

1. Retain and preserve original signs that contribute to the overall historic character of the building or the district.
2. Introduce new signage that is compatible in material, size, color, scale, and character with the building or the district. Design signage to enhance the architectural character of a building.
3. For commercial and institutional buildings, design building signs to be integral to the overall building facade. It is not appropriate to cover a large portion of a facade or any significant architectural features with signage.
4. Introduce new signs, including graphics for windows or awnings, that are easily read and of simple design. Keep the size of graphics on windows or awnings in scale with the feature. It is not appropriate to obscure the view through a large portion of a window with graphics.
5. Select colors for new signage in the historic district that are compatible with the related structure or streetscape.
6. If desired, install small identification signs and historic plaques for residential buildings so that no architectural features or details are obscured or damaged.
7. Construct new signs of traditional sign materials, such as wood, stone, and metal. It is not appropriate to introduce an incompatible contemporary sign material, such as plastic, in the historic districts.



8. Mount flush signboards in appropriate locations on facades so that no architectural details or features are obscured or damaged. On masonry buildings, holes for fasteners should be placed in the mortar joints, not the masonry unit.
9. Install freestanding signs in appropriate locations on low standards or ground bases. Consider screening the base of ground signs with plantings to enhance its appearance.
10. Light signs in a manner compatible with the historic character and the pedestrian scale of the historic district, following the guidelines for lighting in Section 4.5. Internally illuminated awnings and signs are not appropriate in the historic districts.
11. It is not appropriate to install a large, out-of-scale, projecting sign on a building facade.

## 4.10 Archaeological Resources

Archaeological resources include all material evidence of past human activity. Though usually found below the earth's surface, sometimes these precious resources are exposed above the ground. In the historic districts a tremendous wealth of archaeological resources exists, documenting the long-time human habitation of these neighborhoods. Rhode Island is especially fortunate in the richness of our archaeological resources. Our state has Native American sites which are thousands of years old; sites which document first contact between Native Americans and white settlers; sites which explain early settlement and later development of Rhode Island as an agricultural, maritime and industrial center. Even the location of original foundations, porches, accessory buildings, walkways, and gardens can be determined through archaeological surveys. Information on the life-styles of previous inhabitants and patterns of site use can also be culled from archaeological investigations. It is important that such sites be documented; if something is found, contact the NHDC. However, the uncovering of archaeological resources endangers them. Protecting them in place is the best way to safeguard them.

### Things to Consider As You Plan

Before ground is broken for new construction or an addition to an existing building, the area should be examined by a trained archaeologist to see if an archaeological site might be located there. In most cases, there will not be any archaeological material but, if there is, it would be disturbed when the ground is



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broken. And once a site has been churned up, its archaeological value is destroyed. The information about our past that it contained will be lost forever.

If an archaeological site is found, this does not mean that the proposed work cannot be done. The “mitigation measures” referred to in Standard Eight of the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation address this concern and state that sometimes the site can be avoided during work or sometimes it will be excavated before construction.

If you are planning or evaluating a project which involves ground disturbance, the Rhode Island Preservation and Heritage Commission archaeologists can help you determine the likelihood of finding an archaeological site at your project.

#### **4.11 Archaeological Resources: Guidelines**

1. Protect and preserve known, significant archaeological resources in place.
2. Minimize disturbance of terrain in the district to reduce the possibility of destroying or damaging significant archaeological resources.
3. If a site is to be altered, survey and document the terrain in advance to determine the potential impact on significant archaeological resources.
4. If preservation of significant archaeological resources in place is not feasible, use professional archaeologists and modern archaeological methods in planning and executing any necessary investigations.
5. It is not appropriate to use heavy machinery or equipment on sites where doing so may disturb significant archaeological resources.





**CHAPTER 5:  
ADDITIONS  
AND NEW  
CONSTRUCTION**





## 5.1 Decks



*A newly-constructed deck, tastefully applied to the rear façade of the house, out of view from the road.*

The outdoor deck is a contemporary exterior feature frequently introduced in the residential historic neighborhoods. Essentially an uncovered, private version of a back porch, the deck can be compared functionally with a more traditional patio or terrace. To maintain a building's historic character, deck additions are generally located unobtrusively on the rear elevation. Decks are usually built on posts to align with the first-floor level of a residence and can consequently stand considerably above the ground. Like any addition to a historic building, a deck should be compatible with but differentiated from the building and constructed to be structurally independent so that it could be removed in the future without damage to the building. A deck should never be so large that it overpowers the building or the site. Insetting a deck at least 6 inches from a building corner also helps to diminish its impact and differentiate it from the existing building.

### Things to Consider As You Plan

- In locating a deck, property owners should always consider the proposed location's impact on the historic structure, the site, and the district. Locations that are visible from the street or that would damage or diminish significant architectural elements or significant site features, such as mature trees, should not be considered.
- Because decks are exposed to the elements, decay-resistant woods, such as cypress or redwood, or pressure-treated lumber should be used.
- Decks may be painted or stained to protect them from water and sunlight and to make them more compatible with the colors of the historic structure. Some pressure-treated wood may require six to twelve months of weathering before primer and paint will bond well to it. Opaque stains are a good option for exposed decks since they do not peel; stains are not an applied film like paint, but rather are a protective treatment that is absorbed into the wood surface.
- Galvanized nails and fasteners should be used in deck construction to avoid rust stains.
- To relate a deck visually to a historic building, the structural framing should be screened with traditional materials such as skirtboards, lattice, masonry panels, or dense evergreen plantings. Because a deck is a contemporary feature, detailing it to duplicate the architectural detailing of the historic building is usually unwise. Instead, simple balustrades and other elements that reflect the materials and the proportions of the building and the district are appropriate.





