



HANDBOOK

*MAKING
CHANGES TO
YOUR HISTORIC
BUILDING*



*STANDARDS
GUIDELINES
REGULATIONS*

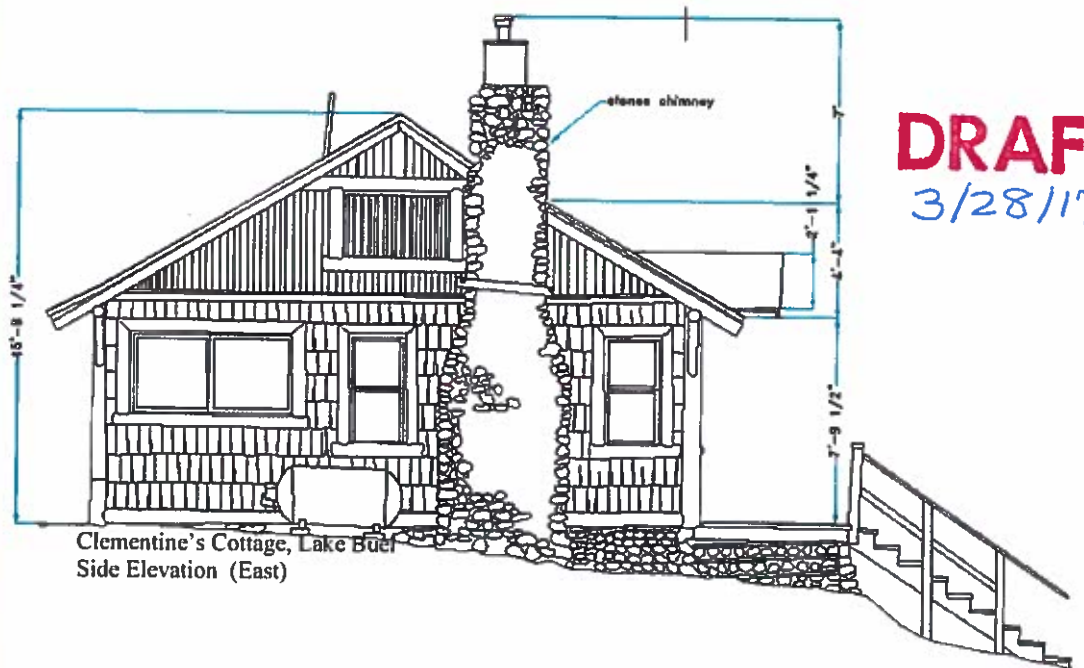


*APPLYING FOR
COAs*

**CHESHIRE
HISTORIC DISTRICT
COMMISSION**

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INFORMATION for Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) Applicants

What to know, what to read

COAs IN BRIEF:

The HDC reviews all proposed changes to Historic Buildings in the two historic districts. All major work requires a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) before the work can begin. The COA process includes a public hearing where you will present your project.

Minor work requires an application for an exemption from the COA. Do not apply for an Exemption for Minor work, unless your work is really MINOR – does not cover or disturb any of the historic details of your building, OR cannot be seen from any public road or place, OR is a repair of or an exact replacement for a historic element. Any work that entails more than that requires a COA.

The Commission strongly recommends a **Pre-application meeting** with a staff member and a commissioner before making your presentation at the required public hearing. Without a pre-application meeting the discussion may have to be continued to a second public hearing. The time involved will depend on the nature and scope of your project.

The Commission must make a decision within 65 days of your application. Your COA is good for one year from the date of approval. You can extend it with no fee, if you do it in time. You can request a change in the COA if your project changes; this can usually be done with no fee and no public hearing. See the HDC Regulations for full details on COA extensions and changes.

READING

Read this HANDBOOK before making drawings or ordering lumber! Making changes to historic buildings is a careful and thoughtful process. If you read this material before your first meeting with the Commission, you will be ahead of the game.

In making decisions, the Commission refers to national standards and guidelines as well as local guidelines, both of these are included in this **Handbook** along with other useful information:

FILLING OUT THE APPLICATION

Required Materials are listed on the application form.

Make sure your photos show the area of proposed work clearly, including any existing architectural features. Bring samples of materials and/or brochures as needed. Please include a site plan for site improvements and for all other work, also include a building elevation. (Samples are in the Handbook.)

- **Tip:** For Exemptions for work not visible from a public way, use the building footprint from the Final Report. Enlarge it on a copier and indicate the location of the work on the building or site. Show the street name (s) as well.

In your presentation at the public hearing, please show how the proposed work will follow the basic steps and how it will adhere to the applicable standards and guidelines which apply.

The Commission appreciates proposals which are thorough and thoughtful. Making changes to a historic building is a careful process. When the changes are well done, we can all be proud.

The HDC endorses these basic Preservation Principles (Basic Steps in Caring for Historic Properties)

BASIC STEPS IN THE CARE OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS

IDENTIFY, RETAIN AND PRESERVE

The first step in treating a historic building is to identify those architectural features that give a building its visual character. These character-defining features should, whenever possible, be retained and preserved rather than altered, covered, destroyed or replaced in order to prevent loss of character.

PROTECT AND MAINTAIN

After identifying and retaining the essential materials and design features, protect and maintain them. Keeping buildings in good physical condition lessens the need for expensive major repairs or replacement later. Regular or "cyclical" maintenance may include such treatments as filling in cracks in stucco, repainting, caulking, securing flashing and so forth.

REPAIR

When character-defining materials and features become well-worn or damaged, additional repair work of the original fabric is recommended. Repair should begin with the "patching, piecing-in, splicing, consolidating, or otherwise reinforcing or upgrading..." The next level of repair entails "limited replacement in-kind" with matching or compatible material when encountering badly deteriorated or missing pieces. It is advisable to match or closely approximate both the material and the original design of the feature.

REPLACE

It is preferable to repair rather than to replace. But when a feature is missing or dangerous, or the extent of damage precludes repair and physical evidence exists to document the nature of the feature, then replacement may be appropriate. When replacing, use matching or compatible materials and repeat the original design, unless doing so causes design flaws, such as flat window sills which drain improperly.

DESIGN FOR MISSING HISTORIC FEATURES

When a major exterior feature, such as a window or wall portion of roof, is entirely missing, it is no longer a character-defining feature unless it can be reconstructed based upon its documented historical appearance. To recreate such a missing feature in order to restore the completeness of the building's overall design, two options are appropriate. The first is to reconstruct the feature to exactly match its historic appearance, provided sufficient documentation exists. A second acceptable option is to recreate the feature in a new design compatible with the missing feature and the overall architectural character of the building. As the Standards state, "The new design should always take into account the size, scale, and material of the historic building itself and, most importantly, should be clearly differentiated so that a false historical appearance is not created."

ALTERATIONS AND/OR ADDITIONS TO HISTORIC BUILDINGS

When alterations or additions are needed to allow for a building's continued use, design these in ways that do not "radically change, obscure, or destroy character-defining spaces, materials, features, or finishes." Needed exterior alterations should generally be made to secondary elevations or areas of the roof that are out of sight from the public view. It may also be advantageous to remove visually intrusive material or features detracting from the building's historic character, allowing repair or reconstruction of the underlying original material. The Standards emphasize that exterior additions should be "considered only after it is determined that (essential) needs cannot be met by altering secondary, i.e., non-character-defining interior spaces." If it is determined that an addition is "the only viable alternative," its design should be both architecturally compatible, and "clearly differentiated from the historic building... so that the character-defining features are not radically changed, obscured, damaged, or destroyed."

HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE REQUIREMENTS; ENERGY RETROFITTING

Care should be taken that these alterations, such as solar collectors or ramps for the handicapped, be designed and placed so as not to radically change, obscure, or damage or destroy character-defining materials or features" in the rehabilitation process.

The following two additional preservation principles deal with appropriate ways of improving existing older homes.

REVERSING ADVERSE ALTERATIONS

Many of Cheshire's historic homes have undergone alterations during the decades of their existence. Some alterations have been done sensitively and compatibly, preserving and enhancing the building's character-defining features. Other modifications, often done by earlier owners, were done with good intentions but without the benefit of preservation education. These adverse changes typically include removing, covering or altering the basic nature of original features. Consider reversing earlier adverse alterations. When doing so, identify the nature of the original feature and repair or replace it while recapturing the original appearance. Use matching or very similar designs and materials.

