

SECTION 1. RESIDENTIAL GUIDELINES

Chapter 1. Introduction and Districts

Introduction

With their historic homes and tree-lined streets, Elberton's older neighborhoods form a critical part of the city's character and sense of place. They trace Elberton's built history and manifest a defining and unique character. The intent of these guidelines is to preserve the historical character of the Districts while allowing Districts to remain vital and fluid so that they are livable by today's cultural standards.

These design guidelines for residential historic districts encourage a goal of quality development in Elberton's historic districts. Homeowners can accomplish this goal through alterations and new construction which are congruous with the character of the neighborhood. Design principles embodied in these guidelines should encourage creative solutions that enhance the character of a neighborhood. These guidelines incorporate prior guidelines that covered alterations and modifications and introduce design parameters for new construction.

Elberton city residential historic districts represent and comprise special community qualities that draw residents to live in these places. Historic district designation offers residents confidence that the character of the neighborhood will be protected through historic preservation laws, ordinances, and processes. Accordingly, a local historic district protects the context of the neighborhood as a whole, and thus protects the major sources of the value of an individual property.

The purpose of the design guidelines for Elberton's residential historic districts is to provide guidance to property owners, architects, designers, builders, developers, city staff, and the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) as well as the City Council. These guidelines provide direction on preserving the integrity of the community's historic resources through congruous new construction and alteration.

Districts

Elberton's residential historic district is protected by the City of Elberton's Historic Preservation Ordinance. The district includes sections of South Oliver Street, East Church Street, Heard Street, Tusten Street, Myrtle Street, Thomas Street, Edwards Street, Forest Avenue, Lake Forest Drive, and South McIntosh Street. *See Chapter 20, Maps.*

Chapter 2. Architectural and Design Character



There are a number of building features that are subject to frequent change or replacement. Many of these are character-altering and need to be considered by the HPC. A number, but not all, of such possible changes are discussed here for convenience to owners. It should be stressed that alternatives such as those discussed here go beyond mere maintenance and constitute character-altering changes. Applications for Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) must be made to the HPC.



The quality and variety of architectural styles in the residential district is indicative of the large amount of significant historic buildings within the city limits. The district includes contributing structures dating from the middle and late 19th century through the 1940's. Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, Queen Anne, Folk Victorian, Neoclassical, Colonial Revival, Craftsman, and folk forms are united in a cohesive neighborhood through common design components. Similar buildings height, massing, setback, proportion, materials, and landscaping features connect the various design styles, and give the neighborhood an eclectic and united feel.



In general, the entire district has a building setback of 25 feet. In some sections the setback is much greater (especially the larger houses on Heard St. and South McIntosh St.); however, whether the building setback is 25 feet or 100 feet, the neighboring buildings share the same distance from the sidewalk. The larger mansion houses have a greater setback than the smaller homes, and this setting is appropriate to the scale and massing to the structures. The adherence to a common distance between the house and the street illustrates how the property owners, contractors, and architects were interested in the site planning of property. Good design and planning is a characteristic of the district that is especially significant considering the wide variety of styles and time periods represented in the neighborhood.



In addition to a common setback, the area is united through the use of common building materials, brick, granite, clapboard, and synthetic siding materials have been used for exterior facades, with asphalt shingles serving as the predominant roofing material. Most foundations are continuous constructed of brick or granite. In some instances the granite foundations are painted white to blend in with the overall paint scheme of a house. The piers on the front porches are made of granite or brick as well. Window openings are double-hung





sash, multi-paned, and painted with several of the late Colonial Revival homes having ribbon windows. Also, front doorways are half-glazed and are usually bordered by a glass transom and/ or side light.



One of the architectural elements that is prevalent throughout the district are porches. Various porch styles may be found on every style of architecture in the district, be it Greek Revival or Folk Victorian. The porches are an important link between the building styles, and represent an “outdoor room” for neighbors to meet and gather. Porch swings, hanging plants, and rocking chairs are evident on every street adding to the character of the area.