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- Roof decks are usually not appropriate in the Newport Local Historic District as they significantly change the appearance of the roof's form and damage historic material. Unless you can prove that a roof deck existed on your building's roof in the past, a roof deck is not appropriate. Proposals for roof decks with no historical basis will be rejected. See **3.6 Roofs, Roofing and Gutter Systems** for more information.

## 5.2 Decks: Guidelines

1. Locate and construct decks so that the historic fabric of the structure and its character-defining features and details are not damaged or obscured. Install decks so that they are structurally self-supporting and may be removed in the future without damage to the historic structure.
2. Introduce decks in inconspicuous locations, usually on the building's rear elevation and inset from the rear corners, where they are not visible from the street.
3. Design and detail decks and associated railings and steps to reflect the materials, scale, and proportions of the building.
4. In rare occasions where it is appropriate to site a deck in a location visible to the public right-of-way (i.e. the side of a building), it should be treated in a more formally architectural way. Careful attention should be paid to details and finishes, including painting or staining the deck's rails and structural support elements in colors compatible with the colors of the building.
5. Align decks generally with the height of the building's first-floor level. Visually tie the deck to the building by screening with compatible foundation materials such as skirtboards, lattice, masonry panels, and dense evergreen foundation plantings.
6. It is not appropriate to introduce a deck if doing so will require removal of a significant building element or site feature such as a porch or a mature tree.
7. It is not appropriate to introduce a deck if the deck will detract from the overall historic character of the building or the site.
8. It is not appropriate to construct a deck that significantly changes the proportion of built area to open space for a specific property.



### 5.3 Additions to Historic Buildings



A major misconception about historic preservation is that additions are not allowed on designated buildings. Over the life of a building, its form may evolve as additional space is needed or new functions are accommodated. However, sensitively designed additions allow historic buildings to compete with contemporary ones in terms of livability and in fact help to preserve historic homes by keeping them available for the continued use and enjoyment of Newport’s residents. Many buildings in the Newport Historic District reflect their history through the series of previous alterations and additions that they exhibit. Consequently, such changes are significant to the history of the building and the district.

New additions within the historic districts are appropriate as long as they do not destroy historic features, materials, and spatial relationships that are significant to the original building and site. A new addition should be designed to respect a building’s character and to preserve its historic integrity. This generally means using existing rooflines, trim lines, material and massing as a guide for designing the new addition. It is critical that additions do not visually overpower the original building.

Further, new additions should be differentiated from the original building and constructed so that they can be removed in the future without damage to the building.

Additions that replicate the features of a historic building must be clearly differentiated as new construction to preserve the visual understanding of the original historic building. This differentiation can be accomplished by breaking the plane of a wall to inset the addition, giving the addition a lower roofline or using a different material. Contemporary designs may be acceptable on the rear elevation.

#### Things to Consider As You Plan

- Make retention of the building’s historic character and materials the focus of the addition’s design.
- New additions should never compromise the integrity of the original structure or site either directly through destruction of historic features and materials or indirectly through their location, size, height, or scale.
- The impact of an addition on the original building can be significantly diminished by locating it on the least character-defining elevation (usually the “rear” elevation) and by keeping it deferential in volume. It should never overpower the original building through height or size.
- The form, design, relationship of openings, scale, and selection of



materials, details, colors, and features of proposed new additions should be reviewed in terms of compatibility with the original building. Please see **Chapter 3: Changes to Building Exterior** regarding guidelines for selecting materials that are appropriate for use in the historic district.

- Additions may be designed in the spirit of the existing architectural style, or may be clearly differentiated from the historic structure but compatible with it and with the surrounding buildings in the historic district.
- Although designed to be compatible with the original building, an addition should be discernible from it. For example, it can be differentiated from the original building through a break in roofline, cornice height, wall plane, materials, siding profile, or window type.
- The impact of an addition on the building site must be considered as well. The addition should be designed and located so that significant site features such as outbuildings, landscaping features (such as stone retention walls, a brick-paved terrace, etc.), or mature trees, are not lost. The size of the addition should not overpower the site or dramatically alter its historic character.



## 5.4 Additions to Historic Buildings: Guidelines

1. Construct new additions so that there is the least possible loss of historic fabric and so that the character-defining features of the historic building are not destroyed, damaged, or obscured.
2. Design new additions so that the overall character of the site, site topography, character-defining site features, trees, and significant district vistas and views are retained.
3. Protect large trees and other significant site features from immediate damage during construction and from delayed damage due to construction activities, such as loss of root area or compaction of the soil by equipment. It is especially critical to avoid compaction of the soil within the drip line of trees.
4. Locate a new addition on an inconspicuous elevation of the historic building, usually the rear one.
5. Limit the size and the scale of an addition in relationship to the historic building (or adjacent neighbors) so that it does not diminish or visually overpower the building(s).





*This new home has a modern design, but it blends harmoniously with surrounding historic homes in its neighborhood. Its massing and setback are appropriate for this street.*

6. Design an addition to be compatible with the historic building in mass, materials, color, and relationship of solids to voids in the exterior walls, yet make the addition discernible from the original.
7. It is not appropriate to construct an addition if it will detract from the overall historic character of the principal building and the site, or if it will require the removal of a significant building element or site feature. Avoid the loss of built features such as outbuildings and landscaping features that are historically associated with the main building.
8. It is not appropriate to construct an addition that significantly changes the proportion of built mass to open space on the individual site.
9. Survey in advance and limit any disturbance to the site's terrain during construction to minimize the possibility of destroying unknown archaeological resources.