OVER IMPROVING AND MODERNIZING

Over improving, as the term is used here, does not refer to spending too much on your house or overbuilding for the neighborhood. It refers, instead, to efforts intended to improve the appearance of a house by making it fancier or by changing its style. Such efforts are not encouraged. Each particular house has its own character and assets. Houses are not more significant because they are bigger and more decorative. Plain houses have as much historical and architectural value as heavily ornamented houses. Small houses are as important as large ones and mid-twentieth century homes may be as significant as late nineteenth century ones. Adding ornament or extraneous architectural features not originally associated with one's house is not encouraged. For example, putting a red tiled, gabled roof on previously flat-roofed Modern house would destroy its architectural character.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Properties

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

The Standards are to be applied to specific rehabilitation projects in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility.

Rehabilitation is defined as the process of returning a property to a state of utility, through repair or alteration, which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions and features of the property which are significant to its historic, architectural, and cultural values.

APPENDIX C

EXCERPTS FROM THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S
GUIDELINES FOR REHABILITATING HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Building Exterior:

Recommended

Not Recommended

Masonry:

Identifying, retaining and preserving masonry features that are that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building such as walls, brackets, railings, cornices, window architraves; door pediments, steps, and columns; and joint and unit size, tooling and bonding patterns, coatings, and color.

Removing or radically changing masonry features which are important in defining the overall historic character of the building so that, as a result, the character is diminished.

Replacing or rebuilding a major portion of exterior masonry walls that could be repaired so that, as a result, the building is no longer historic and is essentially new construction.

Wood:

Identifying, retaining, and preserving wood features that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building such as siding, cornices, brackets, window architraves, and doorway pediments; and their paints, finishes, and colors.

Removing or radically changing wood features which are important in defining the overall historic character of the building so that, as a result, the character is diminished.

Removing a major portion of the historic wood from a facade instead of repairing or replacing only the deteriorated wood, then reconstructing the facade with new material in order to achieve a uniform or "improved" appearance.

Inspecting painted wood surfaces to determine whether repainting is necessary or if cleaning is all that is required.

Removing paint that is firmly adhering to, and thus protecting, wood surfaces.

Removing damaged or deteriorated paint to the next sound layer using the gentlest method possible (handscraping and handsanding), then repainting.

Using destructive paint removal methods such as propane or butane torches, sandblasting, or water-blasting. These methods can irreversibly damage historic woodwork.

Using chemical strippers primarily to supplement other methods such as handscraping, handsanding, and the above-recommended thermal devices. Detachable wooden elements such as shutters, doors, and columns may - with the proper safeguards - be chemically dip-stripped.

Failing to neutralize the wood thoroughly after using chemicals so that new paint does not adhere.

Allowing detachable wood features to soak too long in a caustic solution so that the wood grain is raised and the surface roughened.

Recommended

Not Recommended

Architectural Metals:

Identifying, retaining, and preserving architectural metal features such as columns, capitals, window hoods, or stairways that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building; and their finishes and colors.

Removing or radically changing architectural metal features which are important in defining the overall historic character of the building so that, as a result, the character is diminished.

Roofs:

Identifying, retaining, and preserving roofs - and their functional and decorative features - that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building. This includes the roof's shape, such as hipped, gambrel, and mansard; decorative features such as cupolas, cresting, chimneys, and weathervanes; and roofing material such as slate, wood, clay tile, and metal, as well as its size, color, and patterning.

Radically changing, damaging, or destroying roofs which are important in defining the overall historic character of the building so that, as a result, the character is diminished.

Removing a major portion of the roof or roofing material that is repairable, then reconstructing it with new material in order to create a uniform or "improved" appearance.

Changing the configuration of a roof by adding new features such as dormer windows, vents, or skylights so that the historic character is diminished.

Windows:

Identifying, retaining, and preserving windows - and their functional and decorative features - that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building. Such features can include frames, sash, muntins, glazing, sills, heads, hood-molds, panelled or decorated jambs and moldings, and interior and exterior shutters and blinds.

Removing or radically changing windows which are important in defining the overall historic character of the building so that, as a result, the character is diminished.

Changing the number, location, size, or glazing pattern of windows, through cutting new openings, blocking-in windows, and installing replacement sash which does not fit the historic window opening.

Changing the historic appearance of windows through the use of inappropriate designs, materials, finishes, or colors which radically change the sash, depth of reveal, and muntin configuration; the reflectivity and color of the glazing; or the appearance of the frame.

Obscuring historic window trim with metal or other material.

Recommended

Not Recommended

Entrances and Porches:

Identifying, retaining, and preserving entrances - and their functional and decorative features - that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building such as doors, fanlights, sidelights, pilasters, entablatures, columns, balustrades, and stairs.

Repairing entrances and porches by reinforcing the historic materials. Repair will also generally include the limited replacement in kind - or with compatible substitute materials - of those extensively deteriorated or missing parts of repeated features where there are surviving prototypes such as balustrades, cornices, entablatures, columns, sidelights, and stairs.

Designing and constructing a new entrance or porch if the historic entrance or porch is completely missing. It may be a restoration based on historical, pictorial, and physical documentation; or be a new design that is compatible with the historic character of the building.

Designing enclosures for historic porches when required by a new use in a manner that preserves the historic character of the building. This can include using large sheets of glass and recessing the enclosure wall behind existing scrollwork, posts, and balustrades.

Storefronts:

Identifying, retaining, and preserving storefronts - and their functional and decorative features - that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building such as display windows, signs, doors, transoms, kick plates, corner posts, and entablatures.

Removing or radically changing entrances and porches which are important in defining the overall historic character of the building so that, as a result, the character is diminished.

Stripping entrances and porches of historic material such as wood, iron, cast iron, terra-cotta, tile, and brick.

Replacing an entire entrance or porch when the repair of materials and limited replacement of parts are appropriate.

Using a substitute material for the replacement parts that does not convey the visual appearance of the surviving parts of the entrance and porch or that is physically or chemically incompatible.

Creating a false historical appearance because the replaced entrance or porch is based on insufficient historical, pictorial, and physical documentation.

Introducing a new entrance or porch that is incompatible in size, scale, material, and color.

Enclosing porches in a manner that results in a diminution or loss of historic character such as using solid materials such as wood, stucco, or masonry.

Removing or radically changing storefronts - and their features - which are important in defining the overall historic character of the building so that, as a result, the character is diminished.

Changing the storefront so that it appears residential rather than commercial in character.

Recommended

Not Recommended

Building Site:

Identifying, retaining, and preserving buildings and their features as well as features of the site that are important in defining its overall historic character. Site features can include driveways, walkways, lighting, fencing, signs, benches, fountains, wells, terraces, canal systems, plants and trees, berms, and drainage or irrigation ditches; and archaeological features that are important in defining the history of the site.

Retaining the historic relationship between buildings, landscape features, and open space.

Energy Retrofitting:

Installing freestanding solar collectors in a manner that preserves the historic property's character-defining features.

Designing attached solar collectors, including solar greenhouses, so that the character-defining features of the property are preserved.

Placing solar collectors on non-character-defining roof or roofs of non-historic adjacent buildings.

Removing or radically changing buildings and their features or site features which are important in defining the overall historic character of the building site so that, as a result, the character is diminished.

Removing or relocating historic buildings or landscape features, thus destroying the historic relationship between buildings, landscape features, and open space.

Installing freestanding solar collectors that obscure, damage, or destroy historic landscape or archaeological features.

Locating solar collectors where they radically change the property's appearance; or damage or destroy character-defining features.

Placing solar collectors on roof when such collectors change the historic roofline or obscure the relationship of the roof to character-defining roof features such as dormers, skylights, and chimneys.

Recommended

Not Recommended

New Additions to Historic Buildings:

Constructing a new addition so that there is the least possible loss of historic materials and so that character-defining features are not obscured, damaged, or destroyed.

Locating the attached exterior addition at the rear or on an inconspicuous side of a historic building; and limiting its size and scale in relationship to the historic building.

Designing new additions in a manner that makes clear what is historic and what is new.

Considering the attached exterior addition both in terms of the new use and the appearance of other buildings in the historic district or neighborhood. Design for the new work may be contemporary or may reference design motifs from the historic building. In either case, it should always be clearly differentiated from the historic building and be compatible in terms of mass, materials, relationship of solids to voids, and color.

Placing new additions such as balconies and greenhouses on non-character-defining elevations and limiting the size and scale in relationship to the historic building.

Designing additional stories, when required for the new use, that are set back from the wall plane and are as inconspicuous as possible when viewed from the street.

Expanding the size of the historic building by constructing a new addition when the new use could be met by altering non-character-defining interior spaces.

Attaching a new addition so that the character-defining features of the historic building are obscured, damaged, or destroyed.

Designing a new addition so that its size and scale in relation to the historic building are out of proportion, thus diminishing the historic character.

Duplicating the exact form, material, style, and detailing of the historic building in the addition so that the new work appears to be part of the historic building.

Designing and constructing new additions that result in the diminution or loss of the historic character of the resource, including its design, materials, workmanship, location or setting.

