



**HOUMA**  
**HISTORIC DISTRICT**  
**DESIGN REVIEW**  
**GUIDELINES**  
**HOUMA, LOUISIANA**  
**PREPARED FOR THE CITY OF**  
**HOUMA, LOUISIANA**

**THOMASON AND ASSOCIATES,**  
**PRESERVATION PLANNERS**  
**NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE**

**2011**



## INTRODUCTION

Historic preservation is a major factor in community and economic development of Louisiana's towns and cities. A number of communities across the state have enacted historic district zoning, and historic preservation is now incorporated in many city and county planning efforts. The City of Houma recognizes the importance of revitalizing historic commercial and residential areas of the city as part of its economic goals.

When the Houma Historic District was originally created the role of the Houma Historic District Commission (HHDC) was advisory only. This was amended in 2003 when the city's historic preservation ordinance was changed to make the HHDC a regulatory body. The HHDC was given the authority to review and provide guidance within the Houma Historic District on building rehabilitation, new construction, demolition and other changes such as new signage and streetscapes. Property owners who reside or own businesses within the local district must obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness prior to initiating work and receiving a Building Permit.

The guidelines adopted by the HHDC in 2003 address issues such as building alterations, light fixtures, signs, new construction and demolition. Since 2003 these guidelines have been utilized by the five-member HHDC in their review of a wide variety of rehabilitation efforts and other improvements in the downtown area. In 2010, Houma was selected to receive a grant from the Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation to create a design guidelines manual for use by the HHDC and property owners. The purpose of this manual is to provide a more comprehensive explanation of the guidelines along with photographs and illustrations showing best practices. The manual is intended to assist property owners in understanding appropriate forms of historic building rehabilitation and how new construction can best support the character of the local district. The manual also provides a clearer basis for the HHDC's decision making and policies.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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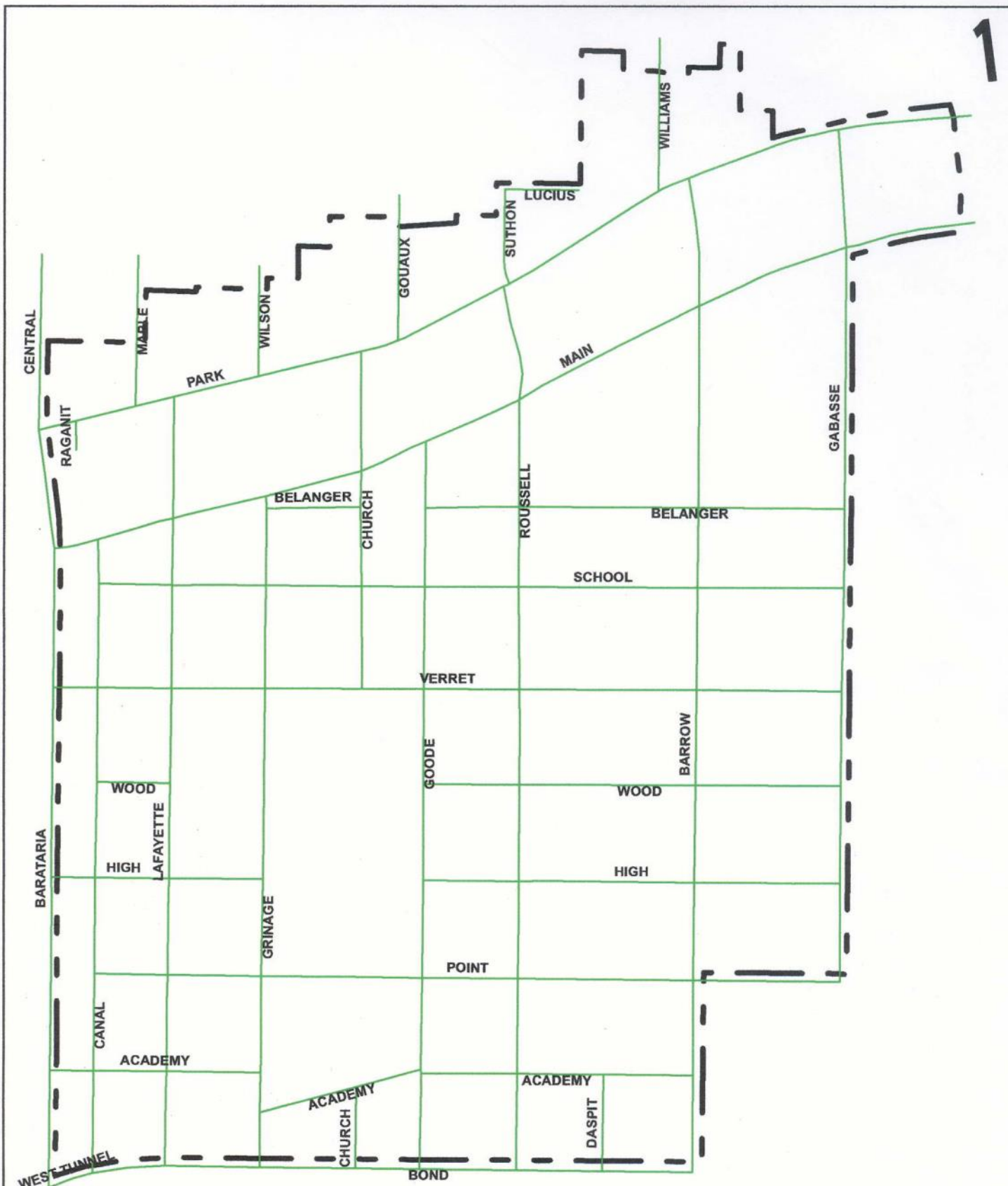
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# Intent and Purpose of Design Guidelines

## The Houma Historic District

The Houma Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983 and includes the downtown area as well as neighboring residential areas. Listing on the National Register is an honorary designation and recognizes the area's historic and architectural significance. Following the listing of the area on the National Register, the Houma Historic District Commission (HHDC) was created to advise property owners on appropriate rehabilitation and new construction in the district. This advisory role was amended in 2003 by the Terrebonne Parish Council in order to require design review by the HDC prior to substantive work within the historic district. The HDC adopted design standards for the historic district but more comprehensive design guidelines were identified as a need for the community. In 2010, a grant from the Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation was awarded the City of Houma to create a design guideline manual for use by property owners and the HHDC.

The *Houma Design Review Guideline Manual* is intended to provide specific criteria for alterations, changes, construction, and demolition in the Houma Historic District. Design guidelines provide owners of historic properties with assistance in making decisions about maintaining and enhancing the appearance of their properties, as well as provide the city of Houma with a framework for evaluating proposed changes. In this context, the guidelines are a useful tool for encouraging the preservation of significant resources through a concerted effort of private and municipal participation. Design guidelines help property owners understand the purpose, the proper methods, and the private and public benefits of preserving and maintaining the historic character and architectural integrity of their property. Ideally, a secondary role of design guidelines is to engender a continuing interest in historic preservation and pride in community that will inspire the maintenance of, and prevent the neglect, abandonment, and demolition of, historic properties.



# HOUMA LOUISIANA HISTORIC DISTRICT

## Legend

- HistoricDistrictStreets
- - - HISTORIC\_DISTRICT



# Intent and Purpose of Design Guidelines

The design guidelines are concerned with all aspects of historic structures and especially with facades visible from streets. Most often the public views buildings from the street or sidewalk. The fronts of buildings also typically contain the most defining features of the property such as porches, main entrances, and decorative details. The rear of buildings are generally considered more private space and rear elevations provide more flexibility for additions or alterations since they are generally not readily visible due to the building's placement on the lot or screening by landscaping or fences. Construction at the rear of buildings is preferred when additional living space is required.

The guidelines are divided into commercial and residential sections and building elements appear in alphabetical order. Included is information on common rehabilitation questions, recommendations for maintaining the site and setting of historic areas and guidance for new construction. Photographs of buildings and architectural details in Houma are included to familiarize property owners with typical features and characteristics. Property owners are encouraged to refer to the guidelines when planning or designing new construction projects, planning exterior rehabilitations, and completing everyday maintenance.



The Houma Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983 (7800 Block of Main Street).

# Preserving Houma = Economic Development



*Historic*

**Streetscape: 600 block of Goode Street.**

## *Preservation Promotes Quality of Life*

Quality of life comprises many facets of a livable community. Historic buildings embody a city's past, differentiating it from that of another place. The feeling of distinctiveness gives a community a strong sense of place. Historic buildings often house the cultural and consumer activities associated with quality of life, such as visiting museums, attending theaters, using libraries, and eating and shopping in unique establishments. Historic buildings are often clustered in a pedestrian-friendly location that is conducive to efficient access to employment, education, recreation, entertainment, shopping, and services. Further, preserving downtown buildings is environmentally responsible and helps prevent costs associated with rural development and sprawl.

## *Historic Preservation is "Green"*

The greenest buildings with the least impact on the environment are those that already exist. Historic buildings embody energy that was expended in the past—the energy put forth to make the bricks, lumber, and details. Debris from demolition makes up 25% to 30% of all materials discarded in landfills. Preservation and rehabilitation precludes this wasteful loss of materials. Preserving and recycling an existing historic building has less negative impact on the environment than new construction.

## *Historic Buildings Often Last Longer Than New Ones*

The life expectancy of rehabilitated historic buildings may well be longer than that of new structures. Many buildings constructed in the second half of the twentieth century do not compare in structural soundness or quality of materials of historic buildings. For this reason, many buildings constructed today will pose rehab problems in a few decades.

## *Historic Preservation Supports Taxpayers' Investments*

# Preserving Houma = Economic Development

Economic development in downtown and inner-city neighborhoods encourages responsible use of existing resources and infrastructure. Commitment to revitalization and reuse of historic commercial areas and neighborhoods may be the most effective act of fiscal responsibility a local government can take. Sprawl studies have proven over and over that the cost of infrastructure required in suburban development exceed the tax revenue returned by the development. Historic preservation bridges private and public investments.

## ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

### *Historic Preservation Increases Property Values*

Studies across the country show that property values in designated National Register or local historic districts either stabilize or increase. These studies are consistent in illustrating that historic overlays benefit owners through higher property values and house sales.

### *Historic Preservation Creates Jobs*

Rehabilitation and revitalization projects create thousands of jobs annually, and **historic rehabilitation creates more jobs than new construction**. Rehabilitation projects are more labor intensive than new construction. In new construction generally half of all expenditures are for labor and half are for materials. In a typical historic rehabilitation project, between 60 and 70 percent of the total cost goes toward labor, which places more money into the local economy. Further, with a lower materials-to-labor ratio, fewer new resources are demanded by rehabilitation projects than in new construction.

Labor for preservation projects – carpenters, electricians, plumbers, sheet metal workers, painters – is nearly always hired locally. And local wages are spent locally. As for new construction, historic preservation generates jobs for architects, accountants, attorneys, engineers, preservationists, real estate brokers, and others. Also, the materials used in preservation projects are much more likely to be purchased locally, whereas materials for new construction are often purchased elsewhere.

### *Historic Preservation Encourages Tourism*

Preserving a city's historic landscape translates into tourism revenue. The distinctive history, culture, and landscape of a city attract visitors to a unique experience. The influx of tourists creates jobs and brings revenue to the community. Heritage tourism, or tourism which focuses on historic areas and sites, is one of the rapidly growing segments of the tourism industry. The quality and quantity of the historic architecture in Houma provides opportunities to enhance tourism in the city. Design guidelines encourage historic rehabilitation that is authentic and reinforce historic character, making destinations attractive to tourists.

# Preserving Houma = Economic Development

## *Tax Credits for Rehabilitation*

Tax-related incentive programs are available at the federal and state levels in Louisiana. To qualify for the federal tax credit a building must be used for income-producing purposes and be listed on the National Register of Historic Places or be contributing to the historic character of a historic district listed on the National Register.

The Federal Preservation Tax Incentive is a cost-effective community revitalization program and rewards the rehabilitation of historic properties with a 20% tax credit. Schools, factories, churches, houses and other historic properties restored for use as income-producing properties such as rental housing, retail stores, and offices may qualify for the credit. There is also a 10% federal tax credit available for non-historic, non-residential buildings placed into service before 1936. The two federal tax credits are mutually exclusive. The rehabilitation must follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and the guidelines prepared for Houma are written to conform with these standards.

The Louisiana Commercial Tax Credit also provides for a 25% credit for rehabilitation expenditures against a property owner's state taxes. The review process is similar to that for the federal credit and both the state and federal credits can be taken for the same project. The Louisiana Residential Tax Credit is also available for property owners who rehabilitate their own houses. The property must contribute to a National Register or locally designated district and must be owned and occupied as the principal residence by the taxpayer. A minimum of \$20,000 must be expended in rehabilitation costs for the residential credit and \$10,000 for the commercial credit. Additional stipulations for the use of the tax credits can be found at the Division of Historic Preservation website at [www.crt.state.la.us/hp/](http://www.crt.state.la.us/hp/)

The federal and state tax incentives are not mutually exclusive. For example, a project that costs \$500,000 would allow the owner to take a \$100,000 credit against their federal taxes as well as a \$125,000 credit against their state taxes. Eligible expenditures include all rehabilitation costs for work carried out within the footprint of the building such as materials, contractor labor, and design fees.

In addition to the tax credits, the Louisiana Main Street program also offers grants for the rehabilitation of commercial facades. In Houma the building at 7887 Main Street is a recent grant recipient.



# Preserving Houma = Sustainability

## *Houma's Historic Buildings and Sustainability*

Preserving and maintaining Houma's historic buildings is one of the city's best opportunities for sustainable development. Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Preserving historic buildings is a valuable approach for protecting the environmental resources that have already been expended as well as those not yet used. Reusing sound older buildings is much more sustainable than abandoning them or demolishing them. Preserving and revitalizing Houma's historic district is "recycling" on a community-wide scale.

## *Conserving buildings preserves embodied energy, and reduces the need for new materials*

Embodied energy is the amount of energy associated with extracting, processing, manufacturing, transporting and assembling building materials. Embodied energy in historic buildings includes the expense and effort used to fire bricks, cut and tool stone, transport and assemble the wood framing, and prepare and apply interior plaster. Construction of a building represents an enormous expenditure of energy from its foundation to its roof. Demolishing a historic building and replacing it with a new energy efficient building would take decades to recover the energy lost in demolishing the building and reconstructing a new structure in its place.

## *Retaining and rehabilitating buildings is more environmentally friendly than new construction*

When studying the environmental effects of buildings, life cycle assessments are utilized. Completing a life cycle assessment of a building means that you examine and determine the material and energy usage and environmental impacts at each stage including extracting the resources, construction, use and disposal. When completing a building assessment not only is the cost of construction examined but also the costs and energy required to operate the building during its life.

One of the key considerations in a life cycle assessment of a historic building is the quality of its materials. The materials in historic houses often can last indefinitely if properly cared for. Most buildings in Houma have old-growth wood windows, brick and wood exteriors, and stone foundations that are a hundred years old or older. These materials can easily last another one hundred years because of their inherent quality. Contrast this with common materials today such as vinyl windows or new-growth wood elements that often require replacement after just ten to twenty years.

## *Preserving buildings reduces waste in landfills*

Construction debris accounts for 35% of the waste in municipal landfills each year. Demolishing sound historic buildings is wasteful of the building's inherent materials and strains the limited capacities of landfills. Demolishing a 2,000 square foot home results in an average of 230,000 lbs of waste.



# Preserving Houma = Sustainability

*Historic buildings were designed to be energy efficient and can be upgraded to increase energy conservation*

Historic buildings are often as energy efficient than new ones. Data from the U.S. Energy Information Agency found that buildings constructed before 1920 are actually more energy-efficient than those built at any time until the past decade when home builders began a concerted effort of building more energy efficient buildings. Many historic buildings have tall ceilings that help to reduce heat in the summertime and brick and plaster walls that provide substantial insulation properties. Common upgrades to historic buildings include the addition of attic insulation, installation of storm windows, and more efficient heating and cooling systems. In particular, repairing and weatherstripping historic wood windows and adding storm windows often results in energy performance equal to new vinyl or aluminum windows and at much less cost.

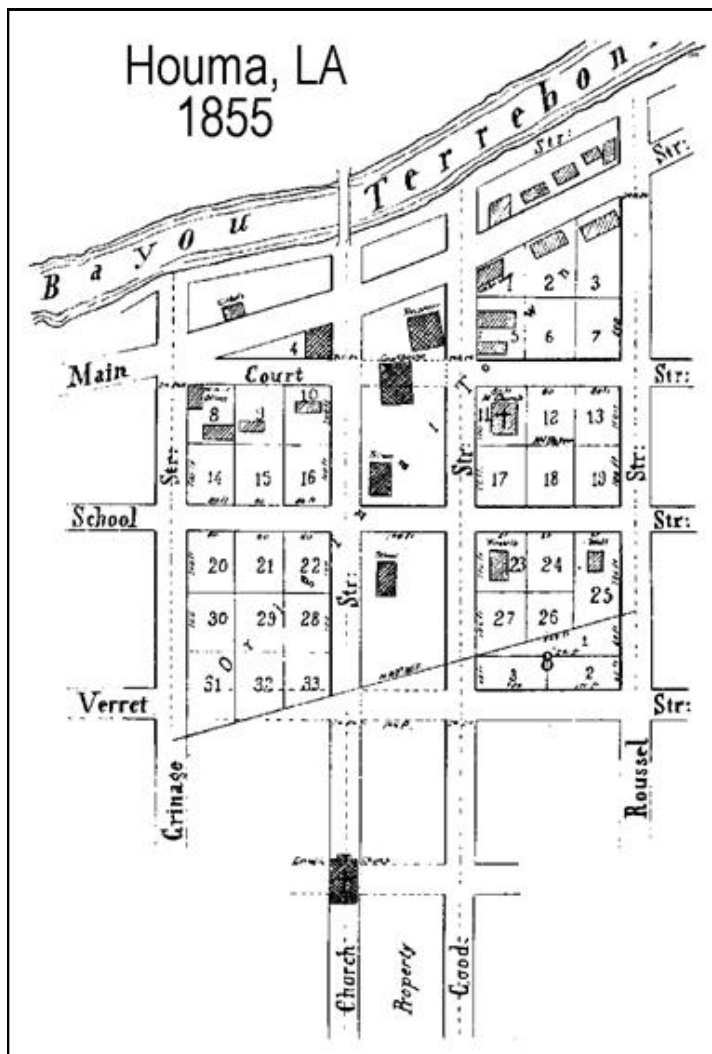


Building such as the Bank of Terrebonne were built with inherent energy conservation methods such as high ceilings and thick masonry walls.

## A Brief History of Houma

Evidence of European-American occupation of present-day Houma dates to the first years of the nineteenth century. Some time prior to 1803, Joseph Hache received a Spanish land grant, which was confirmed and recognized by the U.S. Senate in 1823. The previous year, Terrebonne ("good earth") Parish was founded. Houma, the parish seat, was originally established in 1834 and was incorporated in 1848. Settlers to the area were of French, German, Italian, English, and African ancestry.

Located on the Gulf of Mexico, Terrebonne Parish became a center for seafood. The southern region of the area was historically home to hunters, trappers, and fishermen, while the northern region supported sugar plantations and the timber industry. Centrally located, Houma represented a natural convergence of cultural and ethnic diversity. Before 1855, when the New Orleans, Opelousas, and Great Western Railroad came to Terrebonne Parish, transportation around Houma was reliant on the waterways and the Price-Hine and Company Stageline.



In the mid-19th century Houma was oriented towards Bayou Terrebonne for transportation and commerce.