## 5.5 New Construction - Site and Architecture

Since its inception, the Newport HDC's philosophy regarding new construction has been to promote high quality new design, often contemporary in nature, that fits harmoniously within the context of the historic districts. (For the purposes of these guidelines, "new construction" refers to new buildings or structures of any kind, including garages, and substantial additions larger than 25% of the existing structure). New construction within a historic district can enhance the existing district character if the proposed design and its siting reflect an understanding of and a compatibility with the distinctive character of the district setting and buildings. In fact, the introduction of a compatible but contemporary new construction project can add depth and contribute interest to the district. This section deals primarily with the actual architecture of new construction; the section that follows provides guidelines for determining proper siting within the historic neighborhood where you are planning a new construction project.

### Things to Consider As You Plan

The compatibility of new site development with the district setting depends on its compatibility with characteristic district features as well as the retention of the specific site's topography and character-defining site features, which is discussed more thoroughly in the next section. The success of new construction within a historic district does not depend on direct duplication of existing building forms, features, materials, and details. Rather, it relies on understanding what the distinctive architectural character of the district is. Infill buildings must be compatible with that character. Contemporary design generated from such understanding can enrich the architectural continuity of a historic district. In considering the overall compatibility of a proposed structure, its height, form, massing, proportion, size, scale, and roof shape

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should first be reviewed. A careful analysis of buildings surrounding the site can be valuable in determining how consistent and, consequently, how significant each of these criteria is. The overall proportion of the building's front elevation is especially important to consider because it will have the most impact on the streetscape. For example, if the street facades of most nearby buildings are vertical in proportion, taller than they are wide, then maintaining the vertical orientation of the building façade will result in a more compatible design.

A similar study of materials, building features, and details typical of existing buildings along the streetscape, block, or square will provide a vocabulary to draw on in designing a compatible building. Beyond the obvious study of prominent building elements such as porches or storefronts, particular attention should be given to the spacing, placement, scale, orientation, and size of window and door openings as well as the design of the doors and the windows themselves. Compatibility at the building skin level is also critical. Certainly the selection of appropriate exterior materials and finishes depends on an understanding of the compatibility of proposed materials and finishes in composition, scale, module, pattern, texture, color, and sheen. Individual sections within **Chapter 3, Changes to the Building Exterior**, also provide pertinent information on traditional materials, features, and details found in the historic districts.

It is not necessary to replicate historic architectural styles; designs should be contextual, but should not seek to create a false sense of historical development.

It is strongly recommended that the applicant retain the services of a registered architect, design professional or engineer for the design and construction of any new structure or addition within a historic district. It is especially helpful to choose an architect who has experience with designing new buildings within historic districts.

### **Design Criteria**

Historic neighborhoods in Newport contain a wide variety of building types and architectural styles. While some streets demonstrate great similarity of building sizes, shapes, materials and setbacks, others are characterized by great diversity, demonstrating how a neighborhood has grown over time or how different activities were carried out in the same area. This variety makes it impossible to mandate a specific design for new construction. These guidelines therefore deal with general issues of building height, mass, scale, siting, rhythm, materials, etc. They are intended to provide a framework within which design creativity and the needs of the property owner can co-exist with respect for designated historic districts.

- New construction should reflect the design trends and concepts of the period



*Another successful new construction project. While it draws on the forms of the historic architecture around it for inspiration, it still reflects a modern aesthetic.*



in which it is created, while recognizing that a new building or addition must fit into an existing framework of a variety of older buildings.

- New structures should harmonize with existing older structures, and at the same time be distinct from the old so that the evolution of the district can be interpreted correctly.
- When designing an addition or a new building, consider the following architectural features in relationship to the existing structure and/or the surrounding structures:
  - Height
  - Scale
  - Massing, form, proportions
  - Roof shape
  - Height of foundation platform
  - Sense of entry, porches, doors, stairs
  - Rhythm and size of openings
  - Color and texture of materials
  - Architectural detail
- All new public and commercial buildings must be fully accessible to the disabled under federal and state law. Emergency egress in any new building shall be accommodated inside the building.

#### **New Construction Review Process**

Review of an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for new construction generally occurs in three phases:

1. **Pre-application consultation and/or review.** Consulting with the NHDC staff and arranging a site visit early in the design process (during preliminary design, and before filing an application) is essential. This is the time to identify issues for both the property owner and the NHDC and to investigate alternative approaches to resolving these issues. Applicants may also request a non-binding pre-application review with the NHDC Design Review Subcommittee, to obtain informal feedback on a design concept before filing an application. At a pre-application review the applicant should be prepared to present:
  - A written description of the project
  - Photographs of the site and schematic site plans and elevations.

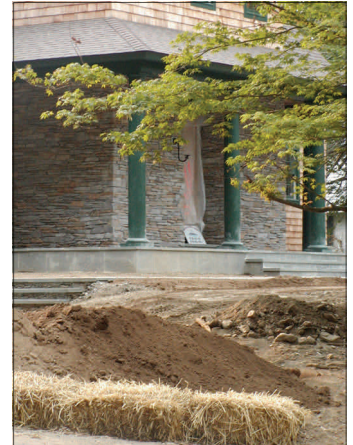


2. **Public Review.** Once a complete application is filed (see “**Documentation Requirements for New Construction,**” below), it is either administratively approved or it is scheduled for review at a public meeting. If it is scheduled for public review, the applicant’s presentation should include:

- Identification of the use of the new structure, and
- A statement of design philosophy and a conceptual design showing height, scale, roof form, setback, shape, rhythm, materials and major site elements.
- The applicant presents final drawings (not for construction) that respond to comments made at the pre-application consultation and that clarify relationships of various building and site elements to each other, relate interior arrangements to exterior appearance, address issues such as projections and recesses, doors and windows, trim and ornament, landscaping, etc., and include operating systems (mechanical, electrical, plumbing).