Using the same wall plane, roof line, cornice height, materials, siding lap or window type to make additions appear to be a part of the historic building.

Designing new additions such as multi-story greenhouse additions that obscure, damage, or destroy character-defining features of the historic building.

Constructing additional stories so that the historic appearance of the building is radically changed.

The following quotes may be helpful to COA applicants. These sections of the Regulations address the decision-making process in regard to COAs, and list the criteria which each application must meet. Section 5.5.10 lists reading materials and where to find them.

3. APPLICATIONS FOR COAs

The HDC strongly recommends this review.

3.1. Pre-application review (optional) A person considering making an application for a COA shall contact the Commission's staff person at the Planning Office (Town Hall). An applicant for a COA may request a pre-application review which will be conducted by one or two persons designated by the Commission for the purpose of explaining the application process and procedures, the information required to be filed with an application, and the standards and criteria which the applicant is required to meet and which the commission is required to follow in deciding an application. Those persons who conduct a pre-application review shall not participate in the deliberations or vote on said application. The Historic District Commission recommends that applicants participate in this review.

5. DETERMINATION OF APPROPRIATENESS

5.1. Deliberations: In its deliberations on what constitutes appropriateness, the Commission shall act only for the purpose of controlling the erection, alteration or demolition of buildings or structures, and installation or alteration of signs and parking areas that are incongruous with the historic or architectural aspects of the district.

5.1.1 In passing on appropriateness as to exterior architectural features, buildings or structures, the Commission shall consider, in addition to other pertinent factors, the type and style of exterior windows, doors, light fixtures, signs, above-ground utility structures, mechanical appurtenances and the type and texture of building materials.

5.1.2 In passing upon appropriateness as to exterior architectural features the commission shall also consider, in addition to any other pertinent factors, the historical value and significance, architectural style, scale, general design, arrangement, type of building materials of the architectural features involved, their relationship to the architectural style and pertinent features of other buildings and structures in the neighborhood. (See Appendix D. Character Defining Features of Each District and/or Neighborhood.)

5.1.3 If, after deliberation, the Commission determines that the proposed construction, alteration, sign, light fixture, parking area, moving, or demolition will be appropriate, it shall issue a COA.

5.2. Design Criteria

5.2.1. For existing buildings and structures

5.2.1a. Architectural characteristics: The existing dimensions and proportions of any character-defining architectural feature shall be preserved whenever possible. Permitted changes should be confined to those that would reverse inappropriate changes already in place. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall be avoided.

- 5.2.1b. Ornamental features:** All historic ornamental features, no matter how small, shall be preserved, restored, and/or precisely replaced with exact replicas, preservation of originals being the more preferable choice. Ornamental features, in general, are not to be supplemented except to replace originals that were lost previously.
- 5.2.1c. Repair, Replacement, Use of Substitute Materials.** Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved. If deteriorated they should be repaired; if repair is not possible, then the features should be replaced with new features matching the old in design, texture, coatings and finishes, and other visual qualities, and where possible, materials. If it is not feasible to use the original materials, then replacement with substitute materials approved by the Commission may be allowed. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, pictorial evidence, or testimony.
- 5.2.2. New Construction (free-standing building on an empty lot):**
- a. New construction should be consistent with the scale of the surrounding structures in terms of building height, width, proportion of height to width, proportion of wall area to door and window openings, rooflines, size of overhangs, setbacks where permitted, and other dominant features. New construction should be compatible with surrounding buildings as to form, texture, scale and character. An appropriate design shall include as many site features from Appendix D. as feasible.
 - b. New construction, outbuilding or other structure should be harmonious with the scale of the main building (s), and in general not larger than the original structure. Existing garages, barns, and sheds should be kept in good condition, repaired if at all possible, and elements replaced in kind when repair is not possible.
- 5.2.3. Additions** Proposed additions should leave the existing form of the building as the primary form, should not destroy any significant features of the original building, and should show visual compatibility with the original structure by the use of similar forms, proportions, materials and features.
- 5.2.4. Stipulations or conditions:** For any new construction, approval of an application for a COA may contain the following stipulations or conditions:
- a. Before construction begins, the owner shall work with the Commission and other interested parties to salvage any archeological materials and features on the site.
 - b. During construction the property owner shall ensure the safety of adjacent buildings, structures, site features, and historic resources such as stone walls, and where possible protect mature trees on the site from damage and from delayed damage such as loss of root area, or compaction of the soil by equipment.
- 5.2.6. Solar energy systems and other renewable resources:** No application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for an exterior architectural feature, such as a solar energy system, designed for the utilization of renewable resources, shall be denied unless the Commission finds that the feature cannot be installed without

substantially impairing the historic character and appearance of the District. A Certificate of Appropriateness for such a feature may include stipulations requiring design modifications and limitations on the location of the feature that do not significantly impair its effectiveness.

5.2.7. Parking: In determining appropriateness as to parking, the Commission shall consider the size of such parking area, the visibility of the cars parked in that area, the closeness of such area to adjacent buildings, and other relevant factors such as lighting.

5.2.8. Lighting The Commission shall regulate all light fixtures in the historic districts in regard to design, materials, finish, size and location; direction of and intensity of emitted light. Applications requiring other permits may be required to meet additional standards set forth in the town's lighting and/or safety codes.

5.2.8a. Residential

Historic lighting fixtures should be maintained and repaired as needed. If replacement is necessary, the replacement fixtures should resemble the old fixtures as closely as possible; period fixtures of a different appearance may be used if documentation for them exists. If new fixtures are used as replacements for, or in addition to existing fixtures, the new lighting should be shielded, of low intensity, and simple in character. Lighting for walkways or driveways should be low, casting light only on the surface. Residential security lights will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Lighting for home business parking areas will be considered on a case-by-case basis, according to the standards set forth in this section.

5.2.8b. Sidewalks/Walkways, Commercial/Industrial buildings, regulated parking lots

Lighting fixtures for walkways and commercial parking areas within the historic districts must be harmonious in design, scale, and materials with the character of the historic district or portion thereof where such fixtures are located. No mercury vapor lights shall be used. Existing historic lighting fixtures in public areas may be retained and used with low wattage bulbs or gaslights along with a contemporary lighting system which meets code requirements.

5.2.8c. Lighting for public buildings and their parking areas will be considered on a case-by-case basis, according to the standards set forth in this section.

5.2.9. Signs: Artistic, graphic or handcrafted identification signs are appropriate. If window lettering is used for signage, it must be etched or painted lettering. The size and style of such lettering should be visually compatible with the structure itself as well as with surrounding buildings.

5.2.10. References for Research: In its deliberations and decision-making on what constitutes appropriate change, the Commission may consult the following, all of which are available at the Town Planning Office:

- a. ***Cheshire Historic District Study Committee's Preliminary Report*** (December 2003) consists of detailed photographic and written descriptions of all HD buildings, outbuildings, and settings thereof, including their architectural and historical significance. Design Guidelines are included as well.

- b. ***Historic District Commission Catalog of Historic District Properties*** (March 2005), a photographic record of architectural features.
- c. ***Historic Resource Survey of the Town Center Area of Cheshire Connecticut***. 1986. Town of Cheshire and Connecticut Historical Commission. (Updated by the HDC, 2008.)
- d. ***United States Department of the Interior: "Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, with Guidelines for Preserving , Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstructing Historic Buildings."*** Excerpts from the Guidelines are for Rehabilitation are available as in the HDC Handbook and in their entirety online at <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/standguide>

Read the guidelines which apply most closely to your proposed work.

- e. ***Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Properties***. Appendix E of these regulations, in the HDC Handbook, also Information Sheet B1, and online at <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/standguide/rehab/rehab>

Find out which Standards apply to your project.

The **Preservation Briefs** (Numbers 1-47) are helpful technical booklets which explain the techniques and materials used in repair and construction to meet the national standards.

List of PB and Tech Notes is in this HANDBOOK; booklets can be downloaded from <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/briefs>.

Making a change to your building? You may need to submit a BUILDING ELEVATION!

What is a Building Elevation?

It is a drawing of each side of a building — the front, the rear, and the sides. When you apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness you must include a drawing of each side of the building affected by the proposed change, showing what it will look like when you're done with your project. Photographs are also required to show what the building looks like at present.

Each elevation should show the location of all the elements of the building—rooflines, windows, doors — and indicate the siding and roofing materials, dimensions of windows and doors, the roof pitch, details of the trim, etc.

Elevation drawings for a COA need not be done by an architect, but must be drawn to scale, i.e. 1/4"=one foot, easy to read and to photocopy.

Please label each page with the project's street address and applicant's name and identify the elevation (North, South, East, or West).

Why do I need a Building Elevation?