# History

Though Houma did not see any action during the Civil War, in 1862, four Union soldiers passed through Houma from New Orleans, and armed citizens attacked their wagon, killing two of the men. Union troops descended upon Houma with 400 soldiers, led by Colonel John C. Keith of the 21st Indiana. Keith first demanded a decent service and burial for the two deceased. He also arrested every male citizen who had not fled, demanding full cooperation and threatening to burn down the town. He pursued the alleged perpetrators into the countryside only after raising the Union flag above Houma, with the warning that its removal would signal his return to lay waste to the town.

In 1871, grading for a railroad through Houma began. The line was completed during the first days of 1872. The line ended at Terrebonne Bayou, and a wharf was built for transferring cargo from boats to rail cars. The railroad thus expanded Houma's market drastically, as products could be shipped across the country. Communication was also greatly expanded when a telephone and telegraph line was run between Houma and Schriever in 1889. Houma's first water system was completed in 1903, and Houma's light and water plant was operating by 1909, improving the urban infrastructure.

Houma's economy and demographics became more diverse as the emerging oil industry brought workers to the predominantly Catholic community in the 1920s and 1930s. In 1934, Houma celebrated its centennial with a parade with thematic floats honoring the Native Americans from whom Houma derived its name, as well as the important components of Houma's industry: seafood, agriculture, and oil. The entire celebration was aided by WPA-funded improvements to the appearance of Houma, including street repairs and a new post office. The town also received PWA funds in 1935 for a garbage incinerator. PWA funds also helped complete a new courthouse in 1937. The Houma Airport was opened in 1939.

The discovery of oil and natural gas deposits in the region in the early 1900s led to a boost in commerce and industry (photo courtesy of the Cobb Collection).





# History

As in other Louisiana cities, Mardi Gras has historically been a key cultural event in Houma. Costumes from past Mardi Gras celebrations were displayed in storefronts along Main Street. Houma's Mardi Gras festivities even warranted the building of a special auditorium, completed in 1954.

During the 1960s, two hurricanes hit the Louisiana coast. In 1961, Hurricane Carla caused vast destruction in Houma, where residents resorted to boats for general transportation along the flooded streets. In 1965, Hurricane Betsy pounded Houma's downtown with winds over 100 mph. Another devastating event in Houma's downtown was an explosion in January of 1970, claiming five buildings and three lives.



Church Street bustled with activity ca. 1935 in this view south from Main Street (photo courtesy of TPCG).

During the late twentieth century, downtown Houma, like many small towns across the country, experienced a decline, as people and businesses moved to the outskirts. The Houma Historic District was designated in 1983, and the Houma Downtown Development Corporation was established to revitalize the historic commercial section of the city. A downtown walking tour was developed, as was a park on Main Street and a museum in a former shrimp packing warehouse.

Hurricane Carla in 1961 caused widespread flooding and damage to the region (photo courtesy of the A.P. Cenac Family).



# Houma Historic District Commission

The Houma Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1983. Listing on the National Register is an honorary designation and provides some protection from federally- or state-funded projects that might have an adverse effect on historic resources, but it does not provide historic buildings with any protection from privately-funded activities. In order to protect and preserve its architectural character, the City of Houma adopted a historic preservation ordinance in 1997 and amended it in 2003. The ordinance created the Houma Historic District Commission (HHDC) "to promote the educational, cultural, economic, and general welfare of the public through the preservation and protection of all such buildings, sites, monuments, and structures of historic interest or importance through their protection, maintenance, and to review and issue certificates of appropriateness for all proposed alterations, relocations, and new construction within the boundaries of the historic district and any other actions necessary to implement the intent of this article." The HHDC is composed of five members which are nominated by the Parish President and appointed by a majority of the Parish Council.

## Certificate of Appropriateness

Buildings and structures within the Houma Historic District must receive a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) prior to the initiation of planned work. A COA is a form issued to ensure that the exterior work planned for a building's rehabilitation or new construction meets the criteria of the design guidelines. A Building Permit is a separate form and type of review which ensures the structural soundness and safety of the building. The COA needs to be obtained in addition to the regular Building Permit. A representative example of a COA is located after the appendices.

## The Design Review Process

Within the Houma Historic District, a COA is required for the following:

- Demolition of any building or structure.
- Moving any building or structure.
- Conspicuous change in the exterior appearance of existing buildings by additions, reconstruction, or alteration other than changes in color.
- Any new construction of a principal building or accessory building or structure subject to view from a public street.
- Change in the type of material or in the design of an existing sidewalk as well as changes in existing walls and fences or construction of new walls and fences, if along public street right-of-ways.
- Addition or alterations to signs.

# Houma Historic District Commission

## Routine Maintenance and Minor Actions

Minor actions that are considered routine maintenance generally do not require a COA application. Ordinary maintenance and repair is defined in the ordinance as: "Any work whose purpose and effect is to correct any deterioration or decay of or damage to a structure and any part thereof, and to restore the same as nearly as may be practicable, to its original condition prior to the occurrence of such deterioration, decay, or damage. Painting is considered to be ordinary maintenance and repair."

## Complete a COA Application and obtain a COA prior to beginning the work.

Whenever a property owner desires to make any alteration to a property within the Historic District that requires the issuance of a COA (see previous page) the owner must initiate the process, prior to the beginning of any work, by completing a COA Application. The application form may be obtained from the Main Street Manager's Office. Upon receiving a completed application, the Building Inspector will promptly transmit the application and all supporting documentation to the HHDC to determine the appropriateness and the architectural compatibility of the alterations proposed in each application. Property owners and applicants are encouraged to consult the Design Guideline manual as they are preparing their preliminary plans.

## COA Application Requirements

In order to have a project reviewed, the property owner or a representative is required to submit the following at the time of application:

- (1) **Structure plan.** A front elevation drawing including proposed signage, and type of surface material. Side elevations shall also be included where there are no adjoining buildings. Not required for demolition.
- (2) **Site plan.** A drawing showing the location, dimensions, and arrangements of all open spaces and yards, including type and size of all planting materials, type of surface materials, methods to be employed for screening and proposed grades. Not required for demolition.
- (3) **Photographs.** A photograph of the front of the property which is the subject of application is required. Other photographs of adjoining lots and other views of subject property are recommended.
- (4) **Scope.** A complete description of scope of work including product choices.

# Houma Historic District Commission

## Approval of a COA

It is recommended that COA applicants and their representatives be present at the HHDC meeting to answer any questions the HHDC may have. It is also recommended that samples of any substitute materials to be used be made available for inspection by the HHDC. Following questions and discussion by the HHDC and questions and comments by the public in attendance, the HHDC will vote on each application. Based on the outcome of the vote, under the parameters of the Historic District Ordinance, each COA Application may be approved as submitted, approved with revision, denied, or tabled until the next HHDC meeting such as for receipt of additional information. Upon approving an application, the HHDC issues the Certificate of Appropriateness which includes a list of approved work. Then, and only then, can the applicant begin to undertake the work that has been approved.

## The HHDC and Design Review

The Historic District Review Board (HHDC) emphasizes preservation over repair, repair rather than replacement, and replacement in kind if repair is not feasible. In conducting its review the HHDC will review Certificates of Appropriateness with the following approach:

- Property owners and applicants are encouraged to first consider preserving, maintaining and repairing original or historic building features.

- If such features and elements cannot be preserved, maintained and repaired, replacement in kind is then recommended. Materials should ideally be replaced with the same materials and with profiles, dimensions, and textures to match the original as closely as possible.

- If replacement in kind is not feasible or practical, the HHDC will consider the use of substitute materials under some circumstances. Any features that are changed or replaced shall be substantiated with documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.

# Houma Historic District Commission

Throughout the manual a number of terms are frequently used to reflect the general approach the HHDC will consider when making its decisions. These terms and their interpretation are as follows:

**Appropriate:** Rehabilitation and new construction actions especially suitable or compatible with the design guideline standards.

**Acceptable/Permissible/Approvable:** These terms are used in the guidelines to identify rehabilitation and new construction actions which will be approved under most circumstances. Although these actions may not be the ideal approach to a design issue, they will meet the intent of the guidelines sufficiently to warrant approval.

**Recommended:** Suggested, but not mandatory actions outlined in the design guidelines.

## Follow Other Requirements and Coordinate Your Work For Existing Historical and New Construction

In addition to the HHDC's design review, local zoning and Building Codes must be followed. The city's Building Inspector can provide information on building code requirements. New construction must be thoughtfully considered to ensure compatibility with historic buildings. There may also be properties in the historic district that need to meet provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

## Oversight and Enforcement

If plans change while work is in progress, contact the HHDC before undertaking a change or deviation from the COA. Work undertaken contrary to original approval in a COA or beyond the scope of the COA requires approval from the HHDC. If work is undertaken without obtaining a COA then a violation will occur and penalties may follow.

# Houma Historic District Commission

## The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties

The Houma Historic District Design Guideline Manual follows the guidelines set forth by the National Park Service. Known as the **"Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties with Illustrated Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings,"** these guidelines are used throughout the country by the majority of America's boards and preservation commissions as a basis for local design review guidelines and for projects utilizing federal funds or tax credits. The Standards were originally published in 1977 and revised in 1990 as part of Department of the Interior regulations. They pertain to historic buildings of all materials, construction types, sizes, and occupancy and encompass the exterior and the interior of historic buildings. The Standards also encompass related landscape features and the building's site and environment as well as attached, adjacent or related new construction. The "Standards" are found in Appendix A of this manual and are also available on line at [www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps](http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps). This web site also provides information on technical aspects of restoration and rehabilitation including "Preservation Briefs." Preservation Briefs are excellent summaries of various design guideline and building rehabilitation issues provided free on-line.



A recent historic rehabilitation project using the state and federal tax credits and following the Secretary of the Interior's Standards is the building at 7887 Main Street. The guidelines for Houma are similar to those used nationally to ensure consistency in review and eligibility for federal and state tax credits.



# Commercial Architectural Styles and Building Types

## One-Part Commercial Block



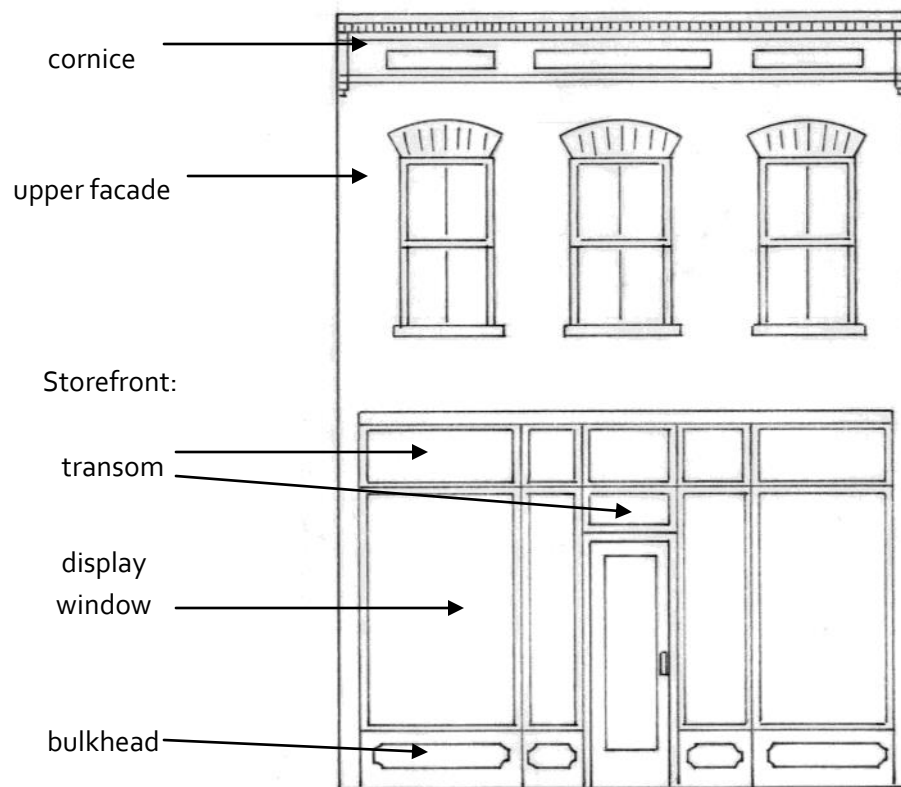
Buildings in downtown Houma can be characterized as One-Part or Two-Part building types. A One-Part commercial building is generally one-story and has a storefront with display windows on bulkheads such as at this row of buildings in the 300 block of Belanger Street.

## Two-Part Commercial Block



Several commercial buildings in downtown Houma can be characterized in form as “Two-Part” commercial blocks, meaning they have two primary components – storefronts and upper facades. Original storefronts feature display windows resting on bulkheads, transoms, and entrances with glass and wood doors. Upper facades have one or more floors of windows and decorative detailing such as brick, concrete or terra cotta panels and cornices at rooflines. This building at 7884 Main Street is representative of Houma’s Two-Part commercial blocks.

# Commercial Architectural Styles and Building Types



This drawing shows a typical late nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial building and identifies some of its components. Downtown Houma is comprised largely of similar buildings.



This row of commercial buildings on Main Street has both one- and two-part buildings.



# Architectural Features

Architectural features in Houma's commercial area include cast iron and brick pilasters; corbelled brick cornices; brick window surrounds, and traditional storefronts. These features are important stylistic elements and should be retained, preserved, and, if needed, repaired to match the original as closely as possible.

1. Historic architectural features should be retained and maintained.
2. Historic architectural features should remain visible and not be concealed.
3. Only serious staining should warrant cleaning. In general, water, mild detergent, and brushes are appropriate cleaning tools.
4. When repairing deteriorated or damaged historic architectural features, use methods that allow them to retain their historic appearance and as much of the building's historic fabric as possible.
5. For decaying wood, it is appropriate to apply epoxy to strengthen damaged areas and fill in small openings. For large areas of decay, remove damaged wood areas and replace with appropriate wood, also known as a Dutchman's repair. Synthetic siding is not an appropriate replacement material.
6. For lightly rusted metal features, hand scraping or chipping or use of a wire brush may be used to remove rust and damaged paint. If rusting is heavy, alternative methods include low pressure grit or sand blasting and chemical treatment. These methods are more hazardous and should be undertaken with professional help. For their protection, adjacent materials such as brick, glass, and wood should always be covered during grit blasting. Metal pieces should be primed with an appropriate primer and painted immediately following rust and paint removal.

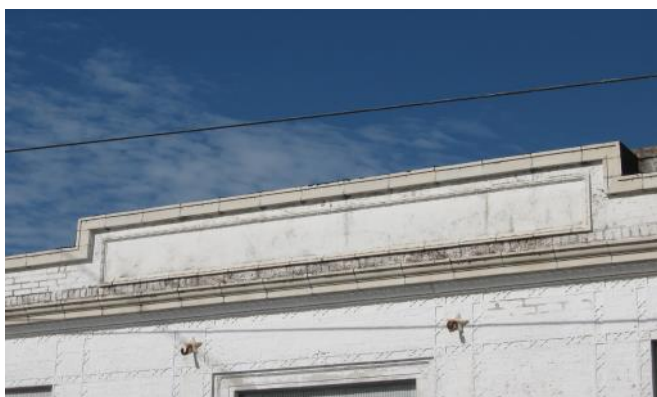


The porcelain sign panel at 7880 Main Street (left) and the Art Deco panel at 7869 Main Street (right) are essential features to these buildings and should be preserved and maintained.

## Architectural Features

7. Architectural features should not be added to buildings where none historically existed.
8. Replace missing or severely damaged historic architectural features with examples that replicate the original or other historic examples that appear to be appropriate to the building being worked on based on physical evidence.

Right: Historic storefront features such as the original terrazzo floor at 7881 Main Street should be preserved and not removed or concealed. Below: The distinctive terra cotta cornice at 318 Church Street should not be altered or concealed.



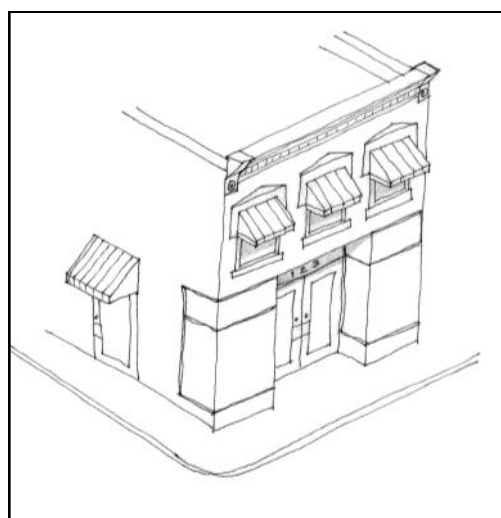
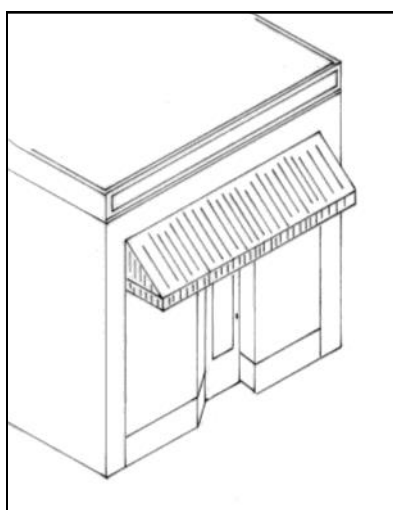
Below, left: the detailed cornice at 318 Church Street should not be covered or concealed. A distinctive feature of the storefront at 7880 Main Street is the paneled wood ceiling. These and other historic details add to the unique character of downtown Houma.



# Awnings and Canopies

Historically, shopkeepers commonly used canvas awnings and fixed metal and wood canopies on their storefronts. Not only did they provide shelter for shoppers, but they also helped in heating and cooling the building. Awnings and canopies add historic character to storefronts and their use is appropriate for downtown commercial buildings.

1. The addition of awnings to commercial buildings is appropriate if they are of traditional design, materials, and placement. Awning colors should be compatible with and complementary to the building. Avoid harsh or overly bright colors. Awnings should be installed below the cornice or transom.
2. Storefronts and upper facade windows are both appropriate locations for awnings.
3. Awnings may be retractable or fixed in place and should fit the opening to which they are applied. Shed awnings = rectangular openings; arched awnings = arched openings.
4. Shed awnings are most appropriate for commercial buildings in Houma. The use of bubble, concave, or convex forms is not recommended. Internally lit awnings are also less appropriate.
5. Transom lights of prism glass or stained glass should not be covered by permanent, fixed awnings.
6. Awnings should be of canvas duck or cotton/polyester blend; vinyl is not appropriate. Metal, wood, or plastic awnings are not appropriate and should not be added to storefronts of historic buildings.
7. The use of fixed wood or metal canopies are appropriate if the storefront originally had such a feature and can be verified by historic photos or physical evidence.
8. Installation of awning hardware should not damage historic materials and features of the building.



The installation of these awnings is appropriate. On the left, the awning fits within the storefront display area without overlapping the outer piers. On the right, upper windows and a secondary entryway have individual awnings that fit within the openings.

## Awnings and Canopies



Above left: This canvas awning at 788o Main Street is appropriate in its materials - a shed design would be more appropriate for the opening. Above right: Awnings are used for second story windows as well as storefronts such as this appropriate canvas awning at 309 Goode Street . Right: The upper floor balcony at 309 Goode Street is covered with an appropriate awning.