At the public meeting the applicant’s application can be approved, approved conditionally, approved conceptually, denied, or continued to either Design Review Subcommittee or the next month’s public hearing. If the final design is approved, the application then passes to review of construction details.

3. **Construction detail review.** After an application is approved and any necessary zoning variances have been obtained, construction drawings and other details (such as material or color samples) are reviewed by staff. These drawings show how the structure will actually be built, and are used by the contractor to price the job, obtain permits and carry out the work. Construction drawings can be reviewed informally unless there are substantial changes to the approved final design; staff or the subcommittee will determine whether proposed changes warrant a further public hearing. Construction drawings must be approved (stamped) before a Certificate of Appropriateness and a building permit can be issued.



*A successful new construction project in progress; again, the architect of this home has blended the old with the new to create a unique design that harmonizes with it’s surrounding neighborhood.*

### Changes to an Approved Project

It is common for project details to change during the course of construction. However, a Certificate of Appropriateness for any project is tied to a specific design and details as illustrated in stamped construction drawings. ***All changes must be brought to the attention of the NHDC staff before construction proceeds on those changes.*** Staff will determine whether the changes can be reviewed in-house or whether the NHDC needs to review them at a public meeting. ***Failure to advise the NHDC of changes to an approved project and to obtain approval for those changes will invalidate the Certificate of Appropriateness and be deemed a***



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*violation of the zoning ordinance.*

### **Documentation Required for New Construction**

#### **Public Review**

The following information must be submitted *at least thirty (30) days in advance of a scheduled public meeting-please see the NHDC City of Newport Webpage for a schedule of NHDC public meetings*. Incomplete applications cannot be scheduled for review.

- A completed application form for a Certificate of Appropriateness, signed by the property owner, including a description of existing conditions and proposed changes.
- Color or black and white photographs of the site where the proposed new construction will occur, and of all abutting properties (abutters are those properties whose lot lines touch the lot lines of the subject property; streets are considered common property lines). Photos should be at least 4x6 inches and must be labeled with the street address, compass direction and date. High quality digital photographs are acceptable.
- Color photocopies of slides may be acceptable if the images reproduce clearly. Photocopied prints and instant (Polaroid) snapshots are not acceptable due to lack of clarity and long-term stability.
- Ten (10) sets of scaled architectural drawings of the proposed new construction. Drawings should be titled, indicating the scale, labeled with the property address and dated. The scale should be sufficient to indicate clearly all aspects of the project. Drawings should include: Site plan illustrating the location of all new construction in relationship to all other site elements, the property lines and structures on abutting properties. Site plan should be based upon data provided by a registered land surveyor, and shall clearly indicate the location of all design features of the proposed construction, including: building setbacks, paved areas, parking areas, landscape features, fences, walls, mechanical equipment and other planned improvements. Indicate north arrow.
- Floor plans, roof plan and exterior elevations showing the design concept for all four elevations, all interior floors and the roof. Drawings should illustrate the relationship of the proposed structure to abutting buildings, and shall clearly indicate all design features of the proposed construction, including: building materials of all permanent exterior finish materials; location, configuration and type of doors and windows; overall dimensions; general details of roofing, siding, ornament and trim; location and type of any proposed signs; exterior mechanical equipment; and other building or





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site features. Recommended but not required: Axonometric or perspective drawings (and/or model), illustrating in three dimensions the proposed construction in context with the surrounding area and abutting buildings.

- Ten (10) complete sets of the above drawings, reduced to 11x17 inches for mailing purposes.
- One (1) full-size set of final design drawings, to scale, depicting the final design of the project.
- Drawings shall include floor, roof and site plans, all exterior elevations, building sections and exterior details. Drawings should be titled, indicating the scale, labeled with the property address and dated.
- Any other information requested by the NHDC or the staff at the Design Review Sub-committee meeting.

#### **CONSTRUCTION DETAILS**

- The applicant shall submit ten (10) sets of scaled construction drawings to the NHDC staff. Material samples, if requested, should be made available on site.

### **5.6 New Construction - Site & Architecture: Guidelines**

1. Retain the services of a registered architect, engineer or other design professional for the design and construction of any new structure or addition within a historic district. It is especially helpful to choose a design professional who has experience with designing new construction within historic districts.
2. Site new construction to be compatible with surrounding buildings that contribute to the overall character of the historic district in terms of architecture, setback, orientation, spacing, and distance from adjacent buildings.
3. Design new construction so that the overall character of the site, site topography, character-defining site features, trees, and significant district vistas and views are retained.
4. Evaluate in advance and limit any disturbance to the site's terrain during construction to minimize the possibility of destroying unknown archaeological resources
5. Protect large trees and other significant site features from immediate damage during construction and from delayed damage due to construction activities, such as loss of root area or compaction of the soil by equipment. It is especially critical to avoid compaction of the soil within the drip line of trees.
6. Conform to the design guidelines found in **Section 4: Site and Setting** regarding site and setting in developing a proposed site plan.
7. Design new buildings to be compatible with surrounding buildings that