The saying, "A picture is worth a thousand words" applies here. The Historic District Commission and its staff use this information to understand exactly what you are proposing to do. Your responsibility is to show as completely as possible the nature and scope of your proposal so that the Commission can make an informed decision. The Historic District Commission's responsibility is to determine that what you are proposing is harmonious with the original or existing design of your building and the surrounding neighborhood. In reviewing your application, the Commission will look at the design, scale, materials, and of your project.

All the materials submitted as part of the application process become part of the public record and history of your property. This information is available for review, at the required public hearing, should neighbors or others have any questions.

Other materials required for a COA application:

- description of materials (samples/brochure)
- site plan (sample in this HANDBOOK)
- photographs of building or portion thereof

Additional required materials differ from project to project. Look carefully at the list on the COA application form to find out what you need to submit.

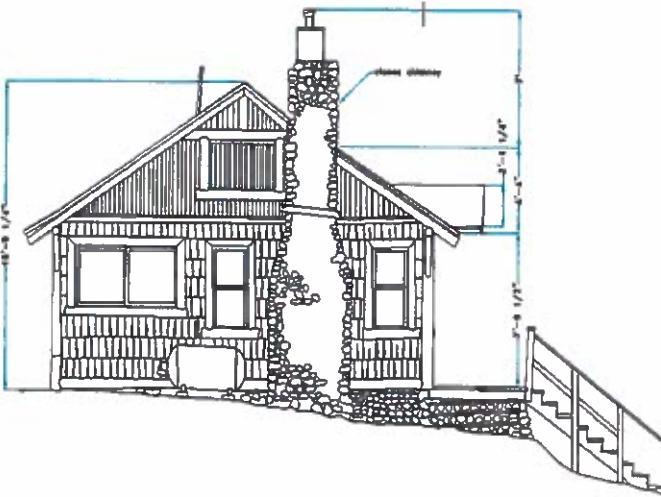
For examples of elevation drawings, see the next page

ELEVATIONS HANDOUT, side 2
Historic District Commission
Cheshire, CT

Each elevation should show the location of all the elements of the building—rooflines, windows, doors, and indicate the siding and roofing materials, dimensions of windows and doors, the roof pitch, details of the trim, etc.

Also, be sure to include any gable or roof vents, exterior meters, utility boxes, or lights that exist or are planned for the structure.

Elevation drawings for a COA need not be done by an architect, but must be drawn to scale, i.e. 1/4"=one foot, easy to read and to photocopy. Please label each page with the project's street address and applicant's name, and identify the elevation (North, South, East, or West).

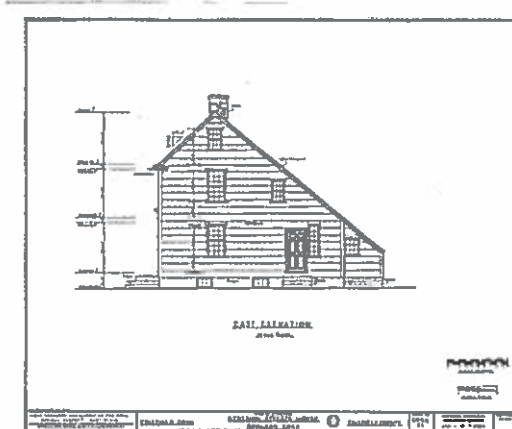


SIDE ELEVATION (West)

Drs. Marcus and Lou Ann Sibley

22 Blue Corn Road, Sheffield, CT

The above drawing shows materials, some dimensions, and the locations of doors, windows, steps, name of the applicant, address of house. More details might need to be shown.



This drawing meets specifications.



The above elevation is simply drawn, shows location of windows, doors, rooflines. It NEEDS dimensions, materials, name of applicant, address of building, north arrow.

What is a Site Plan? (Also called Plot Plan)

A site plan is a scale drawing which shows the entire property and identifies the location of all structures (new and existing) in relation to property boundaries and to each other. A common scale is 1/4"= 10'. If your lot is large, you may need to use a different scale, such as 1"= 50'. You may need to use 11"x17" paper.

Please include the following information in your site plan drawing:

- a. Title block (including title, scale, street address (Suggested scale: ¼" = 10')
- b. Site data: lot area, total area of lot covered by buildings. (Required only for additions and new free standing buildings).
- c. North arrow
- d. Lot lines and dimensions of the property
- e. Existing and proposed construction and dimensions
- f. Setbacks from existing and proposed buildings to property boundaries and to each other
- g. Existing and finished ground levels or grades
- h. Existing rights of way, easements and municipal services (if needed for your project)

Why do I need to include a site plan?

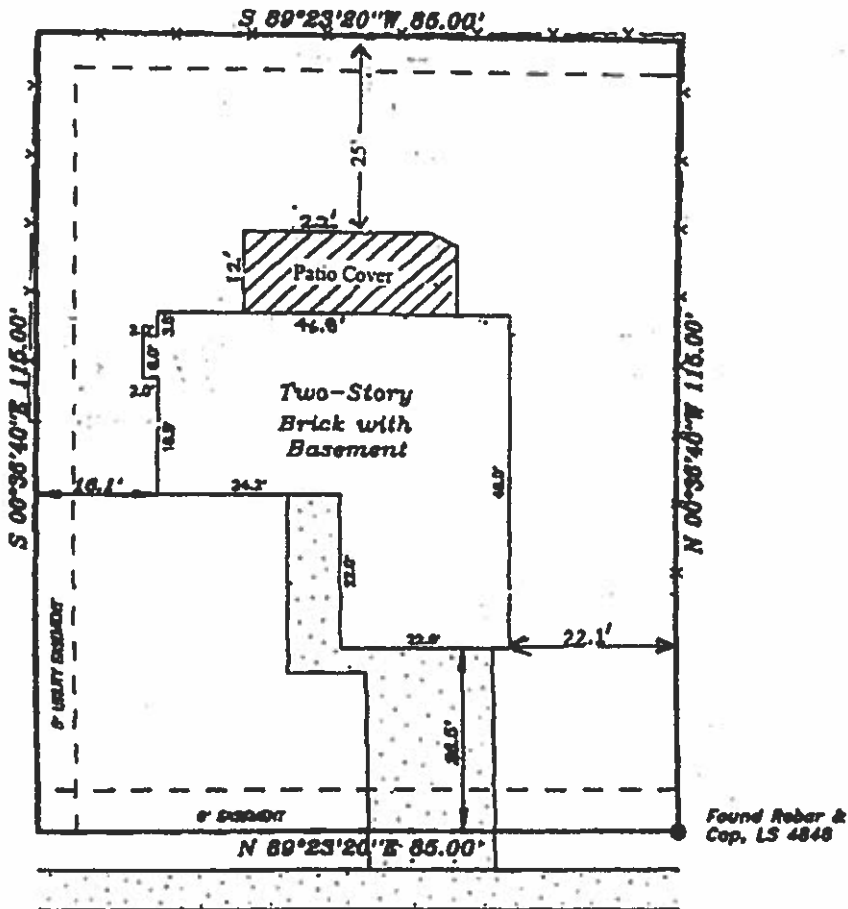
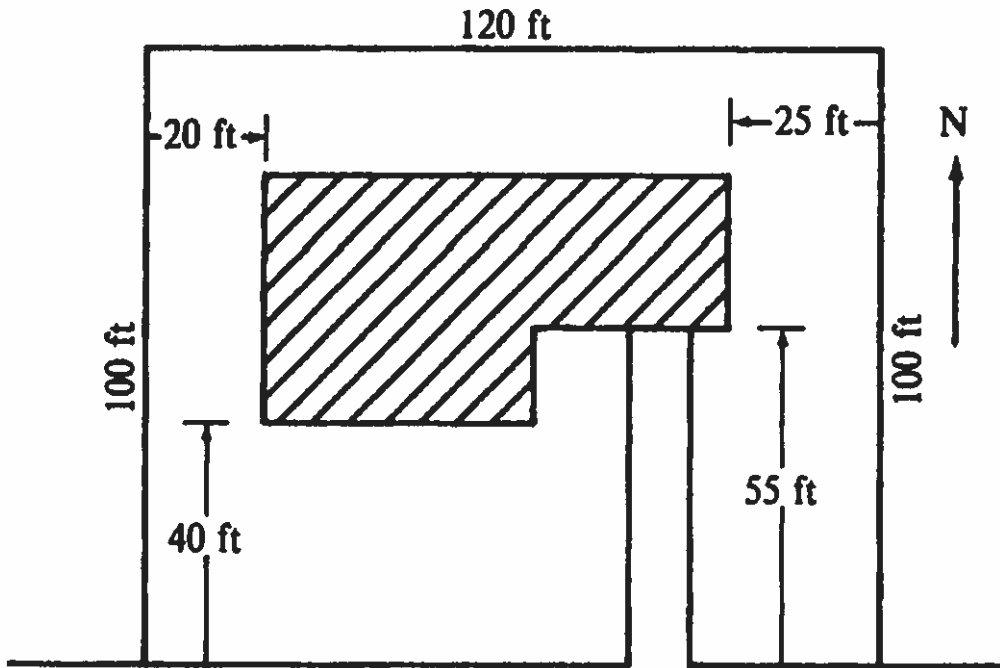
The saying, "A picture is worth a thousand words" applies here. The Historic District Commission and its staff use this information to understand exactly what you are proposing to do. Your responsibility is to show as completely as possible the nature and scope of your proposal so that the Commission can make an informed decision. The Historic District Commission's responsibility is to determine that what you are proposing is harmonious with the original or existing design of your building and the surrounding neighborhood. In reviewing your application, the Commission will look at the design, scale, materials, and of your project. All the materials submitted as part of the application process become part of the public record and history of your property. This information is available for review, at the required public hearing, should neighbors or others have any questions. Other materials required for a COA application:

- *description of materials (samples/brochure)*
- *building elevation (s)*
- *photographs of building or portion thereof*

Additional required materials differ from project to project. Look carefully at the list on the COA application form to find out what you need to submit.

_____ . _____ . _____

For examples of Site Plans, see the following page.



More sample plot plans are available at the Planning Office.

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION GUIDELINES, CHESHIRE, CT (HDSC Preliminary Report, December 2003)

We hope that these Guidelines will help building owners know what to expect when planning to make changes to their buildings in the historic districts. Guidelines are guides, not requirements, but following them ensures that the buildings in the district will retain their beauty and character for generations to come. Approval of application for COAs will be based on careful attention to national and local Guidelines.

Taking Care of Historic Buildings

Our guidelines encourage all building owners to, first, be aware of the character-defining elements of their building*, then to retain and preserve all such elements by following these basic Preservation Principles:

- Meticulous maintenance
- Careful repair
- Replacement in kind (with exact matches)
- Finally, only if necessary, replacement with elements as close to a match as can be found (Commission approval needed)

*The HDC has compiled an inventory of historic buildings showing their significant features. This Catalog of Historic Buildings (2005) is in the Planning Office.

Section 4. Exterior Surfaces

4.1 MASONRY and STUCCO

Brick was used frequently in the construction of commercial, religious, and government's buildings in Cheshire, and less frequently in residential construction. Humiston School, a brick building, has significant stone elements – a pedimented stone doorway, oval windows outlined in stone and stone bands along the top of the foundation. Cheshire Academy's oldest buildings are brick also with some stone details. Cornwall Avenue has one brick home and one stucco home. In South Brooksvale, the Stone Cottage is constructed in large part of rounded glacial stones. Houses in both districts typically have brick chimneys and foundations made of Connecticut brownstone. In South Brooksvale there are low stone walls lining the street, stone gateposts at driveway entrances, and a handsome curving stone bridge over Mountain Brook.

Retain and Preserve masonry features that are important in defining the overall character of the building. Do not replace or rebuild major portions of an exterior wall that could otherwise be repaired unless it can be demonstrated that the wall is structurally unsafe. Rebuild a brick or stone chimney, if necessary using the original bricks if possible.

Protect and maintain: Clean masonry only when necessary to halt deterioration or remove heavy soiling. Employ the gentlest means possible, such as low pressure water and detergents, using natural bristle brushes. Do not sandblast brick or stone surfaces with dry or wet grit or other abrasives. Sandblasting will permanently erode a masonry surface and accelerate deterioration. High pressure water can damage historic mortar joints, as can chemical products, such as acid on limestone or marble. Before cleaning, test an unobtrusive patch of the material to select the gentlest method possible.

Repair: Remove deteriorated mortar by hand-raking the joints. Do not use electric saws and hammers to remove existing mortar prior to re-pointing. Do not remove nondeteriorated mortar from sound joints if only done to achieve a uniform appearance. Duplicate replacement mortar in strength, composition, color and texture, and mortar joints in width and joint profile. Changing the width and joint profile will

materially change the appearance of the building. Do not use a "scrub" coating technique to re-point rather than traditional re-pointing methods. Unless the original mortar contained a high Portland cement content, avoid use of this hard mortar which can damage older soft brick because of the differing porosity and coefficient of expansion. When repairing stucco, remove the damaged material and patch the area with new stucco that duplicates in strength, composition, color and texture the existing stucco. Do not replace, however, with stucco that is stronger than the original. Avoid using waterproofing or water repellent coatings as a substitute for re-pointing and masonry repairs unless conventional repairs have failed to stop water penetration problems. Coatings are frequently unnecessary, expensive, and may change the appearance of historic masonry as well as accelerate its deterioration since they may serve only to trap moisture entering the wall by other means.

Replace: If a masonry wall surface or feature is too deteriorated to repair, replace it in kind using material or pictorial evidence or surviving features as a model. If the same kind of material is not technically or economically feasible, a compatible substitute material may be considered. Do not replace the surface, however, with a new material that does not convey the same visual appearance. Removing a masonry feature without replacing it in kind is not recommended.

4.2 WOOD EXTERIOR FEATURES

Wood is the most common material used in the construction of all New England buildings, for framing and for exterior walls. Almost all of the homes in the districts have wood exteriors including several Cheshire Academy residences. The Congregational Church is wood as is the newer portion of Temple Beth David. Over the years some of the wood clapboard siding in both districts has been covered over with aluminum or vinyl siding.

Retain and preserve the character defining wall surfaces of the building. Radically changing the exteriors finish is not recommended unless it can be documented that the existing finish is historically inappropriate. Applying a stucco finish to historically painted wall surface is not recommended.

Protect and maintain wood features by providing proper drainage and protective coating against the elements. Avoid replacement siding which does not match in appearance and texture the existing or earlier siding as documented by pictorial or material evidence. Avoid using substitute materials that do not convey the visual appearance of the surviving parts or that are physically or chemically incompatible. Do not replace an entire wall surface when repair or limited replacement of deteriorated or missing parts would be more appropriate.

Repair wall surfaces by patching, piecing-in, and consolidating. Do not replace an entire surface, however, when repair or limited replacement is possible. If a wall surface or feature is too deteriorated to repair, replace it in kind using physical evidence or other surviving features as a model. If using the same kind of material is not technically or economically feasible, a compatible substitute material may be considered.

Do not replace the surface with a new material that does not convey the same visual appearance. If synthetic siding materials are approved, retain all the original details. Do not cover or remove the trim.

4.3 ROOFS

Roofs made of wood shakes were typical of home building for many years. A few remain in Cheshire, but none in the proposed districts. Slate roofs were seen on many brick commercial, government, and religious buildings. There is one clay tile roof on an outbuilding on Cornwall Avenue. The great majority of roofs now have asphalt shingles, many in the "architectural" style which give more of a textured appearance. One home retains the patterned shingles on its mansard roof. The roof helps define the architectural form of a building, and provides the weather tightness essential to the long-term preservation of the structure. Those elements important in defining a building's historic character such as the roofs shape and decorative features such as cupolas, cresting, chimneys and weathervanes

should be retained and preserved. This also includes roofing material such as slate, wood, clay tile and metal, as well as its size, color and patterning.

Retain and preserve those character-defining shapes, materials and decorative elements of the roof that may reasonably be repaired and preserved.

Repair: A roof is best repaired with in kind materials and only limited replacement of features where repair is economically unfeasible. The following repair approaches, however, are strongly discouraged:

- Replacing an entire feature, such as a cupola or dormer, when repair or limited replacement would be more appropriate.
- Failing to reuse intact slate when only the roofing substrate requires replacement.
- Using a replacement material that does not convey the visual appearance of the surviving features of the roof, or that is physically or chemically incompatible.

Replacement: When a character-defining roof feature, such as a chimney or dormer, must be replaced because repair is unfeasible, replace it in kind. Do not substitute a new feature that does not convey the same visual appearance. When a feature is completely missing, it may be replaced accurately if sufficient historical, pictorial and material documentation exists. A new design may be acceptable if found compatible with the size, scale, material and color of the historic building. A new feature, however, that creates a false historical appearance based on insufficient documentation is not recommended.

Alterations/Additions for New Use: Mechanical and service equipment, such as air conditioning, transformers or solar collectors, may be acceptable when they do not damage or obscure character-defining features and are inconspicuous from the public right-of-way. While roof additions are sometimes required by new uses, care should be taken not to radically change a character-defining roof shape in the process.