One landscape characteristic common throughout the district are the sidewalks with granite curbing, and the granite retaining walls. These elements are extremely important for several reasons. They are representative of the main industry of Elberton, and they also provide another link between the various architectural styles and time periods. These landscape components should be maintained and preserved.



In addition to the granite curbing and retaining walls, several other landscape features are significant. Most of the front lawns are shaded with mature hardwoods and have some degree of formal landscaping. A few yards have flower or vegetable gardens, and nearly all have evergreen shrubbery. There are a small of number of picket fences in the front yards of the houses and several inconspicuous wooden fences enclosing the rear areas of the lots. Chain link fences exist in only a marginal number of cases. Overall, the local residential historic district is an excellent combination of high style and vernacular architecture that illustrates Elberton’s residential design integrity. It is a significant aspect of the city’s architectural character and contributes to the general “home town” atmosphere which makes Elberton a singular, unique community.



Chapter 3. General Principles of Residential Design

It is recommended that the historic character of the original residence be preserved. This includes the preservation of original detailing, doors, windows, exterior materials, roof configuration and landscaping.

- **Identify, retain, and preserve.** Identification of the structure's character is the basis of the successful rehabilitation project. Once this is identified, the first treatment is to retain and preserve the form and detailing of the architectural materials and features which are critical to defining the historic character of the structure.
- **Protect and maintain.** The second step involves protecting, through the least degree of intervention and prior to further rehabilitation efforts, the important architectural materials and features. Protecting often includes maintenance measures such as caulking or cleaning of roof gutter systems. This step also provides an opportunity to evaluate the structural condition to determine the course of future rehabilitation.
- **Repair.** The third step is only necessary when the previous evaluations determine that repair work is necessary. The preferred method of repair is the least degree of intervention such as parching and splicing, using acceptable, sensitive preservation methods.
- **Replace.** If an important feature is missing, either due to deterioration or damage, the preferred option is to design a replacement based on any existing information, such as remnants of the original feature, plans or old photographs. Ideally the replacement will be identical in material, color, and design to the original; however, substitutes may be used provided they are congruous to existing historic features and the prevailing character of the district.

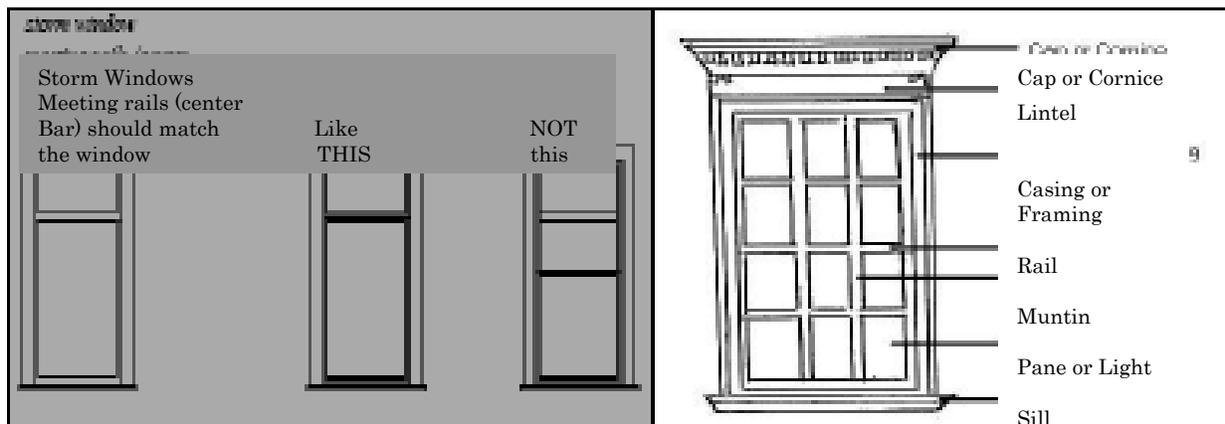


Chapter 4. Residential Components

Windows.

The historic home has many windows frequently exhibiting a variety of styles. The type, location, and placement of each window and how it related to the overall design of the house are all important to the identification of historic character.