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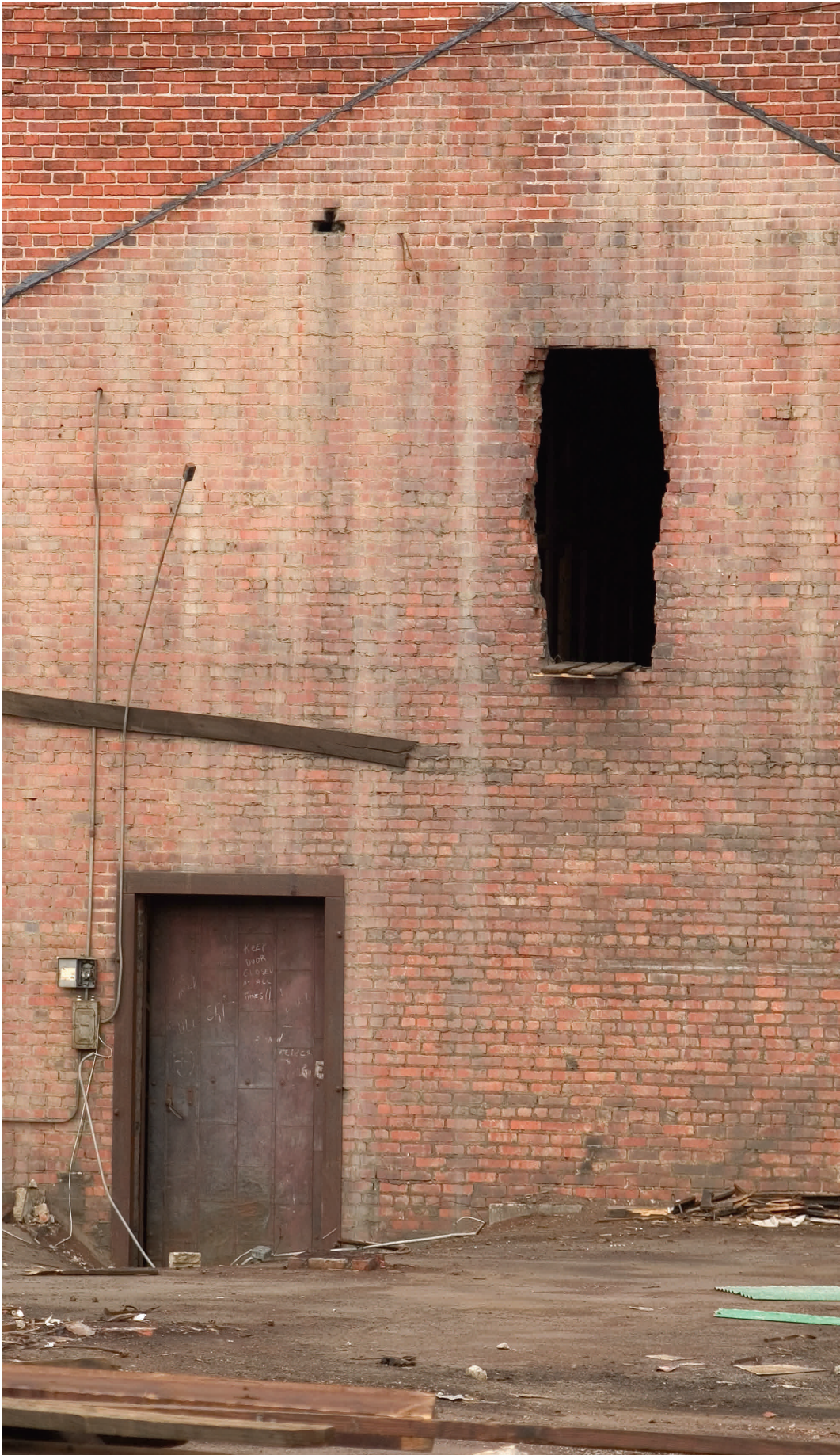
contribute to the overall character of the historic district in terms of height, form, size, scale, massing, proportion, and roof shape.

8. Design the proportion of the proposed new building's front facade to be compatible with the front facade proportion of surrounding historic buildings.
9. Design the spacing, placement, scale, orientation, proportion, and size of window and door openings in proposed new construction to be compatible with the surrounding buildings that contribute to the special character of the historic district.
10. Select windows and doors for proposed new buildings that are compatible in material, subdivision, proportion, pattern, and detail with the windows and doors of surrounding buildings that contribute to the special character of the historic district.
11. Select materials and finishes for proposed new buildings that are compatible with historic materials and finishes found in the surrounding buildings that contribute to the special character of the historic district in terms of composition, scale, module, pattern, detail, texture, finish, color, and sheen.
12. Design new buildings so that they are compatible with but discernible from historic buildings in the district. Your design should not try to create a false sense of historical development.





## CHAPTER 6: RELOCATION OR DEMOLITION







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## 6.1 Relocation of Historic Structures

When a historic structure is moved from its original site, it loses its integrity of setting and its sense of time and place, which are important aspects of the historic building and its environment. Their loss is irreplaceable. Ordinarily, a contributing historic structure listed on the National Register of Historic Places (as are many of the buildings in Newport's local historic district) will lose its National Register status if moved from its original site.

Moving of historic structures into, within or out of historic districts is discouraged except as a last alternative to demolition. In any case, the selection of a new site, appropriate for the building, plays a key role in the success of the relocation project. Consider how the building will relate to the proposed site and to its immediate context in terms of size, massing, scale, setback, texture of materials and parking; and how its architectural style relates to its surroundings and to the district as a whole.