4.4 ARCHITECTURAL TRIM

Non-structural features, such as cornices, doorway pediments, porch trim, roof eave brackets, finials and roof cresting, help define the architectural character of a building and come in a variety of materials including wood, metal and masonry. The conservation and repair approach listed below can be applied generally to each material type. Identify those decorative features, such as cornices, brackets, window trim, and doorway pediments that help define the architectural character of the building. These features should be retained and preserved by good maintenance practices — gentle cleaning and keeping a good protective coating on the surfaces (except for some metals like copper which should not be coated). In spite of these efforts, repairs may need to be made from time to time.

Repair: Wood trim can often be repaired by using a good glue or by filling in holes with epoxy and then priming and painting. (See Paint and other Surface Coatings) Avoid replacing an entire decorative feature when repair or limited in kind replacement of the deteriorated or missing part will suffice. Millwork catalogs and salvage stores are sources for in-kind replacements. Metal elements can sometimes be mended by welding. Nearby there are a number of metal workers; it is possible that a missing or damaged element could be reproduced.

Replacement: Substitute materials for the replacement feature, such as a cornice or window architrave should convey the same visual appearance as the existing or similar feature on the building. Do not remove a deteriorated feature and fail to replace it, or substitute a new feature that is visually incompatible. When the historic feature, such as a cornice or molding, is completely missing, an accurate reproduction may be created using historical, pictorial and material documentation. As a lesser alternative, a new feature may be designed if it is compatible in size, scale, material and color with the historic building. Creating a false historical appearance from insufficient documentation, however, is not recommended. If the missing element cannot be found or reproduced in its original

material, the use of synthetic materials will be considered on a case by case basis. The Commission will require you to supply a sample of the proposed material.

4.5 ARCHITECTURAL METALS

Retain architectural metal features that are important in defining the overall character of the building. Do not replace or rebuild major architectural metal components that could otherwise be repaired.

Protect and maintain: Like all building components, metals require proper drainage to protect against corrosion caused by standing water. Avoid placing incompatible metals together that can result in galvanic corrosion of the less noble metal (e.g., copper will corrode cast iron, steel, tin, and aluminum). Avoid exposing metals that were meant to be protected from the elements. Conversely, avoid painting or coating metals, such as copper, bronze or stainless steel, that were meant to be exposed. Do not remove the patina from historic metals; the patina may serve as a protective coating for some metals such as bronze or copper. When cleaning, identify the metal first and test a patch to assure that the gentlest method is selected. Soft metals, such as lead, tin, copper, terneplate and zinc, abrade under sandblasting while hard metals, like wrought iron, cast iron, and steel, may withstand low pressure grit blasting to remove old paint and corrosion.

Repair: Architectural metal features may be patched, spliced, or otherwise reinforced if appropriate. Repairs may also include limited replacement in kind or a compatible substitute material if a component is extensively deteriorated or missing. Do not, however, replace an entire feature such as a column or balustrade when repair is more appropriate. Do not use substitute materials that are physically or chemically incompatible or that fail to convey the visual appearance of the surviving parts.

Replacement: If an existing feature, such as a metal cornice, is missing or too deteriorated to repair, it may be replaced using historical, pictorial or material documentation. If replacement in kind is not technically or economically feasible, a compatible substitute material may be considered. Do not substitute a new material; however, that does not convey the same visual appearance. In some cases, a feature may be replaced with a new design that is compatible in size, scale, material, texture, and color with the historic feature.

4.6 EXTERIOR PAINT AND OTHER SURFACE COATINGS

Retain and preserve the character-defining surface coatings of the building. Radically altering the exterior's existing finish is strongly not recommended unless it can be documented that the existing finish is historically inappropriate. For example, stripping historically painted surfaces to bare wood, then applying clear finishes or stains to achieve a "natural look" is not recommended. Applying a stucco finish to a wall surface that was historically painted is also not recommended. Choose paint colors that are appropriate to the style and historical period of the building.

Protect and maintain architectural features by retaining coatings that help protect against moisture and the elements. Paint removal should be considered only where the painted surface has deteriorated and will not hold new paint. Remove deteriorated paint to the next sound layer using the gentlest means possible (hand scraping and sanding); avoid destructive techniques such as propane torches, sandblasting or water blasting. Use electric hot-air guns and heat plates with the utmost care to avoid scorching woodwork. Chemical strippers likewise should be used with care to avoid deterioration of wood components. Neutralize wood thoroughly after using chemicals to ensure adherence of new paint. Do not allow detachable wood features like shutters and doors to soak too long in caustic dip solutions. Avoid chemical preservatives like creosote that can change the appearance of wood unless it can be demonstrated that a preservative was used historically.

Masonry: Avoid applying paint or other coatings such as stucco to masonry that has been historically unpainted or uncoated. Conversely, do not remove paint or stucco from historically painted masonry.

Architectural Metals: Avoid painting or coating metals such as copper, bronze or stainless steel that were meant to be exposed. Conversely, do not remove the patina from historic metals; the patina may serve as a protective coating on some metals such as bronze or copper.

4.7 WINDOWS

Windows let in light and are clear spaces to gaze out of. They can also be decorative, pleasing in their design, and an integral part of the building's character. A window's features include the frame, sash, muntins, sill, head, molding, surround, hardware, and the division of panes. All such character-defining features should be retained and preserved.

Protect and maintain the wood and metal elements of historic windows through appropriate methods:

- Inspect regularly for deterioration, moisture damage, air infiltration, paint failure and corrosion.
- Clean the surface using the gentlest means possible: hand cleaning the glass and wood with a cloth and a non-abrasive cleaning agent.
- Limit paint removal and reapply protective coatings as necessary. (See Paint and Coatings.
- Reglaze sash as necessary to prevent moisture infiltration.
- Weatherstrip windows to reduce air infiltration and increase energy efficiency. Repair historic windows and their distinctive features through recognized methods for patching, consolidating, splicing, and reinforcing. If Replacement of a feature or whole window unit becomes necessary, replace only the feature in kind rather than the entire unit. Match the original in design, dimension and material. If you cannot find or do not know how to go about finding an exact or approximate match, be sure to talk with the commission. The Commission may be able to help you find a source for a replacement. If not, a change will have to be made for which a Certificate of Appropriateness will be needed. Commission members will help see you through the process and to help you follow the guidelines below.

Guidelines for Replacing Windows:

- Retain and preserve the pattern, arrangement and dimensions of window openings on the portions of the building seen from a public way. Match the original in design, dimension, and material. True divided light wood windows are an appropriate replacement product for original wood windows when designed to match the original in appearance, detail, profile, and when dimensions are as much the same as possible to the original window.
- Consider compatible substitute materials only if using the original material is not technically feasible. Additional window replacement products will be reviewed on an individual basis using the following criteria: material performance and durability, architectural and historical compatibility, comparison to original window profile.

4.8 DOORS

The front door is usually the focal point of the house and a key architectural feature. Original doors found in the districts typically are wood panel doors, sometimes with fixed panes of glass. Solid wood doors are also seen in the districts and may have sidelights and fanlights with fixed panes of clear, beveled, or stained glass surrounding the door frame. Because of their strong link to, and indication of the architecture and style of a building, original doors should be maintained, repaired as necessary, and preserved as one of the defining elements of a historic structure.

Retain and preserve the pattern arrangement and dimensions of door openings on the building façade. Preserve original or old doors on primary elevations and maintain the character defining features such as frames, hardware, thresholds, and glass pane arrangement. Select storm doors that do not damage or obscure the original doors. Storm doors with full glazing will maximize the view of the door. Paint unfinished metal frames to match the trim on the building.

Maintain and repair the existing doors as carefully as possible, keeping them well painted, the hinges oiled and securely fastened to the door frame. If the door hinges pull loose, they can be re-fastened after filling the screw holes with an epoxy or other compound. Storm doors will help in the preservation of the original or existing doors.

If replacement of a door element is necessary, replace only the deteriorated element to match the original in size, composition material, dimension and detail. Replacement doors, if necessary, should be as similar as possible to existing doors.

Guidelines for Replacing Doors

- Retain and preserve the pattern, arrangement and dimensions of door openings on the portions of the building seen from a public way.
- Match the original door in design, dimension, and material.
- Consider compatible substitute materials only if using the original material is not technically feasible. Additional window replacement products will be reviewed on an individual basis using the following criteria: material performance and durability, architectural and historical compatibility, comparison to original door profile.

Adding New Doors

If necessary to create new door openings, locate them on the side or rear where they are less visible. Choose new doors which are as similar as possible to existing doors, as specified above.

4.9 ENTRANCES AND PORCHES

Entrances and porches can often provide the most prominent character-defining feature on the front facade of a building. Quite often they were integral components of a building's original design, and their removal can significantly alter the historic appearance or character of a building. Those features such as porches, doors, fanlights, sidelights, pilasters, columns, entablatures, balustrades and stairs, should be retained and preserved.