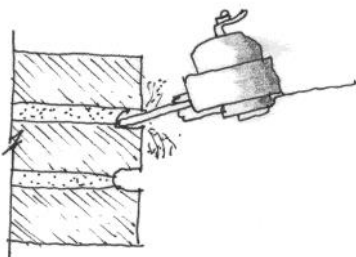
In the early twentieth century, downtown Houma businesses also used fixed wood and metal canopies to shelter pedestrians and provide shade. This photograph was taken ca. 1940 looking west on Main Street from Church Street .(Courtesy Allen J. Ellender Archives , Nicholls State University)



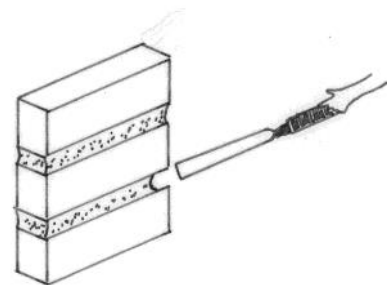
# Brickwork/Masonry

Historic commercial buildings in downtown Houma are of brick, stone or concrete construction. If properly maintained, masonry can last indefinitely. The keys to brick and mortar preservation are to keep water out and to apply a soft mortar when repairs are needed. Abrasive cleaning of historic brick should not occur.

1. Original brick, stone, terra cotta, cast concrete and other masonry original to a building should be preserved and maintained.
2. Masonry should never be subjected to any kind of abrasive cleaning such as sandblasting.
3. Do not clean or remove paint from masonry with high pressure water that exceeds 600 pounds per square inch.
4. The use of detergent cleansers to remove dirt or grime from masonry is acceptable. When cleaning brick it is advisable to test a small area first to ensure the procedure and cleaning agent are compatible with the masonry.
5. The use of silicone-based water sealants on masonry walls is not recommended. Water sealants do not allow the brick to "breathe" and can trap moisture within inside walls. Refer to the National Park Service: Technical Preservation Services' Preservation Brief #1 for advice, available at <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/TPS/briefso1.htm>
6. Masonry that has never been painted should remain unpainted unless the brick and mortar is extremely mismatched from earlier repairs or patching. Buildings which have been sandblasted and show significant brick and mortar erosion may be painted to help seal the masonry surface. In Houma, during the nineteenth century, painting brick was a common practice purely for aesthetic reasons. These historically painted surfaces should be maintained.
7. Original masonry surfaces should not be stuccoed.
8. Historic masonry should remain visible and untreated. Exceptions are if bricks have lost their protective outer coating, in which case paint may be used for preservation, or if repairs have failed to stop water from getting into bricks, in which case water-repellant coatings might be used.

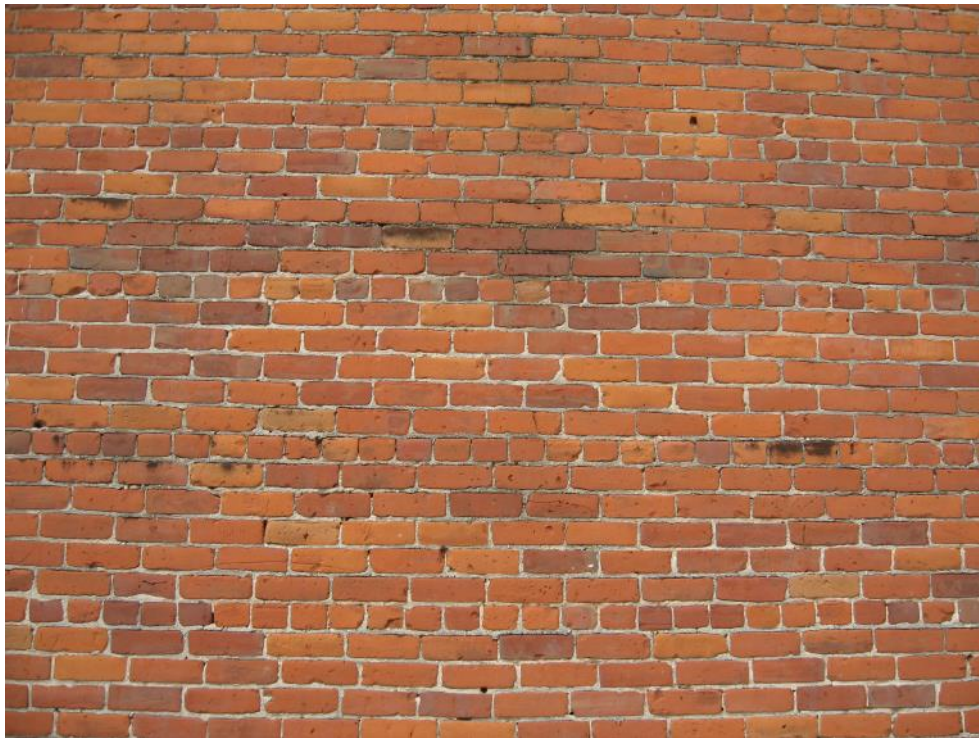


Power tools are damaging and should be avoided when removing mortar. Hand tools are preferred since they allow for precision work and brick preservation.



## Brickwork/Masonry

9. Original mortar should be preserved but if repointing is necessary, historic compounds such as one part hydrated lime and three parts sand should be used. Portland cement is also acceptable for chimney tops, parapets walls, or other situations requiring extra strength. The recommended formula is one part white Portland cement, two parts hydrated lime, and nine parts sand. Use of Portland cement conforms to the advice in NPS Preservation Brief #2 available at <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/TPS/briefso2.htm>. The use of inflexible or hard mortars will not allow masonry to expand and contract properly.
10. When re-pointing brick, the mortar should match the original mortar in its width, depth, color, profile, and composition. When re-pointing brick test a small area first to ensure the procedure is compatible with the masonry.
11. The bonding pattern in replacement masonry should match the historic pattern.



This exterior masonry wall at 7884-7886 Main Street is of five-course common bond brick. Due to the historic nature of the brick it should never be abrasively cleaned or repointed with a hard mortar mix.

# Cast Iron

Downtown Houma has several buildings with cast iron columns and pilasters on storefronts. This historic and structural material should be preserved and maintained. Repair and replacement should be with materials that match the original and will not promote corrosion.

1. Cast iron original to a building should be preserved and maintained. The removal of added storefront materials to expose original cast iron is encouraged.
2. Metal surfaces should be kept painted and cleaned with detergent cleansers. Cast iron may be cleaned using abrasive methods as long as the pressure does not pit or erode the surface. When cleaning metal surfaces it is advisable to test a small area first to ensure the procedure does not harm the historic material.
3. Repair or replacement should be with compatible metals. If an appropriate substitute material can effectively replicate the design and appearance of a damaged or missing feature, its use may be appropriate.



Cast iron pilasters, such as those at 7884 Main Street, should be preserved and maintained.

## Doors and Entrances

Doors are often an important visual element to a storefront. Historic entrances and doors should be retained, maintained, and, if needed, repaired. Missing or severely deteriorated doors should be replaced with historically appropriate doors. Screen, storm, and security doors should not detract from the historic appearance of their building.



The original doors at 7812 Main Street (left) and 7834 Main Street (right) should be retained and maintained. If the original doors are missing, new doors of single-light glass and wood design similar to those shown above are appropriate.

1. Historic doors should be retained and maintained.
2. Primary entrances to commercial buildings should be accessible to meet ADA requirements. If this is not possible, alternative entrances should be available, clearly marked, and maintained to the same standards as the primary entrance.
3. If historic doors do not allow for universal access, they should be retrofitted to meet standards.
4. Deteriorated or damaged historic doors should be repaired using methods that allow them to retain their historic fabric as possible. Replace deteriorated wood with in-kind material. Epoxy is helpful in strengthening and replacing deteriorated wood.
5. Owners are encouraged to replace missing or severely damaged unserviceable historic doors with new doors that replicate the originals or other historic examples.



## Doors and Entrances



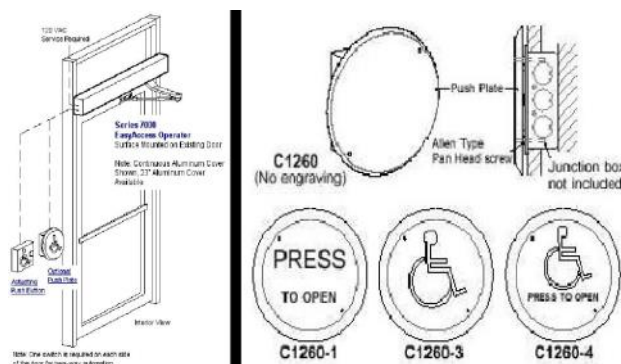
If the original storefront has been removed and the owner does not wish to build back a traditional storefront, also acceptable would be doors made of wood or dark anodized metal with clear-glass single-light openings such as those in the above photo.

6. Clear-glass single-light or multiple-light, painted wood doors are usually appropriate for replacing missing original primary doors in the district's commercial buildings. The opening in secondary entrances may be smaller or doors may be solid wood. Dark or bronze-anodized metal, though less appropriate, may be substituted for wood.
7. New screen doors should be sympathetic to the style of the building, have a wood or aluminum frame, and be full view or have structural members that align with those of the door.
8. Storm doors should be full view and of baked-on enamel or anodized aluminum and should be painted or finished to match the other trim and be as inconspicuous as possible.
9. Security doors may be used on doors not visible from the street.

## Doors and Entrances



Retrofitting existing doors with automatic door openers can help meet ADA requirements.



The use of automatic door openers with push plates is also an alternative to meet ADA door requirements on downtown commercial buildings.

# Fire Escapes and Staircases

Fire escapes are important safety features as a means of escape from upper floors. However, as they are modern additions to historic buildings, they should not be visible from the street and should be sited on rear elevations.

1. Fire escapes and staircases should be located on rear elevations or otherwise located so that they are not visible from the street.
2. The addition of fire escapes should not damage architectural features.
3. Fire escapes may be either open or enclosed.
4. If enclosed, fire escape surfaces should be of wood siding, brick veneer, or stucco.
5. If open, fire escape surfaces should be of metal or wood.

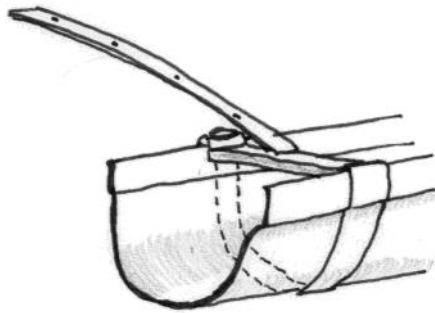


Fire stairs may be of wood or metal design and sited at the rear or side facades of commercial buildings. This appropriate example at the rear of 309 Goode Street is of metal construction.

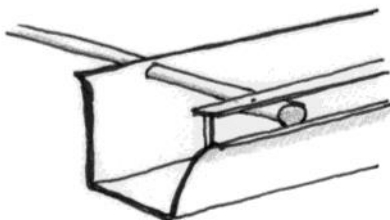
# Gutters and Downspouts

Using well-maintained gutters and downspouts helps to protect buildings from water damage. If new gutters are required, half-round designs are the most appropriate.

1. Gutters and downspouts should be used and maintained.
2. Existing boxed or built-in gutters should be retained.
3. Deteriorated or damaged boxed or built-in gutters should be repaired.
4. If new gutters are needed, the most appropriate design for hanging gutters is half round. For buildings dating from or influenced by designs from the 1940s or later, ogee gutters are also appropriate.
5. Downspouts should be installed so as to avoid damage to architectural features.



Gutters, downspouts, and splashblocks should be used. Half-round gutters, as shown above, are most appropriate. Ogee gutters, below, are also acceptable.

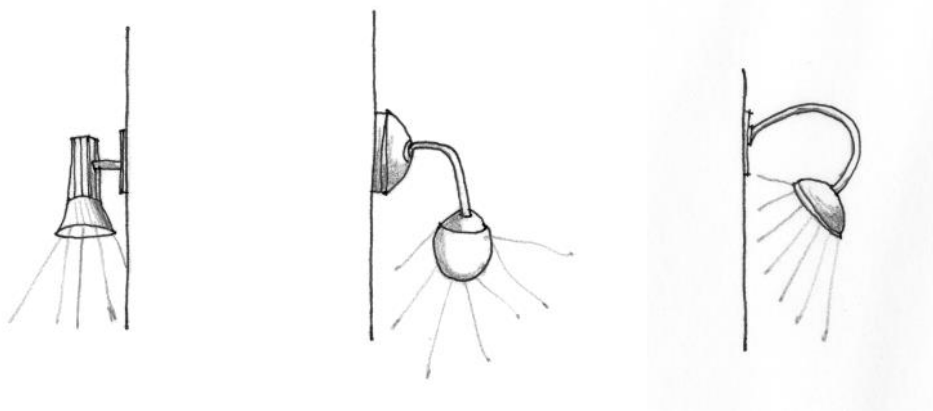


Examples of appropriate gutters and downspouts on commercial buildings at 312-314 Belanger Street.

# Lighting

**Any historic light fixtures remaining downtown should be retained and maintained. New light fixtures should be unobtrusive in design, materials, and placement.**

1. Historic light fixtures should be retained and maintained.
2. Deteriorated or damaged historic light fixtures should be repaired using methods that allow them to retain their historic appearance.
3. Owners are encouraged to replace missing or severely damaged historic light fixtures with replacements that replicate the originals or other historic examples in appearance and materials.
4. If modern light fixtures are desired as replacements or where light fixtures previously did not exist, they should be unobtrusive, conceal the light source, and direct light toward the building.
5. Light fixtures should not damage or obscure architectural features or other building elements.



Examples of appropriate commercial light fixtures on primary facades.



Original light fixtures on commercial buildings should be preserved and maintained such as those at 7868 Main Street (left) and 309 Goode Street (right).



# Paint

Paint colors are not reviewed by the HHDC. Property owners are encouraged to use colors consistent with the building's architectural style and period.

1. The painted surface of historically painted buildings or features should be maintained.
2. New building features of the type that were historically painted, such as metal or wood trim, should be painted and the painted surface maintained.
3. Buildings which have not been previously painted should not be painted. Refer to the National Park Service: Technical Preservation Services' Preservation Brief #1 for advice, available at <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/TPS/briefso2.htm>.
4. Should owners wish to remove paint from historically unpainted buildings, they should first insure that paint is not protecting bricks with damaged surfaces. Non-abrasive methods such as chemical cleaning, hand-scraping, or hand-sanding should be used in removal. Electric heat guns and heat plates are advised with caution because these tools are fire hazards. Abrasive or high-pressure removal methods are destructive and should never be used.
5. While paint colors are not reviewed by the HHDC, there are traditional colors which are appropriate for Houma's commercial buildings. Property owners are encouraged to consult with the HHDC prior to initiating work to get recommendations for particular styles. The HHDC can assist with paint recommendations for the body of the building as well as trim colors.



The paint colors chosen at 7887 Main Street are appropriate for the style and age of the building and provide sufficient contrast between the body of the building and the windows.

# Roofs

Roofs help to determine building style and are important elements of historic appearance. Historic roof shapes should be retained. Public visibility of modern features should be limited. Many of the original roof materials downtown have been replaced due to storm damage over the years and replacement with modern metal roofing materials is appropriate.

1. The historic roof shapes of buildings should be retained. Most commercial roof forms in Houma are flat or sloping but there are also those that are vaulted or barrel shaped.
2. Roof-related features such as parapet walls, cornices, and chimneys should be retained and maintained.
3. New roof elements such as skylights, solar panels, decks, balconies, and satellite dishes should not be visible from the street.
4. Maintain historic roof materials such as sheet metal, especially where they are visible from the street. Roof elements such as flashing and valleys should also be kept in good repair.



Most roofs in the downtown area have been replaced with modern metal roofs due to deterioration and/or storm damage. New roofing materials should be similar to those at 7837 Main Street (top) and 300 Belanger Street (below).

# Signs

Commercial buildings traditionally have had a variety of sign designs and placement, allowing for wide flexibility for their use downtown. Signs are important elements in the historic and commercial character of the downtown business district and historic signage should be retained and maintained. All signs within the Houma Historic District require a Certificate of Appropriateness, including new signs and alterations to existing signs, except for regular maintenance.

1. Historic signs (including neon signs, where possible) should be preserved, maintained, and repaired.
2. New signs should be of traditional materials such as wood, glass, copper or bronze letters. Sand-blasted wood signs are appropriate. Plastic, substrate or unfinished wood signs are not recommended.
3. Signs should be sized in proportion to the building. Avoid oversized signs.
4. Buildings should have no more than three signs, not counting signs painted on windows.
5. Signs that resemble logos or symbols for businesses are encouraged.
6. Signs should have no more than two or three colors; colors should be coordinated with overall building colors.
7. Serif, Sans Serif or Script lettering are traditional styles for signs. Letters should not exceed 18 inches in height or cover more than 60% of the total sign area.
8. Traditional sign locations include storefront beltcourses, upper facade walls (not to exceed 20% of the overall wall surface), hanging or mounted inside windows, or projecting from the face of the building. Movable sandwich boards or "menu easels" are also allowable downtown. They should be placed on the sidewalk in front of the business one foot from the curb during business hours only and should not exceed a total size of 42" x 24" (H x W).
9. Temporary signs such as banners or window graphics should be displayed no more than 30 days and should not exceed ten square feet in size and contain no more than five square feet of text.
10. Signs should be installed in such a way that no damage occurs to historic materials. Mounting brackets and hardware for signs should be anchored into mortar, not masonry.
11. Lighting for signs should be concealed; spot- or up-lighting is appropriate for signs. Internally lit signs are not appropriate for downtown areas.



# Signs



This drawing shows appropriate locations for commercial signage. No more than three signs should be used per building.

## Signs



Wall signs, as this one (left) at 7873 Main



Where possible, wall signs should be grouped together such as at 209 Goode Street.



At 7817 Main Street is an example of a projecting sign with an appropriate design and materials.

Historic painted wall signs and "ghost" signs should be preserved and maintained, not painted over such as at 7834-7836 Main Street (right).



# Signs



Window signs are appropriate for commercial buildings in the historic district. At left is the window sign at 7886 Main Street.



Projecting wood signs are appropriate for businesses, as at 309 Goode Street (left) and 7809 Main Street (right).