Because moving structures is complicated, time-consuming, and expensive, it should not be undertaken until every aspect of the project has been considered and evaluated. The property owner and the commission must give full consideration to the architectural and environmental aspects of the situation before addressing the practical problems of moving a structure. The following questions provide a framework for evaluating the architectural and environmental context for such a decision:

- Is the structure threatened with demolition?
- Is relocation the only alternative to demolition?
- Is the structure significant enough architecturally or historically to warrant moving it?
- Is the property sound enough structurally to survive a move and be adapted to its new site?
- If the structure is currently sited in a historic district, what is proposed for the site once the structure is removed?
- Will the move adversely affect the overall character of the historic district or of remaining historic structures?
- Will the move damage significant district site features, such as a tree canopy, en route or on the site?
- If the proposed site for a relocated structure is in a historic district, does the structure fit into the era of the district; is its style, architectural quality, size, and scale compatible with the district?



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## 6.1 Relocation of Historic Structures: Guidelines and Documentation Required



- If the proposed site for a relocated structure is not in a historic district, what covenants, if any, will be established to preserve the distinctive character of the relocated structure?
- Is there an appropriate and practical new use for the structure on its new site?

Structures may be moved intact, partially disassembled and completely disassembled. It is important that the structure be moved by a professional building moving firm with experience in moving historic structures. Adequate insurance coverage must be provided for all phases of the operation. The property owner will need to get various licenses and permits from city agencies such as the public works, traffic engineering, police, fire and building departments; and from utility companies. The owner must provide proof of ability to comply with all local and state safety regulations, and supply the necessary equipment and vehicles. If the owner is using federal assistance to move a structure listed on the National Register, archeological investigations are usually required.

1. Before moving a historic structure, document its original setting and context. Use photographs, site plans, or other graphic or written statements to record the existing site conditions.
2. Enlist contractors experienced in moving historic buildings to do the following:
  - Determine the structural condition of the property before the move.
  - Coordinate the move with the utility companies and appropriate City departments.
  - Protect the structure from vandalism or weather damage before, during, and after the move.
  - Minimize structural damage during the move.
3. Relocate a structure within the historic district only if it is determined to be architecturally compatible with the adjacent buildings according to the guidelines for new construction.
4. Relocate a structure on a site within a historic district according to new construction guidelines for siting, orientation, plantings, and other pertinent aspects of site and setting.
5. Ensure that the relocation of a structure will not diminish or damage existing historic district buildings or the overall character of the district. Pay particular attention to the tree canopy along the route of the move.
6. Provide the RHDC with site plan information for proposed site features and plantings of the new setting, including information on accessory buildings, driveways, site lighting, and parking areas.



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7. If the original site of the structure to be relocated is within a historic district, before the move, submit to the commission a site plan for proposed site features and plantings of the original site after the relocation.
  8. Protect significant site features of the original site, the new site, and the route of the move during the relocation.

**Documentation Required:**

In addition to the items listed in **1.3 Basic Documentation Required**, the following documentation is also necessary when applying for permission to move a historic building:

**If the structure is to be moved to a site within a local historic district:**

- Site plan (3 sets) to scale, showing the proposed location of the structure, indicating its relationship to the new site and the surrounding neighborhood. Drawings should be titled, indicating the scale and north arrow, and noting the street address and date.
- Elevation drawings (3 sets) to scale, showing the building in its proposed new site in the district, showing its relationship to abutting buildings on all sides; and a scaled foundation plan. Drawings should be titled, indicating the scale, and noting the street address and date.

**If the structure is to be moved from a site within a local historic district:**

- A scaled plan, elevation and section drawings (3 sets) as necessary to illustrate any proposed new construction or site treatment
- A certified report from an engineer or the moving company describing the method of moving, expected loss of historic fabric, timetable, etc.
- List of the names and mailing addresses of all abutting property owners, derived from the most current records of the City Tax Assessor. “Abutter” is defined as any property whose lot lines touch the front, side or rear lot lines of the subject property; since streets are common property lines, properties across the street are included as abutters. Properties on a corner should include the three opposite corner properties as abutters, in addition to those sharing side or rear lot lines.



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## 6.2 Demolition

Demolition of any historic structure constitutes an irreplaceable loss to the historic district and the City of Newport. Given the irreversible nature of demolition, full deliberation of all alternatives before action is essential. Even the demolition of a non-contributing structure, or a secondary structure such as a garage, can have serious consequences for the district as a whole. Consequently, demolition is strongly discouraged.

Demolition proposals are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. The applicant must make a good faith effort to demonstrate that all alternatives to demolition have been evaluated (including rehabilitation, sale, adaptive reuse and relocation of the structure), and to provide both architectural and financial data to support a conclusion that demolition is the only feasible solution. The documentation requirements for demolition proposals are extensive, but complete information is necessary for the NHDC to make an informed decision.

All demolition proposals should include information about how the site will be treated once the structure is removed. Where demolition of a primary structure is proposed, plans for development of the site with new construction should be included with the application. Replacing a building with a surface parking lot can seriously diminish the architectural integrity of historic districts and is strongly discouraged.

Upon approval of an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition, the NHDC may require that the exterior and interior of the structure be recorded, at the owner's expense, according to the documentation standards of the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) and the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER). Such records would be deposited with the NHDC.



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## 6.2 Demolition: Guidelines

1. Before demolition, work with the NHDC to pursue all alternatives to demolition.
2. Before demolition, record significant structures through photographs and/or measured drawings as specified by the NHDC.
3. Before demolition, work with the NHDC and other interested parties to salvage usable architectural materials and features.
4. Before demolition, submit a site plan to the commission illustrating proposed site development or plantings to follow demolition.
5. During demolition, ensure the safety of any adjacent properties and history sources. Also, during and after demolition, protect trees on the site from damage due to compaction of the soil by equipment or materials.
6. After demolition, clear the site promptly and thoroughly.
7. After demolition, plant or develop the site promptly as approved in the proposed site plan.