Protect and Maintain: Those masonry, wood and architectural metals that make up entrances and porches should be protected and maintained through appropriate treatments such as cleaning, rust removal, limited paint removal, and re-application of protective coating systems. Failure to provide adequate protection on a cyclical basis will result in accelerated deterioration.

Repair: In general, entrances and porches should be repaired by reinforcing their historic materials. In some instances, where repair is not feasible because of extensive deterioration, limited replacement is appropriate. However, the use of substitute materials that do not convey the visual appearance of the surviving parts is not recommended. Nor is replacing an entire porch or entrance where repair is feasible and would be more appropriate.

Replacement: Where an entire porch or entrance is too deteriorated to repair, it may be replaced in kind using physical evidence as a model to reproduce the feature. The following approaches are **not** recommended:

- Removing or radically altering entrances and porches
- Stripping entrances and porches of historic material such as wood, cast iron, terra cotta tile and brick.
- Cutting new entrances on a primary, publicly visible elevation. Removing an entrance or porch because a building has been reoriented to accommodate a new use. Removing features that are not repairable and not replacing them is not recommended; nor is replacing those features with a new features that do not convey the same visual appearance, In cases where an extensively deteriorated entrance or porch is not original, and where conclusive historical, pictorial or physical evidence can document the character, construction, and material of the

original pre-existing feature, the original entrance or porch may be reconstructed. In cases where the feature is missing completely, it may be reconstructed based on historical, pictorial and physical documentation. Creating a false historical appearance based on insufficient documentation, however, is not recommended.

Alterations/Additions for New Use: Enclosing porches for interior uses is acceptable when the enclosing wall is recessed behind the existing posts, balustrades and scrollwork of the porch. However, design approaches that enclose the porch in a solid wall plane diminishing or erasing its historic character is not recommended. New entrances required for new uses should seek to preserve the historic character of the building. The following renovation and maintenance approaches, however, are discouraged:

- Radically altering or destroying a roof that defines the overall historic character of a building.
- Removing a major portion of a roof or roofing material that is repairable, and reconstructing the roof with new material in order to create a uniform appearance.
- Altering the configuration of a roof by adding new features such as dormer windows, vents, or skylights that diminish the historic character on its publicly visible elevations.
- Stripping a roof of sound historic materials such as slate, clay tile, wood, and architectural metal.
- Applying paint or other coatings to roofing material which has been historically uncoated.

Section 5 – STOREFRONTS

Since the storefront plays a critical role in the storekeeper's ability to advertise and display goods, it is usually the most prominent feature of a commercial building. A multistep approach aimed at conserving key historic architectural elements is recommended below for storefront renovations. Understanding the original architectural character of a storefront is the crucial first step in restoring or conserving its appearance. The select removal of inappropriate non-historic cladding, like false mansard roofs between the first and second floors, will often help reveal the original underlying character.

Repair is best accomplished by reinforcing the existing historic materials. Repair will generally include limited replacement in kind, or with compatible substitute materials, where similar existing features may serve as models.

*The following repair approaches, however, **are considered inappropriate:***

- Replacing an entire storefront where repair of existing materials and limited replacement of deteriorated parts would suffice.
- Stripping storefronts of historic materials such as wood, cast iron, terra cotta, and brick.

Replacement: An entire traditional storefront that is too deteriorated to repair may be replaced in kind if the overall form and detailing are still evident. Appropriate substitute materials may be used when historic materials are not technically or economically feasible.

*The following approaches to storefront renovations, however, **are not recommended:***

- Removing or radically altering those features that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building.
- Changing the facade so that it appears residential rather than commercial in character.
- Creating a false style or applying new non-historic features whose use cannot be documented, such as a mansard roof coach lanterns, non-operable shutters and smallpaned windows.
- Changing the location of the storefront's main entrance.

Design for Missing Historic Features: Where a historic storefront is missing entirely, reconstruction may be possible where sufficient historical, pictorial or material documentation exists, or where a new design that is compatible in size, scale, material and color with the larger building may be created.

Creating an incompatible new design or a false historic appearance based on insufficient documentation, however, is strongly discouraged.

Section 6 - SIGNS

Good signs can enhance the look of the historic districts. It is important to choose signs that will be in the character of the district while, at the same time, be effective as information postings for businesses, churches, and government buildings. The design, color, size, and scale of a sign, if well chosen, should integrate the sign with the architectural character of a building and the streetscape. The Commission encourages creativity and the use of imaginative signs which suit a particular business: for example signs in shapes other than rectangles or squares, signs embodying the symbols of a particular trade, signs which contain apt illustrations, and signs inspired by historic examples. Preserving existing historic (or familiar and cherished) signs is also encouraged.

Applying for a COA

Please note that temporary signs do not require a COA. They are not fixed permanently into the ground appear only during a period of time for a given purpose or event, and are removed shortly after.

All new permanent signs, including replacement signs that will differ from the existing signs, require a COA. In evaluating each application, the Historic Districts Commission will consider, at the minimum the following points:

- **Message:** Simple signs with the name of the business and the street number are encouraged. Any additional symbols or illustrations should be legible without clutter.
- **Lettering:** Raised or carved letters are encouraged. Fonts should be Serif (that is, any font that includes the fine lines that finish the main strokes of a letter). Raised, cove, or beveled sign edges are strongly recommended.
- **Color:** The Commission does not regulate colors, but recommends selecting colors to complement either the body or trim of the structure served. Many traditional signs use three colors; one for background, one for lettering, and a third color of emphasis (i.e. borders, motifs).
- **Material:** Wooden signs are appropriate in historic districts. Synthetic signs are generally not appropriate, but the Commission will consider applications using such materials. Before proceeding with the application, the applicant must bring a sample of the proposed material (s) to an preliminary informal review session at a regular Commission meeting. Metal signs can sometimes be appropriate.
- **Logos:** Corporate logos did not exist at the time that historic structures were built and they can contribute to a suburban or urban appearance, overpowering the more subtle features of a building, structure, or district. Franchised companies and organizations with registered set logos may be asked to modify their signage to comply with an appropriate appearance for the historic district. Mass produced trademark signs are not appropriate in historic districts.
- **Lighting:** An exterior light source is recommended; internally lit signs are not appropriate in the historic districts. The light should be natural and soft, directed toward the sign with no spillover. High intensity lighting or colored lights are discouraged. The light source for freestanding signs should be concealed using plantings. Lighting for a hanging sign should be incorporated into the sign structure if possible.
- **Location:** Signage should be compatible with the original use of a building. Place signs for historic commercial buildings in locations originally intended for signage such as at the top of the storefront, or on windows, doors or awnings. Signage for new commercial buildings should

reflect similar placement to that of historic commercial buildings in the neighborhood. Signs for home businesses should be placed so as not to obscure any character-defining features of the building.

- **Size:** The recommended size for a sign will depend on its viewing distance from the nearest public way. Here are five basic styles with some suggestions as to size. A *primary sign* is one which contains only the name of the business and the street number. A *secondary sign* may contain additional information such as business hours.
 1. **Freestanding:** Primary sign at main entrance. The best place for a freestanding sign is next to the front walk near the public sidewalk. Readability from that sidewalk will be the criterion for the maximum recommended area and the size of lettering.
 2. **Projecting sign:** Primary sign, hung off a building. Suggested maximum area: 10 square feet. Suggested maximum distance projected from a building: 5 feet. Suggested minimum height from the ground: 10 feet to the bottom of the sign.
 3. **Wall sign:** Can be the primary sign or a secondary sign. Suggested maximum area: the lesser of 8 square feet or 15% of the area of the wall (including doors and windows) to which it is affixed.
 4. **Window sign:** Painted on the window glass or hung in the window. States the name of the business. Suggested maximum area: 20% of the glass area of the building front. Lighting: None, backlit by the business' internal lighting.
 5. **Awning sign:** Lettering is painted on an awning over the main entrance to the building.

Applications

In making a presentation to the Historic Districts Commission, the presenter should begin with a brief overview of the scope of the work. The Commission requires sufficient presentation materials to be able to fully understand the design intent. For informal reviews that would include, but not be limited to, the following:

- A sketch of the sign drawn to scale and location on the site
- Samples of all proposed materials, colors, typeface, etc. Literature about, or pictures of, the proposed lighting fixtures and support
- For formal presentations, the presenter should bring all of the aforementioned materials and other materials including, but not limited to, the following:
 1. a site plan showing the sign's exact location
 2. a sign elevation drawn to scale
 3. proposed sign content drawn to scale using the intended lettering style and details
 4. specifications for proposed brackets/hangers or other supports

Section 7 - ADDITIONS

Historically a house was built to accommodate a family's basic requirements. When the need for space grew, the house was expanded in stages. Similarly, additions to business, government, and religious buildings were needed, as the Cheshire's population increased and diversified. Over several generations, additions were built in a manner that was consistent with what had come before but reflective of their own period. It is often possible to read the history of such additions due to their size, placement, and style; each of which, if they well-designed, added to the overall character of the building. In historic districts, future additions should be designed so that the character of the existing building is not radically changed, obscured, damaged, destroyed, or rendered subordinate to the addition.