# Storefronts

**Storefronts are defining elements of the commercial and historic character of the downtown business district. Historic storefronts should be retained, maintained, and, if needed, repaired and should not be covered or concealed.**

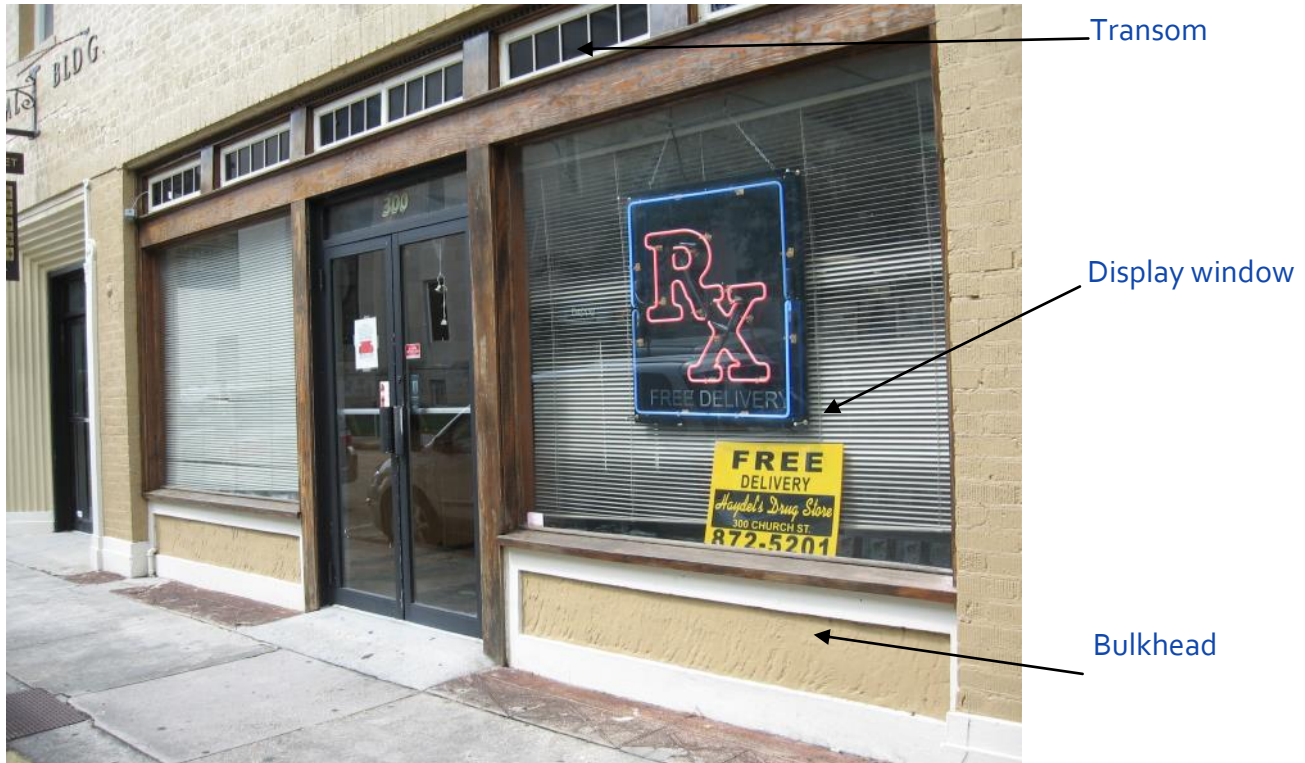
1. Historic storefronts and their components, such as display windows, bulkheads, transoms, doors, cornices, pillars, and pilasters, should be retained and maintained.
2. Historic storefronts and their components should not be covered with modern materials.
3. Deteriorated or damaged storefronts or components should be repaired so that the storefront retains its historic appearance. Repairs should be made with in-kind materials, based on physical or documentary evidence whenever possible.
4. Missing storefronts or components should be replaced so that they replicate the historic storefront or other historic examples that appear to be appropriate to the building being worked on, based on physical evidence.



This original storefront at 244 Barrow Street possesses many typical elements: display windows, bulkheads, and transoms.

# Storefronts

The building at 300 Church Street contains many of the standard components of an early twentieth-century commercial storefront.



If original storefronts have been removed, replacement with a traditional storefront design is encouraged. At right is an appropriate rebuilt wood bulkhead at 7886 Main Street.





## Storefronts



This rebuilt storefront at 7884-7886 Main Street mimics the traditional design of and is compatible with historic storefronts of downtown Houma.



Original terrazzo bulkheads, such as at 7880 Main Street, should be preserved.

# Storefronts

## CARRARA GLASS STOREFRONTS

Downtown Houma has a number of early 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings with storefronts built or remodeled from the 1920s to the 1940s. These storefronts reflect an important movement in merchandising and sales of the period and also are highly decorative in their designs. Materials such as marble, tile, and tinted glass, commonly known as “Carrara” glass, were all used to update to add to storefronts during these decades. These storefronts are significant and should be preserved and maintained in any future building rehabilitation. Storefronts remodeled within the past fifty years are generally not compatible with overall building character and their removal may be appropriate when rehabilitation is undertaken. Such storefronts should be replaced with traditional designs or with designs based on the original appearance of the storefront, if known.



Storefronts that were built or remodeled in the 1930s and 1940s should be preserved such as this storefront at 7815 Main Street, featuring Carrara glass bulkheads and aluminum and glass display windows. These were popular treatments applied to commercial architecture from the 1920s through 1940s.

# Windows

A number of the commercial buildings in Houma retain their original wood sash or steel case-ment windows on the upper floors. Original windows should be preserved, maintained, or re-paired. Windows should not be concealed, enclosed or covered. If replacements are necessary, they should match the original in size, materials, and number and arrangement of lights.

1. Historic windows should be retained and maintained.
2. Historic windows should not be covered or painted.
3. Deteriorated or damaged windows should be repaired so that the windows retain their historic appearances, replacing removed sections with in-kind materials. Use epoxy to strengthen deteri-orated wood.
4. Replace missing panes or sashes rather than entire windows. If 80% of the window is damaged and/or missing, and windows must be replaced, use designs that replicate the missing historic windows or other historic examples that appear to be appropriate to the building being worked on, based on physical evidence.

The windows in these historic buildings are important elements of their appearance and should be retained and maintained. At left are original six-over-six windows at 309 Goode Street and below are original steel hinged windows at 371 School Street.



5. Replacement windows should be of wood to match the original. Historic shutters should be re-tained and maintained.
6. Shutters should be added only if the building historically had them. Replacements replicate his-toric shutters, fit the window opening when closed, and are constructed of painted wood.

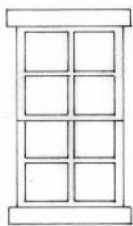


# Windows



Original wood windows such as these casement designs are important to defining the character of a building and should be repaired as needed and preserved (7887 Main Street).

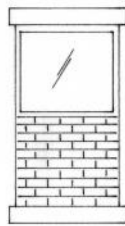
7. Screen and storm windows should be constructed of painted wood, baked-on enamel, anodized aluminum, or painted-to-match-the-frames mill-finish aluminum.
8. Screen and storm windows should fit within the window frames.
9. Storm windows should be full-view design or have a central meeting rail that overlaps that of the window. The use of full-view interior storm windows is also appropriate.



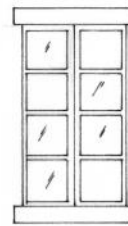
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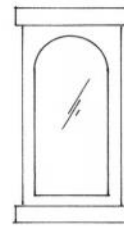
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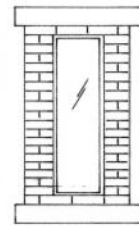
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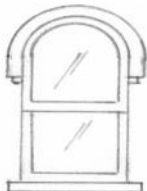
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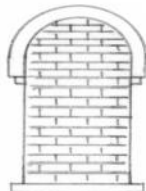
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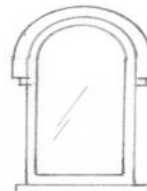
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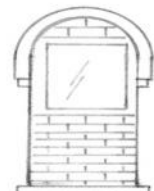
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no



no



no

Preserve and maintain historic windows; do not enclose or alter original window openings.

# Windows

## Why Preserving Original Windows is Recommended and Makes Economic Sense

The Houma Historic District Commission recommends the preservation and retention of historic wood and metal windows unless the windows are clearly proven to be deteriorated beyond repair. The reasons for preserving original windows include:

Rebuilding historic wood windows and adding storm windows makes them as efficient as new vinyl windows and more than offsets the cost of installation. A comprehensive window study in Vermont in 1997 found that a weatherstripped wood window with an added storm window was as energy efficient as most new vinyl thermo-pane windows. Several other studies since this time have supported these findings. (Sources: Home Energy Magazine Online, September/October 1997 "Creating Windows of Energy-Saving Opportunity" and APT Bulletin 36:4, 2005 "What Replacement Windows Can't Replace: The Real Cost of Removing Historic Windows.")

In most cases, windows account for only about one-fourth of a building's heat loss. Insulating the attic, walls and basement is a much more economical approach to reducing energy costs.

The old-growth lumber used in historic window frames can last indefinitely, unlike new-growth wood or vinyl. Old growth windows have a tighter grain and better quality than most new growth wood windows.

All windows expand and contract with temperature changes. However, vinyl expands more than twice as much as wood and seven times more than glass. This often results in failed seals between the frame and glass and a significant performance reduction. Vinyl windows have a high failure rate – more than one-third of all windows being replaced today are less than ten years old.

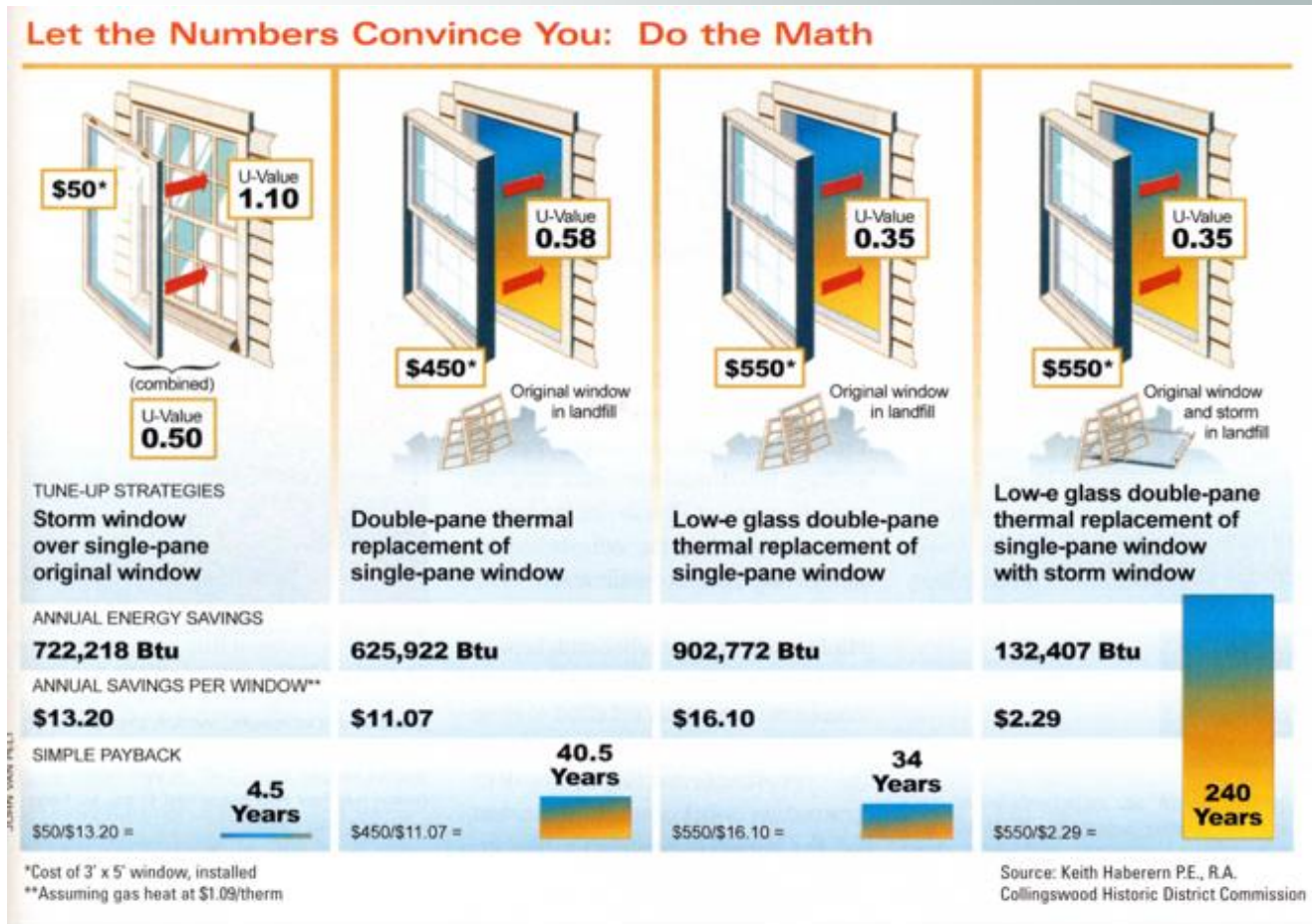
Any energy savings from replacing wood windows with aluminum or vinyl seldom justifies the costs of installation. For most buildings, it would take decades to recover the initial cost of installation and with a life expectancy of 25 years or less, installing new vinyl or aluminum windows does not make good economic sense.

Most vinyl windows don't look like historic wood windows; their texture and thinness are inappropriate for Houma's historic buildings. A more acceptable alternative if the original windows are beyond reasonable repair are aluminum clad wood windows with baked enamel finishes.

Historic wood and metal windows are sustainable. They represent embodied energy, are made of materials natural to the environment and are renewable.



# Windows



Adding storm windows over historic wood windows is a cost-effective approach that preserves the original window and provides energy savings equal to new replacement windows. The payback to the owner is much better as well. (Courtesy the *Old House Journal*).

When replacing windows, it is important to understand U-value specifications of available products. The U-value is a measurement of heat transfer through a material, such as window glass. The lower the U-value, the better the insulation. A U-value of .40 or lower is recommended for a North/Central and South/Central climate. Manufacturers are required to affix label to their windows stating their U-values.

## New Construction - Decks

**Decks are popular modern features. If added to historic buildings, they should be constructed on a building's rear elevation or another location not visible from the street.**

1. Decks should be located on the rear elevations of buildings. They may also be located on a side elevation if screened from view from the street through fencing or plants or on the roof if screened from view through placement or parapets.
2. Decks should be constructed of wood or metal.
3. Decks should be stained or painted so that their colors are compatible with those of their buildings.
4. Decks should be simple in design. Wood balusters should be less than three inches apart and less than two inches in width and depth.



This rear deck at 7717 Main Street is simple in design and of wood construction. These types of decks on rear elevations are appropriate and help connect buildings with the bayou.

# New Construction - Ramps

Most commercial entrances meet ADA requirements and do not require ramps. If they are needed, simple concrete ramps are recommended for main entrances. Wood ramps may be used on rear elevations.

1. Ramps should be constructed of concrete or wood and painted in colors compatible with those of the building.
2. Ramps should be simple in design.
3. Ramps should be sited on rear elevations, if possible, rather than on primary façades.



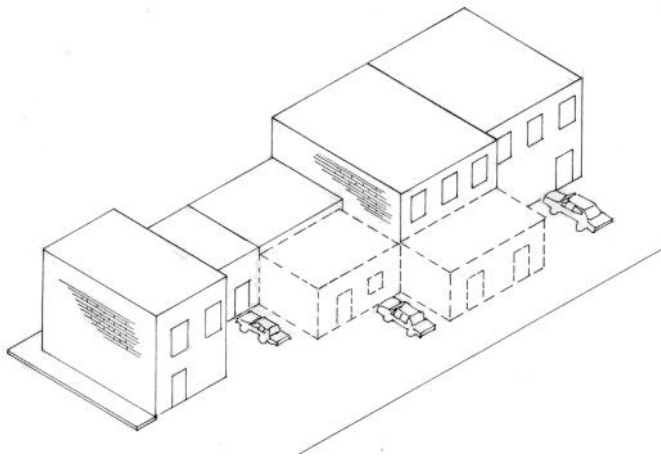
Corner commercial buildings with raised steps at the front can be remodeled to allow for access ramps such as this example.



# New Construction - Rear Additions

Rear and lateral additions offer owners flexibility in their building use. Additions should use design, materials, and placement that minimize their affect on the district's historic character.

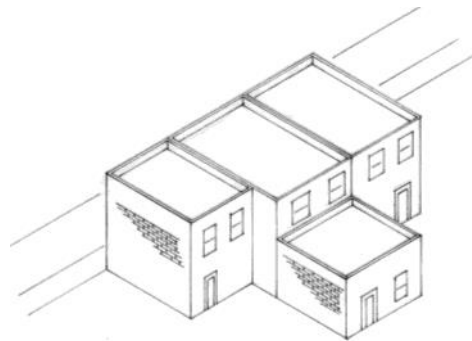
1. Additions should cause minimal damage or removal of historic walls, roofs, and features from historic buildings. Existing openings should be used to connect the building and the addition.
2. Additions should have little or no visibility from the primary street façade.



Shown is appropriate placement for ground level additions. Rear elevations are generally appropriate locations for additions, though lateral additions may also be made to side elevations with limited public visibility.

3. Additions should be compatible with the original building in scale, proportion, rhythm, and materials.
4. Additions should be distinguishable from the historic building: they should be smaller and simpler in design.
5. Additions should be contemporary in design but compatible with adjacent buildings.

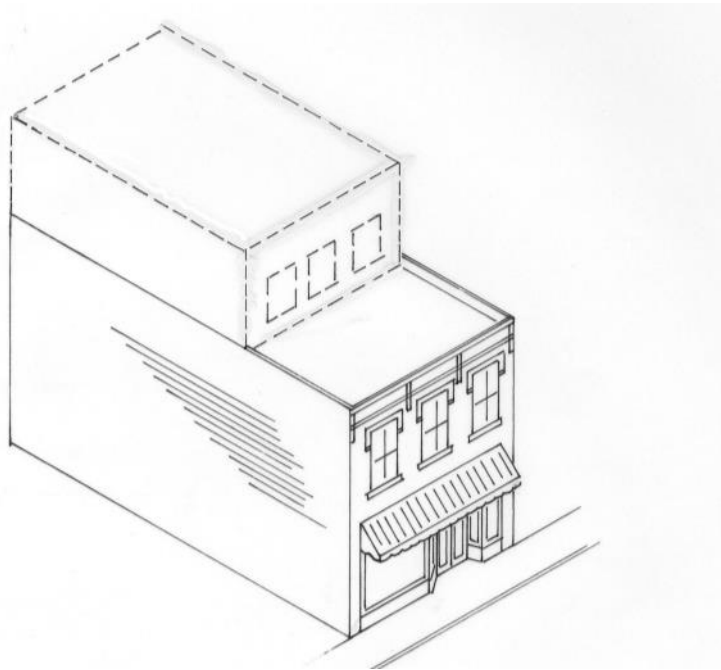
The location, scale, proportion, rhythm, materials, and size of this addition are all appropriate.



## New Construction - Roofline Additions

Rooftop additions provide owners with flexibility in their building use. Additions should use design, materials, and placement that minimize their affect on the district's historic character.

1. Rooftop additions should not be visible from the street.
2. Rooftop additions should use similar roof forms to the buildings to which they are attached.
3. Additions should not cause the removal of character-defining materials and features.



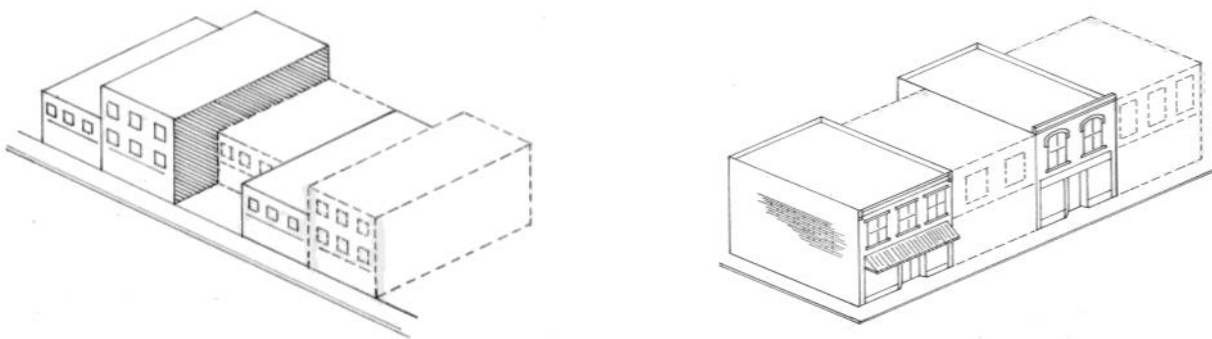
Rooftop additions should be recessed so that they are not visible from the street. Their roof forms should mimic the roof forms of the attached buildings.



## New Construction - Infill Buildings

Where historic buildings have been lost or where there are vacant lots, new construction is encouraged to add to the streetscape and promote economic development. Infill construction in Houma's commercial area should be compatible with adjacent buildings in scale, height, materials, orientation, shape, placement, and rhythm and proportion of openings.