- Every effort should be made to repair original windows rather than replace them. Appropriate protection and maintenance of window framing and trim includes appropriate surface treatments such as cleaning, rust and paint removal, and re-application of protective coating systems. Original windows may be more efficient by re-caulking and replacing or installing weather-stripping.
- When replacing deteriorated windows is required, or new ones must be added, the original windows should be matched in size and type.
- In new construction, vertically proportioned, double hung windows are most appropriate.
- Metal window frames may not be left as bright unfinished metal but should be anodized or painted as recommended by the manufacturer.
- Storm windows and screens should match the existing windows as nearly as possible. Bright aluminum frames and screens are inappropriate.
- The pattern of window openings that exist in surrounding homes should be considered during new construction and renovations. Openings should indicate floor levels, and should reflect the symmetry or asymmetry of the home.



Roofs and Gutters.

The key to determining the historic character of a home is the functional and decorative features of the roof. These features include the roof's shape, such as hip, gambrel or shed; decorative features, such as cupolas, cresting, and chimneys; and materials, such as wood, clay tile, or metal. The size, color and patterning are also important to identifying roof design.



- Character distinguishing historic roof materials such as slate, tile, or pressed metal should be repaired rather than replaced.
- Roofing Materials, should closely match the composition, color and texture of materials used traditionally. Appropriate materials include wood shingles, composition shingles, and seamed metal roofs – though metal roofs are not appropriate for all house styles.
- Modern roof top elements such as solar panels, skylights, and attic ventilators should be located on the roof slopes not visible from the public street. If installed, mount them flush with the roof. Protruding bubble skylights are prohibited.
- It is not recommended to construct additions to a roof on the front of a residence. When such additions are absolutely necessary, such as a dormer added to the house to create and attic room, this should be set back from the primary façade to preserve the appearance of the original roof form.
- Consider gutter screening both at downspouts and over the full length of all gutters. Such screening should be hidden so as not to distract from the roof line and will greatly decrease cleaning and maintenance, especially in the fall when gutters accumulate leaves and debris.
- Chimneys should be preserved, maintained, or restored. The use of clay, slate, or stone chimney caps are acceptable; however, the use of metal chimney caps is not recommended. New chimneys added to historic homes are best limited to the rear of the house.

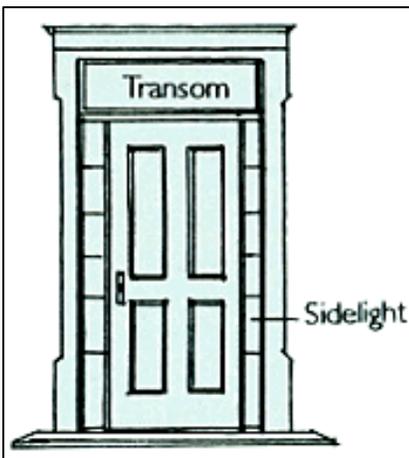
Entrances, Porches and Doors.

Features important to the historic character of entrances and porches include doors, fanlights, pilasters, columns, balustrades, shutters, and stairs. Particular attention should be paid to the size and shape of the entrance treatment and its relationship to the rest of the structure.



Above: before porch enclosure.

Below: after porch enclosure.



- Deteriorated porches should be repaired rather than demolished.
- Often the porch structure provides an opportunity for additional livable floor space. Ideally, these structures are on rear or side elevations which are less critical to the exterior appearance of the home. However, new enclosures may preserve the historic character with careful selection of materials and proper installation. For example, large sheets of glass which are recessed may be obscured behind existing scroll work, posts, and balustrades. This treatment would retain the element's key to the entrance structure as well as the sense of openness associated with these areas.
- Porch piers and foundations should be treated much like other foundations. Ideally, original piers should be left in place and exposed. Continuous foundations, such as continuous brick foundations, should similarly be left intact.
- The front door adds unique character to the home. Many homes in Elberton feature doors with sidelights and transoms. Surrounding moldings such as frames, sills, heads and jambs are equally important and often feature decorative moldings or detailing. These types of features contribute to the historic charm of a residence and should be retained.
- When repair of the existing door is not feasible, take care when replacing it with a design similar to those found historically on the residence. Use the existing door as a guide, or compare the home with others in the area that are of similar date and style and still retain their original door.
- The addition of a clear storm door can provide additional insulation and protection to the original door of the residence. Bright aluminum frames and screens are inappropriate.