## APPENDICES







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## 7.1 Resources for Information

### Local Resources

Newport Historic District Commission  
Department of Planning, Zoning, Development and Inspection  
Newport City Hall, Floor Three  
43 Broadway  
Newport, Rhode Island 02840  
General office telephone: (401) 846-9600  
World Wide Web: <http://new.cityofnewport.com/dept/plan/home.html>

Contact the Department of Planning, Zoning, Development and Inspection for further information on the Newport Local Historic District, applying for certificates of appropriateness, and technical assistance.

### State Resources

Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission  
Old State House  
150 Benefit Street  
Providence, RI 02903  
General office telephone: (401) 222-2678  
Office fax: (401) 222-2968  
TTY (Relay RI): (800) 745-5555  
General email: [info@preservation.ri.gov](mailto:info@preservation.ri.gov)  
World Wide Web: <http://www.rihphc.state.ri.us/>

Contact the RIHPHC for information on historic structures, the National Register or preservation tax credits and loans.

### Federal Resources

U.S. Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240  
Office of the Director: 202/208-4621  
Office of Communications: 202/208-6843  
Cultural Resource Stewardship and Partnerships: 202/208-7625  
Heritage Preservation Services: <http://www2.cr.nps.gov>

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## 7.2 Glossary of Preservation and Architectural Terms



**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 wooden siding. Aluminum siding was developed in the early 1940s and became increasingly common in the 1950s and the 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 around a door or window opening.

**ASBESTOS SIDING** Dense, rigid board containing a high proportion 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 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 rooflike covering of canvas, often adjustable, over a window, a door, 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, BANDMOLD, BELT** Flat trim running horizontally in the wall to denote a division in the wall plane or a change in level.

**BARGEBOARD (ALSO 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 facade.

**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 wooden shutters on windows or 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 wire reinforcement is not used.

**BRACKET** A symbolic cantilever, usually of a fanciful form, used under the cornice in place of the usual mutile 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 facade of a commercial storefront.

**CAPITAL** The top or 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 so as to cover a portion of a 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 was a common outer face of nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings.

**CLASSICAL** A loose term 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 English Georgian architecture of the eighteenth century in the

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North American colonies.



**COLUMN** A vertical shaft or pillar that supports or appears to support a load.

**COMPOSITION BOARD** A building board, usually intended to resemble clapboard, fabricated from wood or paper fabric under pressure and 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 decorative effect.

**CORNER BLOCK** A block placed at a corner of the casing around a 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 surface.

**CRESTING** Decorative iron tracery or jigsaw work placed at the ridge of a roof.

**CUPOLA** A small vault on top of a roof; sometimes spherical in shape, sometimes square with a mansard or conical roof.

**DECK** An uncovered porch, usually at the rear of a building; popular in modern residential design.

**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, planing, 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 bottom to top, 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 a similar device.

**ETCHED GLASS** Glass whose surface has been cut away with a strong acid or by abrasive action into a decorative pattern.

**FAÇADE** The exterior face of a building.



**FANLIGHT** An arched over door light 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 windows and doors and their openings in a building.

**FINIAL** A formal ornament at the top of a canopy, gable, pinnacle, streetlight, 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 portions 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 gable roof more or less symmetrical, having four inclined surfaces, the pair meeting at the ridge having a shallower pitch.

**GERMAN SIDING** Wooden siding with a concave upper edge that fits into a corresponding rabbet in the siding above.

**GINGERBREAD** Thin, curvilinear ornamentation produced with machinepowered saws.

**GLUE-CHIP GLASS** A patterned glass with a surface resembling frost crystals; common in turn-of-the-century houses and bungalows.

**GUTTER** A shallow channel of metal or wood set immediately below or built in along the eaves of a building to catch and carry off rainwater.

**HEADER** A brick laid across the thickness of a wall to bond together different wythes of a wall; the exposed end of a brick.



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**HIPPED ROOF** A roof without gables, each of whose sides, generally four, lies in a single plane and joins the others at an apex or ridge.



**JAMB** The vertical sides of an opening, usually for a door or a window.

**JERKIN HEAD ROOF** A roof whose end has been formed into a shape midway between a gable and a hip, resulting in a truncated or “clipped” appearance; sometimes called clipped gable.

**LATEX PAINT** A paint having a latex binder (an emulsion of finely dispersed particles of natural or synthetic rubber or plastic materials in water).

**LATTICE** A network, often diagonal, of interlocking lath or other thin strips used as screening, especially in the base of a porch.

**LIGHT** A pane of glass.

**LINTEL** A horizontal member spanning an opening and supporting construction above; a beam.

**LUNETTE** A semicircular opening.

**MANSARD ROOF** A modification of the hipped roof in which each side has two planes, the upper being more shallow. This roof is characteristic of the Second Empire style.

**MILDEW** A fungus that grows and feeds on paint, cotton and linen fabrics, etc., that are exposed to moisture; causes discoloration and decomposition of the surface.

**MOLDING** A decorative band having a constant profile or having a pattern in low relief, generally used in cornices or as trim around openings.

**MORTAR** A mixture of portland cement, lime, putty, and sand in various proportions, used for laying bricks or stones. Until the use of hard Portland cement became general, the softer lime-clay or lime-sand mortars and masonry cement were common.