1. Height and width of new buildings should be compatible with that of adjacent buildings.
2. New buildings should be constructed of materials that are compatible with adjacent buildings.
3. Set back of new buildings should be in line with adjacent existing buildings.
4. The roof form of new buildings should match those of adjacent buildings.
5. New buildings should be compatible with adjacent buildings in terms of scale and proportions.



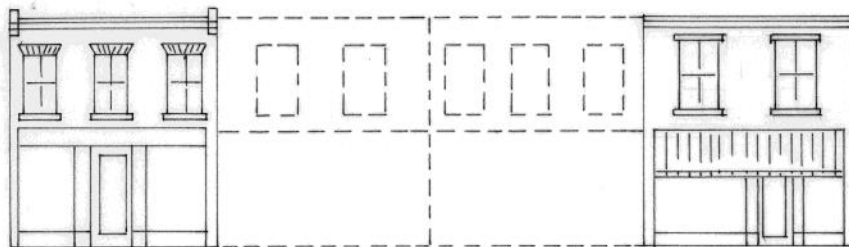
On the left, inappropriate infill. As on the right, buildings should be set back a uniform distance of several feet from the street to form a continuous wall of facades, and side walls are shared. Roofs are flat or very slightly sloped. These patterns of construction should continue.

6. New construction should be oriented toward the major street.
7. New buildings should be contemporary but compatible in design to historic buildings.

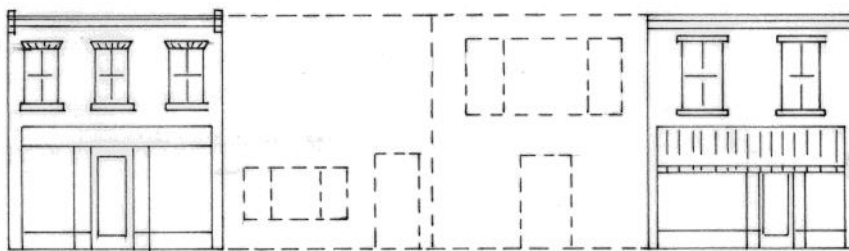
## New Construction - Infill Buildings



If new construction will fill several footprints of missing historic buildings, it should have the appearance of traditional building widths.



Appropriate alignment: The sketch above illustrates new construction that maintains traditional storefront and upper façade alignment. The sketch below illustrates inappropriate alignment.



## New Construction - Infill Buildings



New buildings can be visually compatible with a neighborhood without being imitations of the historic buildings that surround them.



Contemporary designs are appropriate if materials, scale, and alignment are compatible with adjacent buildings.

# Streetscape Elements

Houma has invested in streetscape improvements in the downtown area including new lighting, planter boxes and ADA curb cuts.

1. Houma's commercial area should continue to be enhanced through streetscape elements such as benches and planters.
2. Major streetscape improvements considered in the future should be consistent with the historic character of the downtown area and follow traditional designs.



The streetscape improvements along Main Street and adjacent to the bayou help to connect the downtown area and add vitality and attractiveness to the historic district.

3. Landscaping should not damage historic buildings or conceal historic elements.
4. Since landscaping was not historically common in downtown Houma, contemporary plans should use plants with limited height and canopies.
5. Outdoor furniture provided by the city should be of uniform appearance and historically appropriate materials, such as wrought iron, and not impede pedestrian flow.



Houma has appropriate and standardized garbage receptacles in various locations downtown. Right: an ADA-compliant curb.





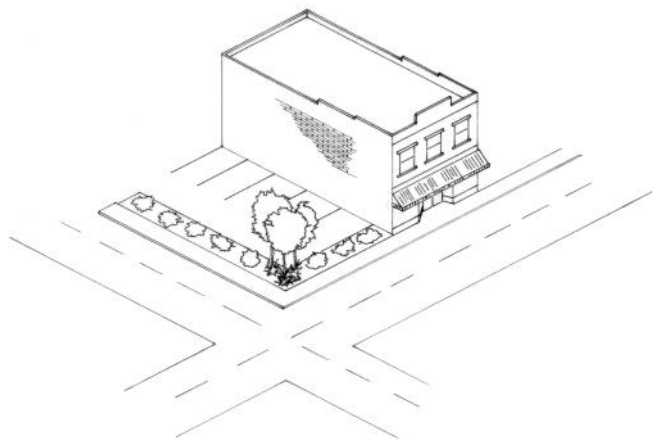
# Parking Lots

**Parking areas that are added to downtown Houma should be screened with landscaping. Owners are encouraged to add appropriate landscape features to their lots.**

1. In planning and constructing parking lots, historic landscape elements, particularly buildings, should be protected.
2. In the commercial downtown, parking lots should be located behind historic buildings and out of pedestrian view.
3. A shared parking lot allows businesses or institutions with different peak use times maximum patronage. Such planning may also prevent the loss of historic buildings for more parking areas.
4. Parking and pedestrian areas should be clearly designated.



The parking area adjacent to 7913 Main Street is defined by an iron fence (left). This lot and others would be more attractive with the addition of landscaping as seen in the parking lot at 7847 Main Street at right. Parking lots at corners should be outlined with landscaping or low walls (below).





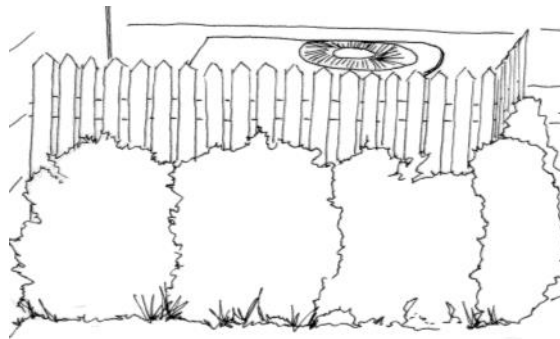
# Utilities

Utilities such as garbage containers and mechanical systems are important to the functionality of buildings and the district. Air conditioning and heating units should be sited at rear facades or on rooftops., where they are not readily visible from the street. They should also be screened with landscaping or fencing. Conduits should be painted to blend with the color of the building.

1. Garbage containers should be placed behind buildings and be screened from view using fencing or plants.
2. Ground-mounted mechanical systems should be located behind or on top of buildings. If on the ground, they should be screened from view using fencing or plants. If on top of buildings, they should be set back or behind a parapet, not visible from the street.



The HVAC units at 7883 Main Street are appropriately placed at the rear façade (left). The HVAC units at 7881 Main Street are screened behind fencing (top right). Mechanical systems should be screened with lattice work, fencing, or plants as shown at right.



3. Window mechanical systems should be located on the side or rear elevations; their visibility should be as minimal as possible.
4. Meters, conduits, and other equipment should be located on rear elevations.

# Demolition

The buildings that contribute to the historic character of the downtown area are irreplaceable physical evidence of Houma's past. The loss of any historic building affects not only the individual building, but the surrounding landscape.

1. Demolition may be appropriate if the building does not contribute to the historic character of the district.
2. Applicants for demolition should explore possibilities for selling or reusing historic buildings, preferably onsite but also in other locations, as alternatives to demolition. Applicants should consider mothballing the building, which involves developing a strategy for halting deterioration, protecting from vandalism, and stabilizing the building structurally until such time that proper rehabilitation or restoration may commence.
3. Demolition may be appropriate if the denial of the demolition will result in a demonstrable economic hardship on the owner. Moving a building from its historic location will be approved only if all other alternatives for preservation have been explored.
4. Demolition by neglect occurs when a building is allowed to deteriorate through lack of maintenance. It is a self-imposed hardship that will not be considered a mitigating circumstance when determining economic hardship.



Demolition of historic commercial buildings should only occur once all other possibilities have been explored.

# Residential Design Guidelines

# Architectural Features

Architectural detailing ( gingerbread, vergeboards, eaves, brackets, dentils, cornices, moldings, trimwork, shingles, columns, pilasters, balusters, or any decorative or character-defining features) is a major component in defining a building's character and style. Original architectural detailing should be preserved and maintained. If the details need to be replaced, the new materials should match the original as closely as possible.

1. Architectural features should not be removed or changed if original to the building.
2. Architectural features may be added to a building if accurately based on physical, pictorial, or historical evidence (e.g., paint "ghosts," removed features, etc.) or that are consistent with properties of similar design, age, and detailing in the surrounding area.
3. Repair rather than replace architectural features.
4. Match the appearance, profile, and texture of the original materials if repair is not possible.
5. Cleaning should occur only if serious staining has taken place. In general, water and mild detergent, applied with brushes, are appropriate cleaning tools.
6. For decaying wood, it is appropriate to apply epoxy to strengthen damaged areas and fill in small openings. For large areas of decay, remove damaged wood areas and replace with appropriate wood. Synthetic siding is not an appropriate replacement material.



Original architectural details should be preserved and maintained such as the decorative wood shingles in the gable field at 407 Rousell Street and the eave vergeboard at 7863 Park Street.

# Awnings

Awnings for windows and porches were common features of buildings in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20th centuries. With the widespread use of air conditioning after World War II, the use of awnings declined. In recent years the use of awnings has increased because they are attractive and save energy costs. Canvas awnings are appropriate for Houma's historic dwellings. Metal awnings were widely used in the mid-20th century and these are also appropriate for the district.

1. Awnings may be added on buildings at traditional locations such as over windows and doors and attached to porches.
2. Awnings should not damage the building or its architectural features.
3. Awnings may be fixed or operating.
4. Awnings should be constructed of canvas duck or cotton and polyester blends and may be treated with acrylic. Vinyl is not an appropriate material for awnings.
5. Awnings should fit the opening and should not cover or conceal significant architectural details.
6. Awning color should complement that of the house.
7. For occasional cleaning, sweeping the under side with a broom and hosing the upper side with clean water is an appropriate method. Twice annually, clean awnings by scrubbing them with a soft brush and soap (not detergent), rinsing, and drying. Every two to three years awnings may require professional cleaning and waterproofing.



Metal awnings installed in the in the mid-20th century remain in use over a front porch and over multiple windows (313 & 501 Roussell Street)



# Chimneys

Chimneys often feature decorative brickwork or designs that contribute to a building's architectural character. Chimneys should be maintained and preserved in accordance with the brick and mortar guidelines.

1. Chimneys should not be removed or altered if original or architecturally significant.
2. Chimneys should be re-pointed and cleaned according to masonry guidelines to match original materials, colors, shape, and brick pattern.
3. If a chimney becomes unstable or has already collapsed, rebuild to match original design.
4. Chimney caps should be of clay, slate, metal, or stone.
5. Chimneys should not be covered with stucco or other veneers.



This original exterior brick chimney at 518 School Street is an important part of its architectural character.

# Doors and Entrances

Doors are often buildings' central visual elements and are particularly important features. Historic entrances and doors should be retained, maintained, and, if needed, repaired. Missing or severely deteriorated doors should be replaced with historically appropriate replacements. Screen, storm, and security doors should not detract from the historic appearance of their building.

1. Historic doors should be retained and preserved. They are also appropriate models for replacement, if necessary. Replacement doors should be of wood, with or without glass lights, and should complement the style of the house.
2. Deteriorated or damaged historic doors should be repaired using methods that allow them to retain their historic appearance and as much of their historic fabric as possible. Epoxy is helpful in strengthening and replacing damaged wood.
3. Missing or severely damaged doors (when 80% is missing or deteriorated) should be replaced with examples that replicate the original or similar door.
4. Replacement doors may be of painted, paneled wood, with or without single or multiple clear-glass openings.
5. Historic screen doors and shutters should be retained and preserved.
6. New screen doors should be complementary to the style of the house, have a wood frame, and be full-view or have structural members that align with those of the door.



These entrances retain original decorative doors, sidelights, and transoms (Left: 606-608 Goode Street, center: 510 Roussell Street, right: 604 Wood Street).

# Fire Escapes and Staircases

Multi-story buildings used for commercial and/or rental residential uses often require fire escapes to meet fire and safety codes. Fire escapes, whether incorporated within the walls of the building or attached to exterior walls, should be sited at the rear or sides of buildings so as not to be visible from the street. Fire escapes should meet all fire and safety codes as well as these guidelines.

1. Fire escapes should be added only if required by building codes or where no other means of upper floor access is reasonably feasible.
2. Staircases should be added to elevations not readily visible from the street.
3. Staircases should not damage architectural features or other building components.
4. Staircases may be either open or enclosed.
5. If enclosed, staircase surfaces should be of wood siding, brick veneer, or stucco.
6. If open, staircase surfaces should be of metal or wood.

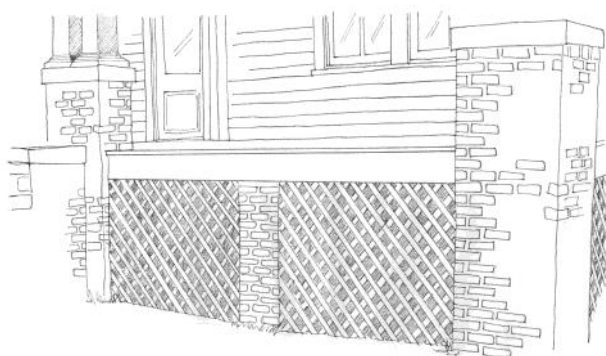


Fire escapes should be added to the rear elevation of a building, out of view from the street, and preferably of wood construction as at 319 Rousell Street.

# Foundations

Foundation materials include stone, brick, brick piers, poured concrete, and rock-faced concrete block. Original foundation materials should be preserved and maintained and should be repaired and maintained in keeping with masonry guidelines. The installation of lattice panels between brick piers is more historically correct than infilling between the piers with concrete block.

1. Foundations should be preserved and maintained in their original design and with original materials and detailing.
2. Brick pier foundations may be filled in as traditional for the type and style of the house. Wood lattice framed panels and decorative vertical wood boards are appropriate; lattice panels should be set back from or flush with the fronts of the piers, not in front, as to conceal the piers.
3. Foundations should not be concealed with concrete block, plywood panels, corrugated metal, or wood shingles.
4. Clean, repair, or re-point foundations according to masonry guidelines.
5. Brick foundations may be painted or stuccoed only if the brick and/or mortar is mis-matched or inappropriately repaired. Dark reds, browns or other traditional brick colors are appropriate paint colors for foundations.



Lattice panels are encouraged for infill between brick piers, but should not cover and conceal the piers (left). The dwelling at 7863 Park Street is an example of appropriate design and placement of lattice panels.



# Garages and Outbuildings

Many dwellings retain original or added outbuildings constructed before 1960. These buildings contribute to the character of the historic district and should be preserved and maintained when feasible. New garages and outbuildings should follow new construction guidelines.

1. Garages and outbuildings that contribute to a property's historic character, or are original to a property should be preserved and maintained. Original or historic features such as siding and windows should be repaired or replaced to match the original if readily visible from the street.
2. Original garages and outbuildings should remain at their original location. However, relocating the structure to another part of a lot may be appropriate if that is the only way to preserve the building.
3. Original doors such as early 20<sup>th</sup> century garage doors should be maintained to the greatest extent possible, but may be retrofitted with modern hardware and custom garage door openers.



Left: An example of an attached garage at the rear of the dwelling at 510 School Street. Right: A free-standing garage at the rear of 600 Roussell Street.



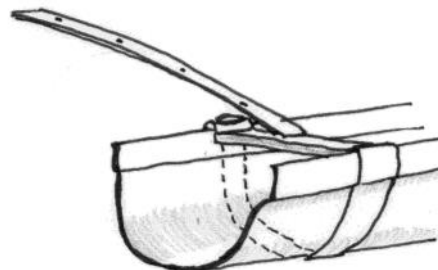
# Gutters and Downspouts

Using well-maintained gutters and downspouts helps to protect buildings from water damage. If new gutters are required, half-round designs are the most appropriate.

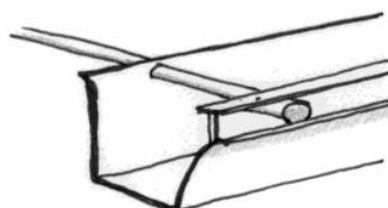
1. Gutters, downspouts, and splashblocks should be used and maintained.
2. Existing boxed or built-in gutters should be retained.
3. Deteriorated or damaged boxed or built-in gutters should be repaired.
4. If new gutters are needed, the most appropriate design for hanging gutters is half round. For buildings dating from or influenced by designs from the 1940s or later, ogee gutters are also appropriate.
5. Downspouts should be located away from architectural features and on the least public building elevation.
6. Original box gutters should be preserved and maintained - not removed or replaced with hanging gutter systems. Box gutters were designed to be complimentary to a house's overall design.



Appropriate design gutter and downspout at 510 Roussell Street.



Gutters, downspouts, and splashblocks should be used. Half-round gutters, as shown above, are most appropriate. Ogee gutters, below, may also be appropriate.



# Lighting

Many early 20<sup>th</sup> century dwellings retain original exterior light fixtures at the porch ceiling or adjacent to the main entrance. These light fixtures are part of a building's character and should be preserved and maintained. Replacement light fixtures with simple designs and detailing are preferred to large or ornate fixtures. Many companies now provide light fixtures based upon historic designs and their addition is appropriate and encouraged. When considering extensive exterior lighting plans, planning and zoning codes should be checked for regulations on intensity of brightness.

1. Historic light fixtures should be retained and maintained.
2. Deteriorated or damaged historic light fixtures should be repaired using methods that allow them to retain their historic appearance.
3. Owners are encouraged to replace missing or severely damaged historic light fixtures with replacements that replicate the originals or other historic examples in appearance and materials.
4. If modern light fixtures are desired as replacements or where light fixtures previously did not exist, they should be unobtrusive and constructed of traditional materials.
5. Light fixtures should not damage or obscure architectural features or other building elements.



Historic light fixtures such as at 621 School Street should be retained and maintained.

# Paint and Paint Color

Paint color is not reviewed by the HHDC. However, colors for exterior surfaces should complement surrounding buildings. Trim can be painted to contrast with the wood siding. Regular maintenance of painted exteriors helps protect the building from moisture.

1. The painted surface of historically painted buildings or features should be maintained.
2. New or replacement building features of the type that were historically painted, including, brick, wood siding or wood trim, should be painted and their surface maintained.
3. Historically unpainted buildings or features should remain unpainted. Refer to NPS Preservation Brief #1 for advice, available at <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/TPS/briefs01.htm>.
4. If existing paint is protecting damaged bricks or other surface materials from disintegration, it should not be removed.
5. If the removal of existing paint is desired, non-abrasive methods such as chemical cleaning, hand-scraping, or handsanding should be used. Electric heat guns and heat plates may also be used; use these tools with caution because of the fire hazard.

Original wood siding should be painted with colors appropriate to the style and period of the house. Paint helps to protect wood as well as add color and variety to a historic property (510 School St.).



# Porches

**Porches are one of the most defining characteristics of historic houses. In most cases, historic porches should be retained, maintained, and, if needed, repaired. New porches should be consistent with the historic appearance of building to which they are attached.**

1. In most cases, historic porches visible from the street should be retained and maintained.
2. Porches on the primary façade should not be enclosed, though screening is appropriate if the structural framework for the screen is minimal. Wood framing is preferred, though anodized or baked aluminum framing is acceptable; raw aluminum framing is not appropriate.
3. If the historic porch is missing, it is appropriate to replace it. Replacement porches should use materials and styles that are compatible with the building to which they are attached and when possible be based on historic photographic or documentary evidence. Removing a front porch that has been added where there was not one historically may be appropriate in some circumstances.
4. Porch details should be retained intact with repair work and replacement of missing parts, such as columns, posts, railings, balusters, decorative molding and trimwork, to match the original in design, materials, scale, and placement.
5. Original porches should not be removed. Porches on the rear and sides of dwellings may be enclosed when not visible from the street and if the height and shape of the porch roof is maintained.
6. Wood porches should have wood steps, not brick or concrete steps. Brick, concrete, or tile porches may have similar materials used for rebuilding front steps and stairs if needed. The use of pre-cast concrete steps for front porches is discouraged. The use of composite materials for porch floors may be acceptable.
7. Wood trellis for plants is appropriate. Wood lattice panels may be added between porch piers below the porch in accordance with foundation guidelines.