Fences, Landscaping and Driveways.

The appearance of a historic residential building from the street was more important than creating privacy in the front yard. Maintain the openness between the street and the house whenever possible.



- Fences should be open in character and appropriate in materials.
- Front yard fences must not exceed four feet in height. The fence design should be consistent with the style of the house on the property.
- Fence materials may be brick, stone, ornamental iron, or wood picket.
- New side and rear yard fences and walls must not exceed six feet in height. Side yard privacy fences are best placed well behind the front wall of the house. Avoid the use of vinyl fencing. The use of dark vinyl coating for chain link fencing is encouraged as is vegetative screening.
- Existing historic retaining walls are significant historic features that should be repaired rather than replaced or removed. Should a historic retaining wall need to be replaced, the replacement should match the original in material, height and design. New retaining walls in front yards must follow established precedent within the block face by using granite, stone, brick, or smooth stucco.
- The placement of new driveways should follow established precedent within the neighborhood. The most common placement in the district is directly alongside the house. Rear drives accessed by alleys are permitted and encouraged. Parking areas should be located in the rear of the house. Driveways shall not exceed a width of 10 feet including the flare at the street.
- Some appropriate driveway and parking area materials include: poured concrete, brick, gravel, or some other natural material. It is not recommended to pave a driveway with asphalt unless evidence exists that the driveway was traditionally paved in the area. Retain the original placement of the driveways and sidewalks throughout the neighborhood. Use concrete sidewalks with granite curbing throughout the district. Create a visible buffer between parking areas and the public view.

Lighting.

Preserving the original lighting is important to remember when maintaining or renovating of a historic house. Make sure to preserve original light fixtures where they exist.

- New porch lighting should use design appropriate to the scale and character of the house. Utilitarian fixtures should be placed inconspicuously.
- Use flood lights where needed, located toward or at the rear of the house and placed in trees or at the base of buildings.

Modern Elements.

Modern elements, including devices for the generation of energy, satellite dishes, swimming pools, wheelchair ramps as well as decks and accessory buildings should not be visible from the public view.



Above: The mechanical system has been properly obscured with latticework.

Below: Window air conditioners should not be placed on the front façade of a historic home.



- Mechanical devices should not be placed on the façade of a building or in the front yard. Generally, it is best for such features to be placed at the rear of the property.
- Swimming pools and similar recreation facilities should not be placed in the front yard. Generally, it is best for such features to be placed at the rear of the property and away from public view.
- Wheelchair ramps are best located to the rear or to the side whenever possible. Location at the front may be considered with proper screening. Those tying into the front porch should be simple in design and painted a dark color to make them less apparent rather than matching the design and color of the porch features.
- Decks are permitted only when located to the rear of the principal structure and such decks shall be no wider than the width of the house.
- New accessory structures, when visible from the public view, should have design and materials compatible with the primary structure. Stock outbuildings and carports are inappropriate in these areas.

Exterior Materials.

The most important characteristic of historic materials is their scale. Retain the original exterior material whenever possible.



- Most materials such as wood siding, brick, and stone are appropriate for historic structures. Wood is the predominant material used on historic houses in Elberton and it is important to preserve these exteriors through good maintenance. Replace wood siding with wood that is of the same lap dimension as the original. If the structure is brick or stone, it is not recommended to cover it with paint. *Consult the HPC on ways to clean the exterior of the structure. Some materials can damage the structure.*
- For additions or repairs, use materials similar in type and scale to those of the existing building.
- Finish new materials to match the existing materials. Highly reflective materials are inappropriate in the historic area.
- In new construction, it is not necessary to replicate the historic materials of surrounding building, but the type, scale, and detail of historic materials should be used.
- Siding should only be considered if the existing exterior is deteriorated or damaged beyond repair, and if the installation will not cause irreversible damage or obscure the architectural features and trim of the residence. It is recommended that the new siding should match the historic materials in size, profile and finish so that there is no change in the character of the historic property. It is not recommended to install synthetic siding materials such as vinyl, aluminum, steel or imitation brick over the original structure. These materials do not accurately convey the effect of the original exterior, and the added layer of siding can destroy the historic integrity of a residence. If vinyl is necessary, owners should take care to use vinyl siding that successfully imitates wood. All vinyl siding must be approved by the HPC.