**MULLION** A vertical member dividing a window area and forming part of the window frame.

**MUNTIN** A molding forming part of the frame of a window sash and holding one side of a pane.

**NEWEL POST** A vertical member or post, usually at the start of a stair or at any place a stair changes direction. Usually large and ornate, it is the principal support for the handrail.

**OGEE** A double curve formed by the combination of a convex and concave line, similar to an s-shape.

**OIL PAINT** A paint in which a drying oil, usually linseed oil, is the vehicle for the pigment; rarely used as a house paint since the mid-twentieth century when it was commonly replaced by alkyd resin paints.

**PANEL** A thin, flat piece of wood framed by stiles and rails as in a door or fitted into grooves of thicker material with molded edges for decorative wall treatment.

**PANTILE** A roofing tile that has the shape of an S laid on its side.

**PARAPET** A low wall along a roof, directly above an outer wall.



**PATIO** An open, outdoor living space adjacent to a building, usually surfaced with stone, tiles, or concrete and at ground level.

**PEDIMENT** A triangular gable bounded on all sides by a continuous cornice. This form is characteristic of classical architecture.

**PILASTER** A flat or half-round decorative member applied at a wall suggesting a column; sometimes called engaged column.

**PORTE COCHERE**—A roofed passageway large enough for wheeled vehicles to pass through.

**PORTICO** A small entrance porch or covered walk consisting of a roof supported by open columns.

**PORTLAND CEMENT** A very hard and strong hydraulic cement (one that hardens under water) made by heating a slurry of clay and limestone in a kiln.

**PRIMER** A paint applied as a first coat that serves the function of sealing and filling on wood, plaster, and masonry.

**QUARTER ROUND** A small molding that has the cross-section of a quarter circle.

**QUOIN** In masonry, a hard stone or brick used, with similar ones, to reinforce an external corner or edge of a wall or the like; often distinguished decoratively from adjacent masonry.

**RAKE** Trim members that run parallel to a roof slope and form the finish between the wall and a gable roof extension.

**RECESSED LIGHT** A light that has been placed into a surface so that its face is flush with the surface of a ceiling or a wall.

**REHABILITATION** The act or the process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving the portions or the features that convey the property's historical, cultural, or architectural values.

**REPOINTING** Raking out deteriorated mortar joints and filling into them a surface mortar to repair the joint.

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

**RISER** The vertical portion of a stair, connecting two steps.

**ROOFING TILE** A tile for roofing, usually of burnt clay; available in many configurations and types, such as plain tiles, single-lap tiles, and interlocking tiles.

**RUSTICATED STONE** Masonry or wood in which each principal face is rough or highly patterned with a tooled margin.

**SANDBLASTING** An extremely abrasive method of cleaning brick, masonry, or wood that involves directing high-powered jets of sand against a surface. Sanding, flattening down, rubbing—Smoothing a surface with abrasive paper or cloth, either by hand or by machine.



**SASH** The moving part of a window.

**SAWNWORK** Ornamentation in cutout planking, formed with a bandsaw. Popular in the 1880s and the 1890s, this decorative detailing is flat.

**SHEET METAL** A flat, rolled-metal product, rectangular in cross-section and form; when used as roofing material, usually terne- or zinc-plated.

**SHINGLE** A roofing unit of wood, asphalt, slate, tile, or other material cut to stock lengths, widths, and thicknesses; used as an exterior covering on roofs and applied in an overlapping fashion.

**SHUTTERS** Small wooden louvered or solid panels hinged on the exterior of windows, and sometimes doors, to be operable.

**SIDELIGHT** A narrow window area beside an outside door, generally seen in Greek Revival style.

**SILL** The lowest horizontal member in a wall opening.

**SOFFIT** The exposed undersurface of any overhead component of a building, such as an arch, balcony, beam, cornice, lintel, or vault.

**STEPPED GABLE** A gable concealing the end of a roof with a stepped parapet.

**STRETCHER** A brick or a 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.

**TARPAPER** A roofing material manufactured by saturating a dry felt with asphalt and then coating it with a harder asphalt mixed with a fine material.

**TERNEPLATE** Sheet metal coated with terne metal, which is an alloy of lead containing up to 20 percent tin.

**TERRA-COTTA** Hard unglazed fired clay, used for ornamental work and roof and floor tile; also fabricated with a decorative glaze and used as a surface finish for buildings in the Art Deco style.

**TEXTURED SIDING** Wood cut in various flat patterns, such as half-rounds or scallops, and applied to portions of facades to create a picturesque or romantic look. This treatment was generally used in Queen Anne-style buildings. Surface textures are often found in diamond, scallop, staggered butt, or composite patterns.

**TONGUE AND GROOVE** A joinery system in which boards are milled with a tongue on one side and a groove on the other so that they can be tightly joined with a flush surface alignment.

**TRACERY** An ornamental division of an opening, especially a large window, usually made with wood. Tracery is found in buildings of Gothic influence.

**TRANSOM, OR OVERDOOR LIGHT** A glazed panel above a door or a storefront, sometimes hinged to be opened for ventilation at ceiling level.

**TREAD** The horizontal surface of a step.



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**VINYL SIDING** Sheets of thermal plastic compound made from chloride of VINYL ACETATES, as well as some plastics made from styrene and other chemicals, usually fabricated to resemble clapboard.

**WATERBLASTING** A cleaning method similar to sandblasting except that water is used as the abrasive. As in sandblasting, high-pressure water jets can damage wood and masonry surfaces.

**WATER TABLE** A belt course differentiating the foundation of a masonry building from its exterior walls.

**WEATHERBOARDING** Wooden clapboard siding.

**WROUGHT IRON** Iron that is rolled or hammered into shape, never melted.