Porches are important defining features of dwellings and original porch design and arrangement should be preserved and maintained (502 Academy Street).

# Porch Columns and Railings

Historic porch columns and railings should be retained and repaired with materials to match the original. If the original porch columns and railings are missing, replacement porch columns and railings should be appropriate for the dwelling's architectural style and period.

1. Porch columns and railings should be preserved and maintained. If repair is required, use materials to match the original in dimensions and detailing.
2. Columns often deteriorate first at the bottom, next to the porch floor. It is preferred that the deteriorated section is replaced, rather than replacing the entire column.
3. Porch columns are available in modern materials, such as aluminum, wrought iron, vinyl, but these are not appropriate for front porches. These types of columns are not preferred but are acceptable for porches at the rear of a dwelling or for side porches that are not visible from the street.

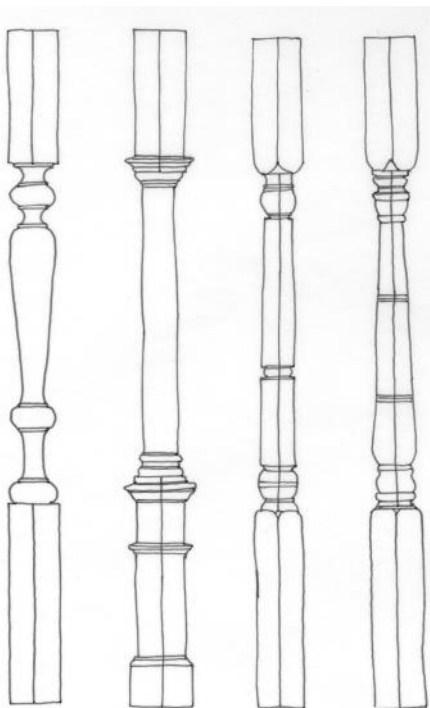


Columns and posts are character defining features of particular styles: left, the Queen Anne style dwelling at 501 Rousell Street has Tuscan columns resting on wood piers; right, Bungalow at 631 Verret Street has tapered brick columns and a railing with square balusters.



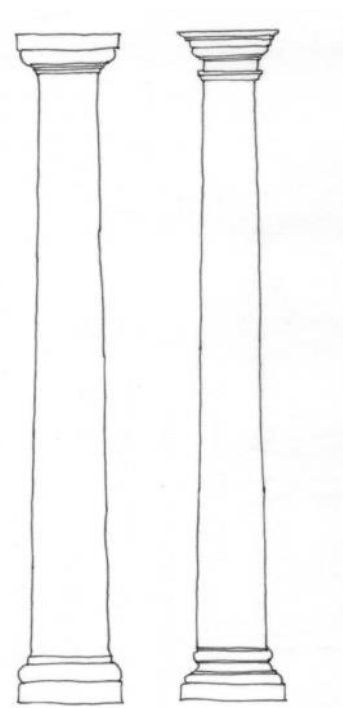
## Porch Columns and Railings

4. Columns on front porches should be rebuilt in historic designs if the original columns and railings are missing. For Queen Anne and Folk Victorian styles of the turn of the century, milled porch columns are appropriate and are readily available from wholesale companies. These porch columns are generally 8' in height and have widths and depths of 4" to 6".
5. If porch railings require replacement balusters or newel posts, these are readily available. "Ball top" newel posts are best for Queen Anne or Folk Victorian porches. "V Groove" Posts are acceptable for Queen Anne, Folk Victorian, and American Foursquare porches. They are generally 4' feet in length and 4" in width. Milled spindle are appropriate for Queen Anne and Folk Victorian porches. Square balusters of the same dimensions are suitable for American Foursquare and Colonial Revival porches.
6. Original porch railings should be rebuilt rather than removed to avoid conflicts with building codes. Today's building codes generally require the tops of railings to be at least 36" above grade which is often too high for historic porches. If a new porch is necessary consider raising the grade level through landscaping to retain appropriate railing heights.



On the left are examples of appropriate replacement columns for Victorian era dwellings.

At right, are appropriate replacement columns for Colonial Revival and American Foursquare dwellings.



# Roofs

Original roof forms should be preserved and maintained. Additions to roofs such as new dormers or skylights should be added at rear or side rooflines that are not visible from the street. Historic roof materials such as metal standing seam, clay tiles, or slate should be repaired and preserved. If repair is no longer practical, replacement with an appropriate substitute material is appropriate.

1. The historic roof shape should be retained.
2. If localized damage or deterioration of historic roofing materials occurs, replacement with matching materials is preferred to complete removal and replacement.
3. New dormers should not be added on front facades but dormers may be added on rear facades or secondary facades where not noticeably visible and if in keeping with the character and scale of the structure.



Original roof forms should be not be altered and original materials should be preserved as long as possible.

Many roofs in the historic district retain materials such as the pressed metal shingles at 313 Rousell Street (top) and clay tile at 621 School Street (bottom).



# Roofs



Satellite dishes should be installed on rear elevations where they are not readily visible from the street (left).

New metal standing seam roofs should match the original in seam crimping and spacing (right).

4. New skylights, solar panels, decks, balconies, and satellite dishes should not be readily visible from the street.
5. Roofs with standing seam metal should be repaired. If replacement is necessary the new roof should match the historic one as closely as possible in dimensions, seam crimping, and seam spacing.
6. Cornices should be retained and preserved.

Corrugated metal is a widely used roof material in the district (606-608 Goode Street).



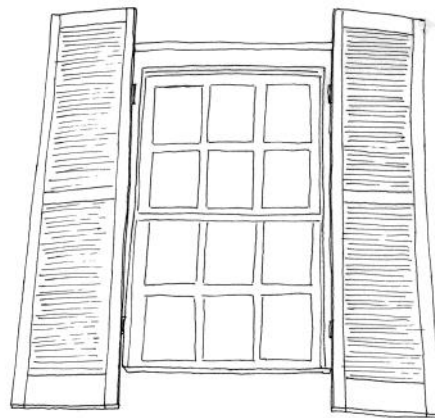
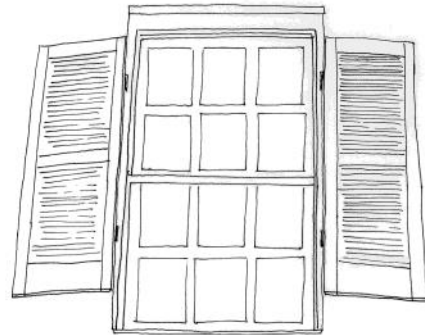
# Shutters

Window shutters were common for Houma's historic houses to block the sun in the summer and to protect windows during storms and hurricanes. Original shutters should be preserved and maintained. The addition of new shutters should be of wood and with dimensions that match the window opening. Most residential shutters of the 19th century were of louvered design while 20th century dwellings also featured paneled shutters.

1. Window shutters original to the dwelling should be preserved and maintained.
2. If historical evidence indicates that a dwelling originally had shutters, new ones can be added. The new shutters should imitate the historic shutter design and fit the window opening.
3. Fiberglass and vinyl shutters are not appropriate materials, as their imitation grain and appearance is not compatible with historic dwellings.
4. Shutters should be attached to the window frame, not attached directly to the façade wall.



Preserve original louvered shutters such as at 518 School Street.



Two examples of inappropriately sized shutters .



# Siding

Exterior siding materials such as weatherboard, clapboard, shingles, and board and batten cladding are essential components defining a building's architectural character. Synthetic sidings do not successfully imitate the original siding dimensions or texture. Use of these materials may not be cost effective compared to continued maintenance and painting of the original siding, especially as there are potential structural problems inherent in their use on historic buildings.

1. Original wood weatherboard, clapboard, shingles, and board and batten should be maintained. These exteriors should be replaced only if necessary.



Original wood siding materials should be preserved and maintained. If severe deterioration occurs, siding should be restored with like materials (313 Roussell Street).

2. Deteriorated wood siding should be repaired or replaced with wood siding to match the original. Replacement should be with the most rot resistant wood available .
3. Removal of added synthetic siding (aluminum, masonite, and vinyl) that has been added to a building is highly encouraged, followed by restoration of the original wood siding.
4. If original wood siding is severely damaged due to rot, insect infestation, or loss of material, it is acceptable to repair those areas with in-kind materials. For insect treatment, a homeowner should seek professional consultation.



## Siding

5. The application of synthetic or substitute materials such as vinyl or aluminum over original wood siding is not appropriate and may cause ,conceal, or accelerate structural damage. In cases where the historic siding has been removed, the HHDC may allow for the application of synthetic siding materials as long as the materials match the appearance of the original sheathing materials. While the application of synthetic siding materials is discouraged, it is not prohibited.
6. To be approved, the application of synthetic sidings must not result in the concealment of, or removal of, original decorative detailing and trim. This includes the concealment of window and door surrounds. Synthetic siding materials should match the dimensions and appearance of the original wood siding as closely as possible. Avoid the use of wood grain textured synthetic sidings. Care should be taken to have the synthetic siding vented to the maximum extent possible. NOTE: The application of synthetic siding materials over original wood siding would not be approved for state or federal rehabilitation tax credits.
7. If synthetic sidings are applied, consider only siding the rear elevation or side facades. Preserving the original wood siding on the primary façade is encouraged.
8. Cement siding may be appropriate for replacement of highly deteriorated wood.
9. In cases where homeowners seek approval to remove and replace synthetic siding, a two-step process is recommended, postponing an application of new synthetic siding until the materials and quality of the lower layer is ascertained.



Exterior siding materials are also important in defining the style and character of a dwelling such as the wood shingles in the gable field at 631 Verret Street.

# Siding

## Why Preserving Original Siding is Recommended and Makes Economic Sense

The Houma Historic District Commission requires the preservation and retention of historic wood siding unless the siding is clearly proven to be deteriorated beyond repair. The reasons for preserving wood siding and not concealing it beneath synthetic siding materials include:

Synthetic sidings do not successfully replicate the appearance of historic wood siding materials. In particular, vinyl siding's plastic appearance is at odds with the rich and varied surfaces of wood siding.

Synthetic sidings such as aluminum and vinyl can trap moisture and condensation between it and the wood underneath, leading to rotted wood and structural problems. Synthetic sidings don't allow the historic building to "breathe" and provide sufficient permeability.

Synthetic sidings such as vinyl and aluminum may be less economical than preserving and maintaining wood siding. The costs of applying synthetic siding materials often exceeds or equals the cost of regular painting of wood siding. In terms of resale value, wood siding has the economic advantage; a study by *Remodeling Magazine* judges that property owners do not recapture one out of every three dollars invested in aluminum siding when they sell their house. Real estate appraisers across the country have also recorded increased resale values when historic building owners retain original wood siding and avoid vinyl siding.

Wood and synthetic materials perform fairly equally in terms of energy conservation since most heat leaves houses through roofs, basements, windows, and doors.

Claims that synthetic siding is "maintenance-free" are untrue. Owners of 15 to 20 year old aluminum and vinyl siding often find that it, like wood, requires painting due to fading of the original color. In particular vinyl siding gets brittle with age and tends to crack and break after ten years.

Vinyl siding is made from polyvinyl chloride and the manufacture, use and disposal of this material

# Signs

All signs within the Houma Historic District require a Certificate of Appropriateness, including new signs and alterations to existing signs, except for regular maintenance. Many former dwellings in the historic district are now used for offices and free-standing signs in front yards or signs affixed to the front of the building are most appropriate.

1. New signs should be of traditional materials such as wood, glass, copper or bronze letters. Sandblasted wood signs are appropriate. Plastic substrate signs, plywood signs, or unfinished wood are not recommended.
2. Length of a sign should not exceed two-thirds the width at the narrowest point.
3. Signs with no more than two or three colors are most effective and least obtrusive. Colors should be coordinated with overall building colors.
4. Traditional lettering such as serif, sans serif, or script lettering is recommended. Letters should not exceed 18 inches in height and cover more than 60% of the total sign area.
5. Flat wall signs shall not extend more than three inches from the building's surface; dimensional surface signs shall not extend more than twelve inches. Limit of one wall sign and one projecting sign per building. Hardware should be mounted into mortar.
6. Limit of one window sign per building, with an area limited to 20% of the window.
7. Spot or up-lit lighting for signs is recommended; light fixtures should be unobtrusive. Internal lighting is not appropriate.
8. A free-standing sign should be compatible with its surroundings and not exceed 16 square feet per face or 25 feet in height.



Appropriate free-standing signs at 518 School Street (left) and 501 Roussell Street (right).



# Windows

**Windows are prominent building components. Historic windows should be retained, maintained, and, if needed, repaired.**

1. Original window should be preserved in their original size, location, and design, with their original materials and number of panes.
2. Windows should not be added on the primary façade.
3. Windows should be repaired rather than replaced. If severe deterioration necessitates replacement (80% of the original window is missing or deteriorated), new wood windows should be in-kind to match the original design and materials. Baked enamel or anodized aluminum windows may be appropriate. Vinyl or vinyl clad wood windows should not be installed on the any façade visible from street views.
4. Original metal windows in twentieth-century buildings should be preserved and maintained or replaced with new metal windows of similar appearance.
5. Snap-on muntins do not effectively replicate the appearance of historic muntins and should not be used.
6. Screens or storm covers should fit within the window frame and not overlap the frame.
7. Security bars should not be used where visible from the street. While security bars should not be used on windows on a primary façade, they may be appropriate on basement windows.

Preserve and maintain original historic windows such as the two-over-two wood sash window at 407 Roussell Street.



# New Construction - Decks

Porches are preferred to decks but decks are acceptable at the rear facade. Decks on the sides of buildings are also acceptable if they are not readily visible from the street.

1. Decks should be located at the rear of buildings. If built on the side of a building the deck should be screened from street view with fencing and/or appropriate native evergreen plants and shrubs.
2. Wood decks should be of simple design with square, wood, balusters 2" wide and spaced no more than 3" apart .
3. Decks should be stained or painted to match or blend with the colors of the building.

The location of this deck, to the rear of the house and with limited visibility from the street, is appropriate. Its wooden construction is also appropriate.



Decks are appropriate for rear elevations that are not readily visible from the street.



# New Construction - Ramps & Lifts

Access ramps and lifts should be sited at the rear or sides of buildings that are not visible from the street. Ramps of wood construction are most appropriate for the Houma Historic District's residential areas and the railings should be with simple designs or match the original porch railing in design and detailing. Ramp construction should not damage the historic qualities of a property and should be built so that the building can be readily restored once the ramp is removed.

1. Ramps preferably should be located at the rear or sides of buildings. If a handicapped ramp must be placed on the front of a building it should be of wood construction rather than of brick, concrete, or metal. Brick, concrete, and metal ramps are more acceptable at rear and sides of buildings not visible from the street.
2. Ramps of wood construction should be simple in design and configuration using square balusters in the railing and simple square handrails. Ramps may also be designed to match the original porch railing in materials, dimensions, and detailing. Ramps should be painted to match the color of the porch railing or the overall building paint color. Handrails should be of wood or metal. Wire or cable handrails are not appropriate.
3. Ramps should be screened with landscaping of low shrubbery to provide concealment.
4. Ramps that are temporary in nature should be reversible, not destroy or remove any historic fabric and be of materials and color to have the least visual impact on the historic building.
5. Ramps or mechanical handicap lifts should also be considered for installation at rear or non-readily visible side facades. Lifts should be as inconspicuous as possible and should be built into another feature or painted to match the adjoining materials.

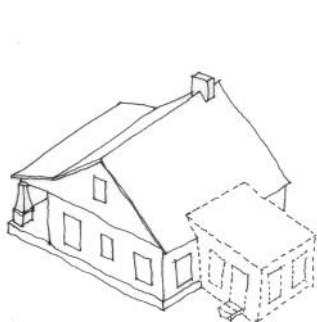
Appropriate design and location of an access ramp at the rear of 518 School Street.



# New Construction - Additions

In planning additions the best approach is to site additions where they will not be visible from the street, or where they will have the least effect on the building's overall form and plan. The rear of buildings is the best locations for the addition of rooms, wings, porches, or decks. Enlarging a property through adding additional stories is not appropriate except at rear roof lines which are not readily visible.

1. Additions to historic homes should be located at the rear of buildings, not on the front or sides of buildings where they are readily visible from the street.
2. Additions should be secondary (smaller and simpler) than the original building in scale, design, and placement.
3. Additions should be of a compatible design in keeping with the original building's design, roof shape, materials, color, and location of window, door, and cornice heights.
4. Additions should not imitate an earlier historic style or architectural period. For example, a Victorian-era Queen Anne style rear porch addition would not be appropriate for a Colonial Revival house.
5. The recommended approach is for additions to reflect characteristics of the current period in design but compatible with the original building.
6. To avoid extensive removal, damage, or loss of historic materials, additions should keep the exterior walls of the original building as intact as possible and use existing door and window openings for connecting the addition to the building.



Shown are appropriate designs and placements for ground-level additions. Their locations along the rear of buildings limits their public visibility. Their simple design and continuity of roof forms and window types and placement are also a measure of appropriateness.

# New Construction - Infill Buildings

Where historic buildings have been lost or where there are vacant lots, new construction is encouraged to add to the streetscape and promote economic development. Infill construction in the Houma Historic District's residential areas should be compatible with adjacent buildings in scale, height, materials, orientation, shape, placement, and rhythm and proportion of openings. Contemporary designs are encouraged but replicas of historic designs may also be acceptable.

1. New buildings should be compatible with adjacent buildings in terms of height.
2. New buildings should be compatible with adjacent buildings in terms of materials.
3. New buildings should be compatible with adjacent buildings in terms of set back.
4. New buildings should be compatible with adjacent buildings in terms of scale and proportions.



Infill buildings should model their height, roofline, and spacing on those of their nearest neighbors.

5. New buildings should be compatible with adjacent buildings in terms of roof form.
6. New construction should be oriented toward the major street.
7. New garages should be built at the rear of a dwelling or set well back on side elevations.



NO: Garages should not be added on the fronts of buildings on new construction.

## New Construction - Infill Buildings



New construction should be compatible with adjacent buildings in materials, porch design, and window and door openings such as this new house.