Paint Color

Generally, muted, natural hues are appropriate as base colors for new or renovated buildings in the residential historic district.



- Trim and other details may be painted in a bright accent color adding vitality and interest to the building.
- It is recommended that a chosen color be tested on a section of the structure because large areas of paint will look different than small one inch paint chips. A painted cardboard mock-up of the structure may also be considered to evaluate a paint scheme.

Alterations and Additions to the Residential Historic District.

When constructing an addition, it should be compatible in size and scale with the historic portion of a house. Whenever possible, additions should be visually subordinate to the historic residence. Place additions on the rear where they are not visible. It is important to maintain the setback from the street that is typical to the neighborhood. Use materials compatible to the original historic materials used on the residence. Maintain a scale and proportion compatible to the existing property. For example, it would be inappropriate to add a two-story addition to a one-story house.

New Construction in the Residential Historic District.

The placement, orientation, massing, scale, façade elements, materials and ornamentation should be considered for new construction in the residential historic district. It is important to remember to maintain the typical size and shape of historic homes found within the neighborhood.



- New construction should have similar heights and widths to surrounding, historic residence. It is not recommended to try to replicate historic styles. New residential construction should compliment the neighborhood, avoiding materials and styles that are not common in the area.

Moving Historic Buildings

Moved buildings should not be relocated to a historic area unless the only alternative for the structure is demolition. The moved building must not require the demolition of a historic building in the neighborhood and must be compatible with the surrounding architecture in terms of style, period, design, scale, setting, and location on the lot.

In rare instances it is necessary to move historic buildings in order to preserve them. While there is considerable precedent for moving buildings-several Elberton buildings are known to have been moved; however, moving is now greatly discouraged unless no other solution is available. If a building must be moved, the following steps must be taken:

- Retain as much of the original building as possible.
- Take care in dismantling elements for the move. Label all parts before dismantling.
- Make a careful photographic (and ideally graphic) record of the building prior to the move.
- Select a new site that shares many characteristics with the original or historic site.
- Maintain the original or existing orientation of the building.
- Maintain the original elevation of the building (the same height above ground).

Demolition

Do not demolish any buildings or significant architectural elements that contribute to the overall sense of place and design character of the neighborhood and the City of Elberton. The only instance where a demolition will be considered is if the building is so structurally deteriorated that its rehabilitation is not feasible. The determination of structural stability will be made by a structural engineer and not the property owner.

Demolition may be allowed if it can be sufficiently proven by the property owner that denial of a demolition permit would result in unreasonable economic hardship.

Demolition of historic structures may be necessary in instances where it is necessary to ensure the public safety and welfare. This decision may not be made arbitrarily and must be reached by the HPC and City Council.

Chapter 5. Signs for Residential District

Appropriate signs are important in the preservation of the character of Elberton's residential historic district. When the proposed sign is to be located in the front of the property, then the design should be reviewed to assure that it will not have a significant negative effect on the district.

In all cases, it is important that the proposed sign be compatible to the design, scale, style, and materials located within the neighboring buildings.

Free-standing signs

have been added to some houses in the historic district area that have been adapted to offices for commercial uses. Appropriate signs for those businesses are important to maintain the architectural character of the historic district. Wall signs are not appropriate for converted residential structures. The method of lighting signs in the historic district should utilize ground spot lights. Interior lit ground signs are not appropriate for historic properties. Care should be taken in historic districts so that the lighting does not impact the surrounding buildings.



Sign height, dimensions, material, number of signs and placement should be submitted to the building inspector to be considered by the HPC for approval.



RESERVED