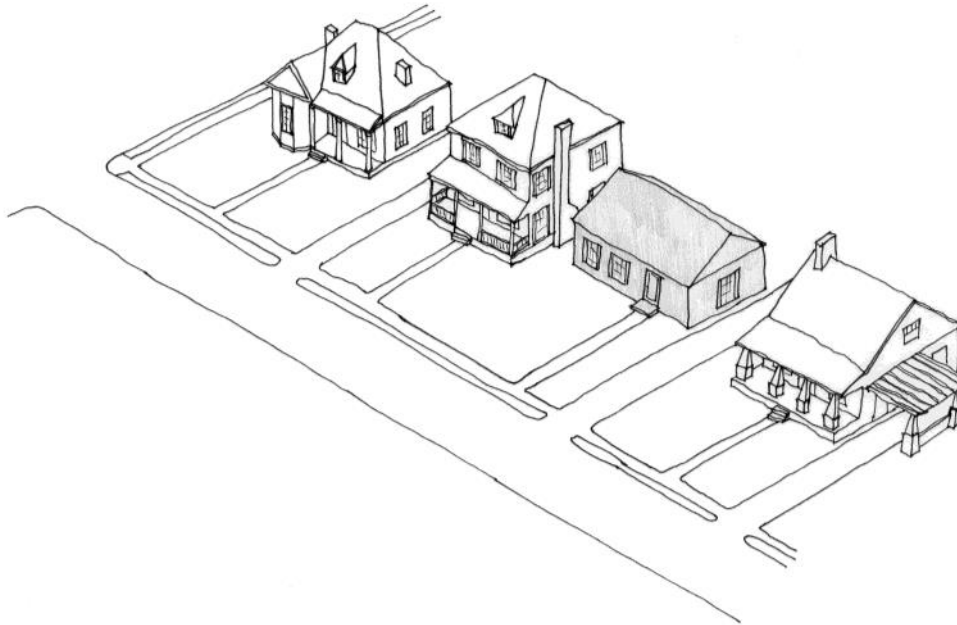
New buildings can be visually compatible with a neighborhood without being imitations of the historic buildings that surround them.



## New Construction - Infill Buildings



Above: example of inappropriate new construction. Garages should not be placed on primary facades in historic areas. This new dwelling is also incompatible with its setback and lack of a front porch.



In the above example, the infill dwelling disregards height and porch compatibility with neighboring properties.



# Driveways, Sidewalks, and Walkways

Historic driveway materials of brick, concrete and gravel should be preserved and maintained. New driveway or parking lot surfaces should be of concrete and brick rather than asphalt. Parking areas should not be sited in front yards but at side or rear locations.

1. Original driveways and walkway materials such as brick or concrete, should be preserved and maintained.
2. Driveways should be of gravel, concrete ribbons, grass and dirt, or concrete. Blacktop and asphalt driveways were not historically features of the district, and should be avoided. Driveways should be located to the side of the house.
3. Residential parking areas larger than one car width should be screened and located behind the house or out of view from the sidewalk.



(Left) Appropriate sidewalk at 624 Wood Street. (Center) The concrete driveway at 624 Wood Street is along the side of the house, leading to the garage located appropriately at the rear. (Right) The concrete ribbon driveways, as at 908 Goode Street, are a traditional design and would be appropriate for new driveways in a historic district.

# Fences and Walls

Historic (pre-1960) fences and walls should be preserved and maintained. The construction of new fences or walls based upon historic designs and materials is also appropriate. Fences were typically constructed of wood, cast iron, brick, stone, or woven wire.

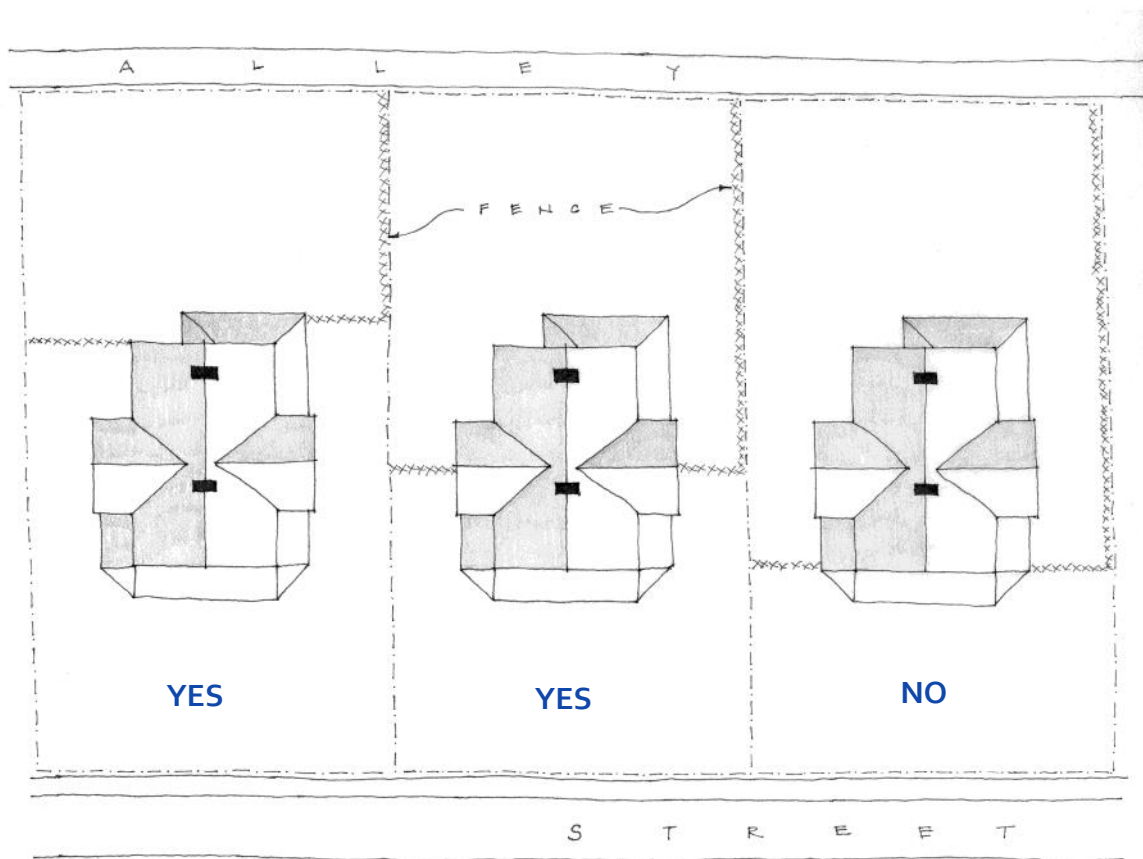
1. Historic fences and walls should be retained and maintained.
2. Wood picket fences are appropriate for new construction. Wood fences should be painted using colors complementary to the adjacent house. Fences should be less than three feet tall, and the pickets should be set less than three inches apart and be less than four inches in width.
3. New metal fences are appropriate for 19th and early 20th century dwellings as long as they are in traditional designs and patterns.
4. Wood board fences may be located in back yards, which traditionally could be as tall as eight feet. Flat tops, dog-ear tops, or pointed tops are all appropriate designs. Fences should be painted to blend with the building.
5. Free-standing brick or concrete walls may be located in back yards or, if not visible from the street, side yards.
6. Chain-link fencing may be located in back yards or, if not visible from the street, side yards. They should be painted dark green or black, coated with green or black plastic, or screened with plants. Vinyl or plastic-coated fencing is not appropriate.



Rear yards are appropriate locations of fences of brick as at 501 Roussell Street. The addition of wood privacy fences is appropriate for rear or side yards (502 Academy Street).

## Fences and Walls

7. Split or horizontal rail, railroad tie, or timber fences may be located in rear yards but should be avoided on the fronts of houses.
8. Walls of stone, concrete, or rock-faced concrete block that are original to a property (or erected before 1958) should be preserved, or if missing, may be reconstructed based on physical or pictorial evidence.
9. Walls should be repaired with materials which closely approximate the original.
10. Walls of brick, concrete, or stone may be added to the front of a property if historically appropriate and consistent with the character of the district.
11. Privacy fences should not exceed 6' in height. In front yards codes require fences to be no more than 3' in height.



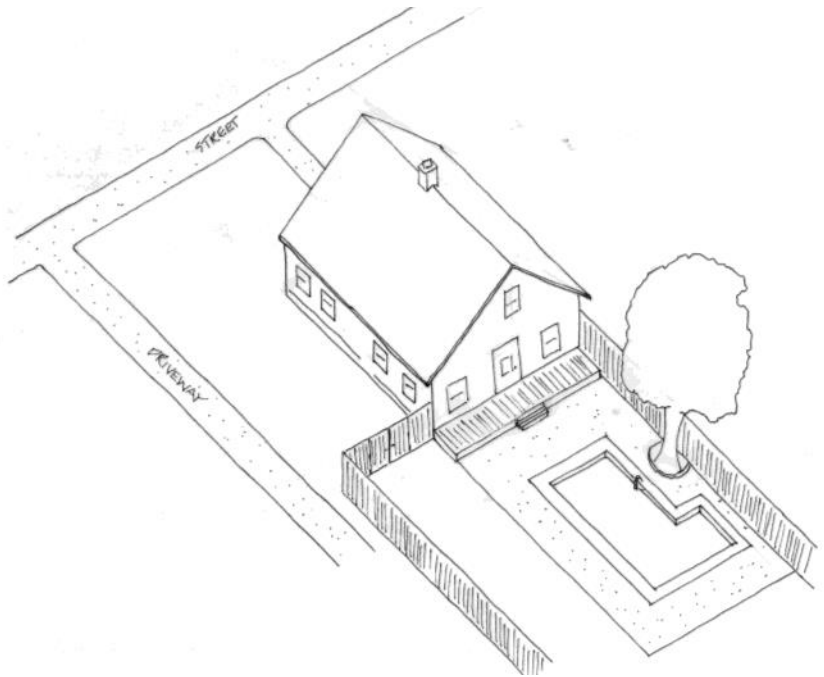
The installation of privacy fences is appropriate for the historic district as long as the fences are recessed back from the front of the house.

# Pools, Fountains, Gazebos, Pergolas

The installation of swimming pools, fountains, gazebos, pergolas, etc. should be limited to rear yards or side yards where they are set well back from the street. Swimming pools should be screened from view by fencing or landscaping.

1. Gazebos and pergolas should be constructed of wood and painted in colors that complement the adjoining building.
2. Gazebos and pergolas should not obscure views or damage historic features of the adjoining building.
3. Gazebos and pergolas should be located out of or with limited public view.
4. Swimming pools and fountains should be located in the back yards and have limited visibility from public vantage points.
5. Plants and/or fencing should be used to screen views of pools or fountains.

Swimming pools should be situated at rear yards and screened by fencing or landscaping.

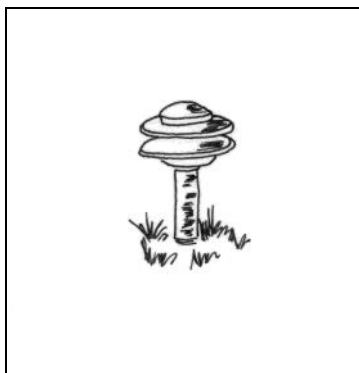




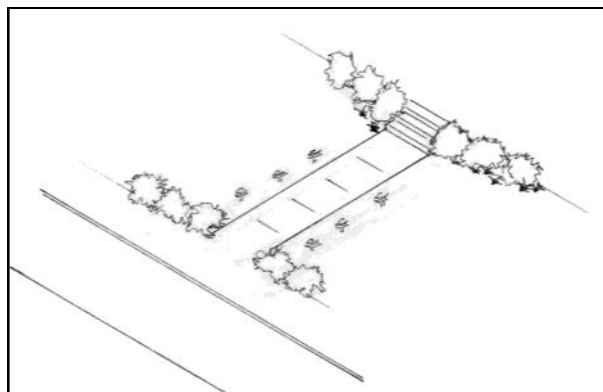
# Landscape Elements

Landscaping should follow historic patterns when possible. Landscaping should not damage historic buildings or other historic elements. While landscaping is not reviewed by the HHDC, the following guidelines are recommended.

1. Historic landscape elements and patterns of gardens, plantings, or other features should be retained. Historically modest landscaping designs should be followed.
2. Plants should not damage historic buildings or landscape elements. Vines or other vegetation growing on or next to walls and large roots below foundations or walkways are damaging and should be avoided. Therefore, trees that will mature taller than ten feet should not be planted in close proximity to a historic building.
3. Landscaping can be used in addition to hardscape features to conceal garbage receptacles, which should be placed at the rear of the building.



The use of footlights to provide walkway lighting is appropriate .



The landscaping at 404 Roussell Street is an appropriate addition to help conceal parking areas.



# Utilities

Utilities such as garbage containers and mechanical systems are important to the functionality of buildings and the district. They should be located out of public view, have minimal physical affect on historic buildings, and be accessible for pick up, reading, or servicing.

1. Garbage containers should be located behind buildings and be screened from view using fencing or plants.
2. Ground-mounted mechanical systems should be located behind buildings and screened from view using fencing or plants.
3. Window mechanical systems should be located on the side or rear elevations; their visibility should be as minimal as possible.
4. Meters, conduits, and other equipment should be located on rear elevations.
5. Underground utility installation may be appropriate in many situations.



Mechanical systems should be screened using landscaping or fencing.

# Moving Buildings

Because much of a building's historic significance results from its relationship with other buildings and landscape elements, moving buildings is a less desirable means of preservation than leaving them in place.

1. Moving a building into a locally designated district may be appropriate if compatible with the district's architectural character through style, period, height, scale, materials, setting, and placement on the lot.
2. Moving a building that contributes to the historic and architectural character of a district should be avoided unless demolition is the only alternative.
3. Moving a building from its historic location will be approved only if all other alternatives for preservation have been explored and exhausted.

# Demolition

The buildings that contribute to the historic residential character of the historic district neighborhoods are irreplaceable physical evidence of Houma's past. The loss of any historic building affects not only the individual building, but the surrounding landscape.

1. Demolition may be appropriate if the building does not contribute to the historic character of the district.
2. Applicants for demolition should explore possibilities for selling or reusing historic buildings, preferably onsite but also in other locations, as alternatives to demolition. Applicants should consider mothballing the building, which involves developing a strategy for halting deterioration, protecting from vandalism, and stabilizing the building structurally until such time that proper rehabilitation or restoration may commence.
3. Demolition may be appropriate if the denial of the demolition will result in a demonstrable economic hardship on the owner. Moving a building from its historic location will be approved only if all other alternatives for preservation have been explored.
4. Demolition by neglect occurs when a building is allowed to deteriorate through lack of maintenance. It is a self-imposed hardship that will not be considered a mitigating circumstance when determining economic hardship.

# Appendices

- A: Secretary of the Interior's Standards**
- B: Basic Maintenance Advice**
- C: Definitions and Terms**
- D: Bibliography**
- E: Incentives and Assistance for Rehabilitation**
- F: Resources**

## Appendix A: Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation

1. A property will be used as it was historically, or be given a new use that maximizes the retention of distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships. Where a treatment and use have not been identified, a property will be protected and, if necessary, stabilized until additional work may be undertaken.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The replacement of intact or repairable historic materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Work needed to stabilize, consolidate, and conserve existing historic materials and features will be physically and visually compatible, identifiable upon close inspection, and properly documented for future research.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. The existing condition of historic features will be evaluated to determine the appropriate level of intervention needed. Where the severity of deterioration requires repair or limited replacement of a distinctive feature, the new material will match the old in composition, design, color, and texture.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.



## Appendix A: Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Changes to properties over time are to be expected; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. If 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, when possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

## Appendix A: Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Restoration

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use which reflects the property's restoration period.
2. Materials and features from the restoration period will be retained and preserved. The removal of materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize the period will not be undertaken.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Work needed to stabilize, consolidate and conserve materials and features from the restoration period will be physically and visually compatible, identifiable upon close inspection, and properly documented for future research.
4. Materials, features, spaces, and finishes that characterize other historical periods will be documented prior to their alteration or removal.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize the restoration period will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated features from the restoration period will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials.
7. Replacement of missing features from the restoration period will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence. A false sense of history will not be created by adding conjectural features, features from other properties, or by combining features that never existed together historically.
8. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
9. Archeological resources affected by a project will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
10. Designs that were never executed historically will not be constructed.

## Appendix A: Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Reconstruction

1. Reconstruction will be used to depict vanished or non-surviving portions of a property when documentary and physical evidence is available to permit accurate reconstruction with minimal conjecture, and such reconstruction is essential to the public understanding of the property.
2. Reconstruction of a landscape, building, structure, or object in its historic location will be preceded by a thorough archeological investigation to identify and evaluate those features and artifacts which are essential to an accurate reconstruction. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
3. Reconstruction will include measures to preserve any remaining historic materials, features, and spatial relationships.
4. Reconstruction will be based on the accurate duplication of historic features and elements substantiated by documentary or physical evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different features from other historic properties. A reconstructed property will re-create the appearance of the non-surviving historic property in materials, design, color, and texture.
5. A reconstruction will be clearly identified as a contemporary re-creation.
6. Designs that were never executed historically will not be constructed.

Please see "Illustrated Guidelines" at <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/TPS/tax/rhb/>

## Appendix B: Basic Maintenance Advice

### **MATERIALS**

1. Prevent water from making contact with exterior wood siding. Of particular importance is keeping all gutters and downspouts in good repair to keep water from infiltrating the wood surface.
2. All exposed wood should be kept painted, stained or treated with preservatives.
3. Repairs for wood siding such as cracks can be made through the use of waterproof glue. Large cracks may be filled with caulk followed by putty. The surface should then be sanded, allowed to dry, and painted.
4. Where exterior siding has to be replaced the use of siding to match in dimension, size and profile is recommended.
5. Use paints consistent (oil or latex) with the existing paint surface for exterior siding.
6. Keep exterior brick clean of mildew, efflorescence and dirt. Also keep exterior brick clean of vines, ivy, and other plant materials. Washing with detergents and water are best for exterior masonry and mortar. Sandblasting, water-blasting and other abrasive cleaning methods are detrimental to historic buildings and should not be used.
7. Re-pointing of historic mortar should be with a mortar which matches the original in appearance and composition. Most mortar from before 1900 was composed of lime and sand and a mortar with similar content should be applied. The use of Portland cement is not appropriate due to the hardness of the mortar versus the softness of the brick.
8. Most silicone based or waterproof coatings have limited effectiveness and may actually add to moisture problems by not allowing the brick to breathe. The use of these products is not appropriate.

### **ROOFS, CORNICES, CHIMNEYS**

1. Check the roof regularly for leaks, deterioration of flashing, and worn roof surfaces such as rolled or asphalt shingles. An inspection of the upper floor or attic space during or following a rainstorm can also assist in detection of water related problems.
2. Know what metals are used in the cornice or roof flashing and use only similar metals during replacement or repair. Different metals should not touch each other or a galvanic reaction may occur leading to corrosion.

## Appendix B: Basic Maintenance Advice

3. Metal roofs and cornices should be kept painted to prevent rust and deterioration. Appropriate paints include those with an iron oxide oil base. Asphalt based paints and aluminum paints should not be used on historic metals as they could accelerate the rusting process.
4. Chimneys should be regularly checked for cracking, leaning, spalling, and infestation by birds and insects. The use of chimney caps over chimneys or flue openings is recommended to keep out moisture. Refer to the chimney section – only certain types of caps are acceptable.

### ***GUTTERS AND DOWNSPOUTS***

1. Keep gutters and downspouts in good repair. Make sure they are properly connected, are clean of leaves and other debris, and channel water effectively away from the building. Seal all cracks in downspouts with silicone caulk or sealants.
2. Gutters and downspouts which are deteriorated should be replaced with new gutters and downspouts. Half-round gutters and round downspouts are preferable to corrugated designs.

### ***FOUNDATIONS***

1. All water should drain away from a building and should not enter the foundation.
2. Trees, shrubs, and other plants should be kept well away from the foundation to prevent damage from moisture and root movement. Typically a minimum distance of 2' between the plantings and the foundation wall is recommended.

### ***PORCHES AND EXTERIOR ORNAMENTATION***

1. Keep all porch and trim elements painted.

### ***ENTRANCES***

1. Doors, transoms, and sidelights should be kept clean.
2. Original locks and hardware should be kept oiled and in good repair. If original hardware is missing or is deteriorated, the use of reproduction locks and hardware suitable for the building is recommended.
3. Doors with a stained wood finish should be kept varnished; doors that were painted originally should be kept painted.



## Appendix B: Basic Maintenance Advice

### **WINDOWS**

1. Windows should be kept clean and free of dirt and grime. Wood sash surfaces should be painted regularly.
2. Windows should be kept operable. Seams in the framing or between the window and storm window should be caulked and sealed to aid in energy conservation.
3. Shutters should be kept painted and in good repair.

### **AWNINGS**

1. Canvas awnings should be washed periodically and kept in good repair.
2. Awning hardware should be regularly checked for rust or loose mechanisms.
3. Awnings which become torn or otherwise deteriorated should be replaced.

### **SIGNS**

1. Abandoned signs and sign hardware should be removed from buildings, unless historic.
2. Signs should be kept painted and mounting bolts should be checked periodically to make sure they are secure.
3. Light fixtures, conduits, and wiring for signs should be inspected and replaced when necessary.

## Appendix C: Definitions and Terms

### Procedural Definitions

***Certificate of Appropriateness:*** A document issued by the Houma Historic District Commission (HHDC) allowing an applicant to proceed with a proposed alteration, demolition, or new construction in the Houma Historic District, following a determination of the proposal's suitability according to applicable criteria.

***Due process:*** The established procedure by which legal action is carried out.

***Normally Required:*** Mandatory actions, summarized in the guidelines, whose compliance is enforced by the HHDC.

***Public notice:*** The classified advertisement of an event, such as a preservation commission meeting, that is published in the local newspaper and posted in the city government building in order to notify the general public of the upcoming event.

***Recommended:*** Suggested, but not mandatory actions summarized in the guidelines.

### B. Technical Definitions

***Adaptive Use:*** Rehabilitation of a historic structure for use other than its original use such as a residence converted into offices.

***Acceptable:*** Work that will be approved.

***Addition:*** New construction added to an existing building or structure.

***Alteration:*** Work which impacts any exterior architectural feature including construction, reconstruction, repair, or removal of any building element.

***Appropriate:*** Especially suitable or compatible.

***Configuration:*** The arrangement of elements and details on a building or structure which help to define its character.

***Contemporary:*** Reflecting characteristics of the current period. Contemporary denotes characteristics which illustrate that a building, structure, or detail was constructed in the present or recent past rather than being imitative or reflective of a historic design.

***Compatible:*** In harmony with location and surroundings.

***Context:*** The setting in which a historic element, site, structure, street, or district exists.

***Demolition:*** Any act which destroys in whole or in part a building or structure.

***Demolition by Neglect:*** The destruction of a building or structure through abandonment or lack of maintenance.

***Design Guidelines:*** Criteria developed to identify design concerns in an area and to help property owners ensure that rehabilitation and new construction respect the character of designated buildings and districts.

***Element:*** A material part or detail of a site, structure, street, or district.

***Elevation:*** Any one of the external faces or facades of a building.

***Fabric:*** The physical material of a building, structure, or community, connoting an interweaving of component parts.

***Facade:*** The front elevation of face of a building. Most buildings have only one façade; some, like the Lanier Mansion, have two.

***Harmony:*** Pleasing or congruent arrangement.

***Height:*** The distance from the bottom to the top of a building or structure.

***Historic District:*** A geographically definable area with a significant concentration of buildings, structures, sites, spaces, or objects unified by past events, physical development, design, setting, materials, workmanship, sense of

## Appendix C: Definitions and Terms

cohesiveness or related historical and aesthetic associations. The significance of a district may be recognized through listing in a local, state, or national landmarks register and may be protected legally through enactment of a local historic district ordinance administered by a historic district board or commission.

**Historic District Commission:** The city's governmental board responsible for overseeing design review in the Houma Historic District.

**Historic Imitation:** New construction or rehabilitation where elements or components mimic an architectural style but are not of the same historic period as the existing buildings (historic replica).

**Infill:** New construction in historic districts on vacant lots or to replace existing buildings.

**Landmark:** A building, structure, object or site which is identified as a historic resource of particular significance.

**Landscape:** The totality of the built or human-influenced habitat experienced at any one place. Dominant features are topography, plant cover, buildings, or other structures and their patterns.

**Maintain:** To keep in an existing state of preservation or repair.

**Material Change:** A change that will affect either the exterior architectural or environmental features of an historic property or any structure, site, or work of art within an historic district.

**New construction:** Construction which is characterized by the introduction of new elements, sites, buildings, or structures or additions to existing buildings and structures in historic areas and districts.

**Obscured:** Covered, concealed, or hidden from view.

**Preservation:** Generally, saving from destruction or deterioration old and historic buildings, sites, structures, and objects and providing for their continued use by means of restoration, rehabilitation, or adaptive use.

**Proportion:** Harmonious relation of parts to one another or to the whole.

**Reconstruction:** The act or process of reproducing by new construction the exact form and detail of a vanished building, structure, or object, or a part thereof, as it appeared at a specific period of time.

**Rehabilitation:** The act or process of returning a property or building to usable condition through repair, alteration, and/or preservation of its features which are significant to its historical, architectural, and cultural values.

**Restoration:** The act or process of accurately taking a building's appearance back to a specific period of time by removing later work and by replacing missing earlier features to match the original.

**Retain:** To keep secure and intact. In the guidelines, "retain" and "maintain" describe the act of keeping an element, detail, or structure and continuing the same level of repair to aid in the preservation of elements, sites and structures. **Re-use:** To use again. An element, detail, or structure might be reused in historic districts.

**Rhythm:** Movement or fluctuation marked by the regular occurrence or natural flow of related elements.

**Scale:** Proportional elements that demonstrate the size, materials, and style of buildings.

**Setting:** The sum of attributes of a locality, neighborhood, or property that defines its character.

**Significant:** Having particularly important associations within the contexts of architecture, history, and culture.

**Stabilization:** The act or process of applying measures essential to the maintenance of a deteriorated building as it exists at present, establishing structural stability and a weather-resistant enclosure.

**Streetscape:** The distinguishing character of a particular street as created by its width, degree of curvature, paving materials, design of the street furniture, and forms of surrounding buildings.

**Style:** A type of architecture distinguished by special characteristics of structure and ornament and often related in time; also a general quality of a distinctive character.

## Appendix C: Definitions and Terms

### C. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Addition** New construction added to an existing building or structure.

**Alteration** Work which impacts any exterior architectural feature including construction, reconstruction, or removal of any building or building element.

**Apron** A decorative, horizontal trim piece on the lower portion of an architectural element.

**Arch** A construction which spans an opening and supports the weight above it. (see flat arch, jack arch, segmental arch and semi-circular arch).

**Attic** The upper level of a building, not of full ceiling height, directly beneath the roof.

**Baluster** One of a series of short, vertical, often vase-shaped members used to support a stair or porch handrail, forming a balustrade.

**Balustrade** An entire rail system with top rail and balusters.

**Bargeboard** A board which hangs from the projecting end of a gable roof, covering the end rafters, and often sawn into a decorative pattern.

**Bay** The portion of a facade between columns or piers providing regular divisions and usually marked by windows.

**Bay window** A projecting window that forms an extension to the floor space of the internal rooms; usually extends to the ground level.

**Belt course** A horizontal band usually marking the floor levels on the exterior facade of a building.

**Board and batten** Siding fashioned of boards set vertically and covered where their edges join by narrow strips called battens.

**Bond** A term used to describe the various patterns in which brick (or stone) is laid, such as "common bond" or "Flemish bond."

**Ghosts** Outlines or profiles of missing buildings or

**Bracket** A projecting element of wood, stone or metal which spans between horizontal and vertical surfaces (eaves, shelves, overhangs) as decorative support.

**Bulkhead** The structural panels just below display windows on storefronts. Bulkheads can be both supportive and decorative in design. 19th century bulkheads are often of wood construction with rectangular raised panels. 20th century bulkheads may be of wood, brick, tile, or marble construction. Bulkheads are also referred to as kickplates.

**Bungalow** Common house form of the early twentieth century distinguished by horizontal emphasis, wide eaves, large porches and multi-light doors and windows.

**Carrara Glass** Tinted glass widely used for storefront remodeling during the 1930s and 1940s. Carrara glass usually came in black, tan, or dark red colors.

**Capital** The head of a column or pilaster.

**Casement window** A window with one or two sashes which are hinged at the sides and usually open outward.

**Clapboards** Horizontal wooden boards, thinner at the top edge, which are overlapped to provide a weather-proof exterior wall surface.

**Classical order** Derived from Greek and Roman architecture, a column with its base, shaft, capital and entablature having standardized details and proportions, according to one of the five canonized modes: Doric, Tuscan, Ionic, Corinthian, or Composite.

**Clipped gable** A gable roof where the ends of the ridge are terminated in a small, diagonal roof surface.

**Colonial Revival** Architectural style of the early twentieth century based on interpretations of architectural forms of the American colonies prior to the Revolution.

**Column** A circular or square vertical structural member.

**Common bond** A brickwork pattern where most courses are laid flat, with the long "stretcher" edge exposed, but every

## Appendix C: Definitions and Terms

fifth to eighth course is laid perpendicularly with the small "header" end exposes, to structurally tie the wall together.

**Corbel** In masonry, a projection, or one of a series of projections, each stepped progressively farther forward with height and articulating a cornice or supporting an overhanging member.

**Corinthian order** Most ornate classical order characterized by a capital with ornamental acanthus leaves and curled fern shoots.

**Cornice** The uppermost, projecting part of an entablature, or feature resembling it. Any projecting ornamental molding along the top of a wall, building, etc.

**Craftsman** Architectural style popularized around the turn of the twentieth century emphasizing simple, original craftsmanship as a movement away from Victorian styles.

**Cresting** A decorated ornamental finish along the top of a wall or roof, often made of ornamental metal.

**Cross-gable** A secondary gable roof which meets the primary roof at right angles.

**Dentils** A row of small tooth-like blocks in a classical cornice.

**Doric order** A classical order with simple, unadorned capitals, and with no base.

**Dormer window** A window that projects from a roof.

**Double-hung window** A window with two sashes, one sliding vertically over the other.

**Eave** The edge of a roof that projects beyond the face of a wall.

**Elevation** Any of the external faces of a building.

**Ell** The rear wing of a house, generally one room wide and running perpendicular to the principal building.

**Engaged column** A column attached to a wall.

**Entablature** A part of a building of classical order resting on the column capital; consists of an architrave, frieze, and cornice.

**Facade** The face or front elevation of a building.

**Fanlight** A semi-circular window usually over a door with radiating muntins suggesting a fan.

**Fascia** A projecting flat horizontal member or molding; forms the trim of a flat roof or a pitched roof; also part of a classical entablature.

**Fenestration** The arrangement of windows on a building.

**Finial** A projecting decorative element, usually of metal, at the top of a roof turret or gable.

**Fishscale shingles** A decorative pattern of wall shingles composed of staggered horizontal rows of wooden shingles with half-round ends.

**Flashing** Thin metal sheets used to prevent moisture infiltration at joints of roof planes and between the roof and vertical surfaces.

**Flat arch** An arch whose wedge-shaped stones or bricks are set in a straight line; also called a jack arch.

**Flemish bond** A brick-work pattern where the long "stretcher" edge of the brick is alternated with the small "header" end for decorative as well as structural effectiveness.

**Fluting** Shallow, concave grooves running vertically on the shaft of a column, pilaster, or other surface.

**Foundation** The lowest exposed portion of the building wall, which supports the structure above.

**Frieze** The middle portion of a classical cornice; also applied decorative elements on an entablature or parapet wall.

**Gable** The triangular section of a wall to carry a pitched roof.

**Gable roof** A pitched roof with one downward slope on either side of a central, horizontal ridge.

**Gambrel roof** A ridged roof with two slopes on either side.



## Appendix C: Definitions and Terms

building details. These outlines may be visible through stains, paint, weathering, or other residue on a building's facade.

**Guardrail** A building component or a system of building components located at or near the open sides of elevated walking surfaces that minimizes the possibilities of a fall from the walking surface to a lower level.

**Handrail** A horizontal or sloping rail intended for grasping by the hand for guidance or support.

**Hipped roof** A roof with uniform slopes on all sides.

**Hood molding** A projecting molding above an arch, doorway, or window, originally designed to direct water away from the opening; also called a drip mold.

**Ionic order** One of the five classical orders used to describe decorative scroll capitals.

**Infill** New construction where there had been an opening before, such as a new building between two older structures; or block infill between porch piers or in an original window opening.

**Jack arch** (see Flat arch)

**Keystone** The wedge-shaped top or center member of an arch.

**Knee brace** An oversize bracket supporting a cantilevered or projecting element.

**Lattice** An openwork grill of interlacing wood strips used as screening.

**Lintel** The horizontal top member of a window, door, or other opening.

**Luxfer glass** A glass panel made up of small leaded glass lights either clear or tinted purple. These panels were widely used for storefront transoms during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Mansard roof** A roof with a double slope on all four sides, with the lower slope being almost vertical and the upper almost horizontal.

**Terra cotta** Decorative building material of baked clay. Terra cotta was often glazed in various colors

**Masonry** Exterior wall construction of brick, stone or adobe laid up in small units.

**Massing** The three-dimensional form of a building.

**Metal standing seam roof** A roof composed of overlapping sections of metal such as copper-bearing steel or iron coated with aterne alloy of lead and tin. These roofs were attached or crimped together in various raised seams for which the roof are named.

**Modillion** A horizontal bracket, often in the form of a plain block, ornamenting, or sometimes supporting, the underside of a cornice.

**Mortar** A mixture of sand, lime, (and in more modern structures, cement), and water used as a binding agent in masonry construction.

**Mothballing:** Implementing temporary measures to stabilize and protect a building from deterioration and vandalism.

**Mullion** A heavy vertical divider between windows or doors.

**Multi-light window** A window sash composed of more than one pane of glass.

**Muntin** A secondary framing member to divide and hold the panes of glass in multi-light window or glazed door.

**Neo-classical Revival style** Early twentieth century style which combines features of ancient, Renaissance, and Colonial architecture; characterized by imposing buildings with large columned porches.

**Oriel window** A bay window which emerges above the ground floor level.

**Paired columns** Two columns supported by one pier, as on a porch.

**Palladian window** A window with three openings, the central one arched and wider than the flanking ones.

**Paneled door** A door composed of solid panels (either raised or recessed) held within a framework of rails and stiles.

**Parapet** A low horizontal wall at the edge of a roof.

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**Pediment** A triangular crowning element forming the gable of a roof; any similar triangular element used over windows, doors, etc.

**Pier** A vertical structural element, square or rectangular in cross-section.

**Pilaster** A square pillar attached, but projecting from a wall, resembling a classical column.

**Pitch** The degree of the slope of a roof.

**Portico** A roofed space, open or partly enclosed, forming the entrance and centerpiece of the facade of a building, often with columns and a pediment.

**Portland cement** A strong, inflexible hydraulic cement used to bind mortar. Mortar or patching materials with a high Portland cement content should not be used on old buildings. The Portland cement is harder than the masonry, thereby causing serious damage over annual freeze-thaw cycles.)

**Preservation** The act of maintaining the form and character of a building as it presently exists. Preservation stops deterioration and stabilizes the structure.

**Pressed tin** Decorative and functional metalwork made of molded tin used to sheath roofs, bays, and cornices.

**Pyramidal roof** A roof with four identical sides rising to a central peak.

**Quoins** A series of stone, bricks, or wood panels ornamenting the outside of a wall.

**Reconstruction** The accurate recreation of a vanished, or irreplaceably damaged structure, or part thereof; the new construction recreates the building's exact form and detail as they appeared at some point in history.

**Rehabilitation** The act of returning a building to usable condition through repair, alteration, and/or preservation of its features.

**Restoration** The process of accurately taking a building's appearance back to a specific period of time by

removing later work and by replacing missing earlier features to match the original.

**Ridge** The top horizontal member of a roof where the sloping surfaces meet.

**Rusticated** Roughening of stonework of concrete blocks to give greater articulation to each block.

**Sash** The moveable framework containing the glass in a window.

**Segmental arch** An arch whose profile or radius is less than a semicircle.

**Semi-circular arch** An arch whose profile or radius is a half-circle the diameter of which equals the opening width.

**Sheathing** An exterior covering of boards of other surface applied to the frame of the structure. (see Siding)

**Shed roof** A gently-pitched, almost flat roof with only one slope.

**Sidelight** a vertical area of fixed glass on either side of a door or window.

**Siding** the exterior wall covering or sheathing of a structure.

**Sill** The bottom crosspiece of a window frame.

**Spindles** Slender, elaborately turned wood dowels or rods often used in screens and porch trim.

**Stabilization** The essential maintenance of a deteriorated building as it exists at present, establishing structural stability and a weather-resistant enclosure.

**Streetscape** The general appearance and configuration of the many buildings which define the street.

**Stretcher bond** A brickwork pattern where courses are laid flat with the long "stretcher" edge exposed.

**Surround** An encircling border or decorative frame, usually at windows or doors.

**Swag** Carved ornament on the form of a cloth draped over supports, or in the form of a garland of fruits and flowers.

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and textures. Terra cotta was widely used for cornices, inset panels, and other decorative façade elements from ca. 1880 to 1930.

**Transom** A horizontal opening (or bar) over a door or window. (see Overlight)

**Trim** The decorative framing of openings and other features on a facade.

**Turret** A small slender tower.

**Veranda** A covered porch or balcony on a building's exterior.

**Vergeboard** The vertical face board following and set under the roof edge of a gable, sometimes decorated by carving.

**Vernacular** A regional form or adaptation of an architectural style.

**Wall dormer** Dormer created by the upward extension of a wall and a breaking of the roofline.

**Water table** A projecting horizontal ledge, intended to prevent water from running down the face of a wall's lower section.

**Weatherboard** Wood siding consisting of overlapping boards usually thicker at one edge than the other.

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## Appendix E: Incentives and Assistance for Rehabilitation

### Tax Credits for Historic Buildings in Louisiana

	Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit	Louisiana State Commercial Tax Credit	Louisiana State Residential Tax Cred- it
What is eligible?	Building listed on the National Register individually or within an NR historic district; must produce income.	Income-producing building within a Downtown Development District or Cultural District, as designated by the Division of Historic Preservation.	Owner-occupied building listed in an NR district, a locally designated district, a DDD or CD, or a Main Street district; a vacant or blighted building at least 50 years old.
% of Credit	20% of construction costs and fees	25%	25% credit=AGI \$50,000/less; 20% credit= AGI \$50,001-75,000; 15% credit= AGI \$75,001-100,000; 10% credit=AGI \$100,000+. (Available only for vacant/blighted residences 50 years or older.)
Minimum expenditure	Must exceed the adjusted basis of the building; \$5,000 minimum	\$10,000	\$20,000
Fees	\$250 + final fee based on size of rehabilitation	\$250	\$250
Recapture	If the owner sells within 5 years, he loses 20% of the earned credit for each year short of the full 5 years.	If the owner sells within 5 years, he loses 20% of the earned credit for each year short of the full 5 years.	If the owner sells within 5 years, all unused credit becomes void.



## Appendix F: Resources

For more information about [historic preservation contact](#):

### Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation

Capitol Annex Building

1051 North Third Street

Baton Rouge, LA 70804

(225) 342-8160

Email: [hp@crt.la.gov](mailto:hp@crt.la.gov)

National Park Service

### Southeast Regional Office

100 Alabama Street NW

1924 Building

Atlanta, GA 30303

(404) 507-5600

### National Trust for Historic Preservation Southern Field Office

William Aiken House

456 King Street

Charleston, SC 29403

(843) 722-8552

Email: [sro@nthp.org](mailto:sro@nthp.org)

### Foundation for Historical Louisiana

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Baton Rouge, LA 70821

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