Guidelines for Additions

Additions should:

- not obstruct the visual integrity of the original structure;
- be in harmony with the original structure in size, scale, style and materials;
- either faithfully replicate and extend the design of the original structure or be clearly distinguishable from yet compatible with it;
- unless an historically sensitive extension of the design of the original structure (e.g. an ell or rear traditional extended farmhouse design), be located where least visible from the public view;
- take into account the streetscape
- not place garages where they are prominently visible from the street;
- minimize site disturbance to reduce the possibility of destroying site features and trees.

Additional stories, if needed, should be in the same style as the original house, forming an architecturally coherent design that is similar to other multi-story historic structures in the district. If this is not practical, additional stories should be made as inconspicuous as practical by being set back from the façade. New materials, including synthetic materials, can be used, but must be harmonious with the original materials.

Procedure for Review:

As in all large projects The Commission ask that you come to a pre-application meeting early in the planning process. Show us preliminary sketches or tell us about the proposed project. A commissioner and staff member will work closely with you, insuring a successful review culminating in the commission's approval for a Certificate of Appropriateness. It may not be possible to follow all the guidelines, but a successful design will be strongly guided by these recommendations.

Section 8 – New Construction

New construction should be compatible with historic buildings in the historic district. While buildings that are architecturally twenty-first century buildings are permitted, they should be simple in design and similar to historic buildings in massing, building and window proportions, building materials, and roof shapes. Buildings which draw strongly upon historic architectural traditions are encouraged, although "faux" historicism, in which individual historical elements are used in a manner that creates confusion between historical and modern styles, is discouraged.

To judge whether an application meets the design guidelines for the district, commission members must determine if the project supports and maintains the stated goals of the district and respects the design elements that characterize the district. The commission first evaluates the project in terms of the larger issues of context, scale, massing, and height, followed by the details. The Commission also considers the long-term effects of the project on the district.

The Historic Districts Commission will not specify a particular architectural style or design for new construction projects. The scale, mass and size of a building are often far more important than the decorative details applied. However, well designed stylistic and decorative elements, as well as building materials and landscaping, can give new construction projects the attributes necessary to blend in with the district, while creating a distinctive character for the building.

Another possibility for a buildable site in a historic district is the moving of an historic building or outbuilding to the site or for onsite re-construction of an historic building or outbuilding the parts of which have been carefully preserved, provided that the building or outbuilding meets the following criteria.

All new construction projects will be evaluated for compatibility using the following criteria:

- Size (the relationship of the project to its site)
- Scale (the relationship of the building to those around it)
- Massing (the relationship of the building's parts to each other)
- Fenestration (the placement of windows and doors)
- Rhythm (the relationship of fenestration, recesses and projections)
- Setback (in relation to setback of immediate surroundings)
- Materials (their compatibility with the historic district)
- Context (the overall relationship of the project to its surroundings)

Section 9 – Making Changes To Non-Contributing, Commercial, Religious, Institutional, And Government Buildings

Buildings or structures which contribute to a district's character, either by age, style or historic significance, are called contributing. Those built within the past 50 years, altered to a degree that historical integrity has been obliterated, or determined not representative of the district's character, are classified as non-contributing. In making changes to a noncontributing building, an owner will usually be granted approval for a Certificate of Appropriateness under less-stringent requirements than those for a contributing building. A building's classification as non-contributing may be reconsidered by the Historic Districts Commission after a building's age exceeds 50 years or when proposed changes would restore the building's architectural integrity which was lost by earlier removals, demolitions, alterations or additions. Where appropriate, the Commission can determine, once the proposed changes have been completed, that such a building has become contributing.

All buildings in a historic district, contributing or non-contributing, need to meet local and State requirements for fire and safety, as well as other applicable codes and regulations. Contributing buildings are, at the same time, expected to retain their historic appearance while meeting these regulations. This is a tall order, but satisfactory solutions can, most often, be discovered through a joint effort of those concerned with the proposed changes.

Commercial buildings must conform to all applicable State and local codes and regulations. These laws take precedence over design guidelines for historic districts. Being able to efficiently conduct business in a historic property is a priority for commercial owners. Finding the appropriate balance between accommodating a contemporary function and maintaining a building's architectural integrity can be difficult. With sensitive guidance and practical consideration, solutions supporting preservation and profitability are usually not only possible but also affordable. Finding such economical solutions for necessary change in historic districts is a fundamental goal of the Historic Districts Commission.

Many religious, institutional and public buildings are used for community meetings and events. Building managers need to provide access for handicapped people as well as meet the special needs of children. As with commercial properties, historic buildings serving these functions must conform to applicable codes and regulations. Guidelines for change in historic districts are created to mesh with

these other requirements. Most often, necessary changes can be made which are aesthetically appropriate to a building's integrity and reasonably in line with an owner's functional and budgetary demands.

Section 10 - DEMOLITION

The demolition or removal of any structure in a historic district requires a Certificate of Appropriateness. The Historic Districts Commission has the authority to delay the issuance of the Certificate for up to ninety (90) days. The decision to demolish a historic structure should be carefully considered and all alternatives to demolition should be explored. During the delay period, the Commission will actively seek alternatives to demolition. In meeting with the owners, the following list can be used as a starting point for discussion.

- Is the structure of national, state, or local significance?
 - Does the site have known or potential archeological significance?
 - Is there a well-developed proposal for the use of the site requiring demolition?
 - If so, the owner should submit the site plan to the Historic Districts Commission as part of the COA application.
 - Could another site serve the purpose just as well?
 - Could the existing structure be adapted to suit the owner's needs?
 - Could the property be sold to someone willing to preserve the building?
 - As a last resort, could the building be moved to another location?
- If all efforts to find alternative solutions fail, and approval to demolish is granted, the following should be done:

Before Demolition

- The Historic Districts Commission should study the structure through photographs, drawings, written accounts, etc. and compile a record of the building for the Cultural Resources Inventory Files.
- The Historic Districts Commission should work with the owner and other interested parties to salvage usable architectural materials and features.

During Demolition

- The property owner should ensure the safety of any adjacent properties and historic resources.
- Protect trees on the site from damage.

After Demolition

- The site should be promptly cleared.
- If the site is to remain vacant for over sixty (60) days, the owner should reseed as necessary and maintain the property in a manner appropriate to the historic district.

Section 11 – Preservation Briefs

The Preservation Briefs (No. 1-47) are an invaluable series of short manuals prepared by the Technical Preservation Services Office of the National Park Service. The technical advice contained within the series is useful for its consistency with the Secretary of the
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Preservation Briefs [Also online](#)

- No. 1: *Assessing Cleaning and Water-Repellent Treatments for Historic Masonry Buildings*. Robert C. Mack, FAIA, and Anne E. Grimmer. (1975, revised 2000)
- No. 2: *Repointing Mortar Joints in Historic Masonry Buildings*. Robert C. Mack, FAIA, and John Speweik. (1976, revised 1998)
- No. 3: *Conserving Energy in Historic Buildings*. Baird M. Smith, AIA. (1978)
- No. 4: *Roofing for Historic Buildings*. Sara M. Sweetser. (1978)
- No. 5: *The Preservation of Historic Adobe Buildings*. (1978)
- No. 6: *Dangers of Abrasive Cleaning to Historic Buildings*. Anne E. Grimmer. (1979)
- No. 7: *The Preservation of Historic Glazed Architectural Terra-Cotta*. de Teel Patterson Tiller. (1979)
- No. 8: *Aluminum and Vinyl Siding on Historic Buildings: The Appropriateness of Substitute Materials for Resurfacing Historic Wood Frame Buildings*. John H. Myers, revised by Gary L. Hume. (1979, revised 1984)
- No. 9: *The Repair of Historic Wooden Windows*. John H. Myers. (1981)
- No. 10: *Exterior Paint Problems on Historic Woodwork*. Kay D. Weeks and David L. Look, AIA. (1982)
- No. 11: *Rehabilitating Historic Storefronts*. H. Ward Jandl. (1982)
- No. 12: *The Preservation of Historic Pigmented Structural Glass (Vitrolite and Carrara Glass)*. (1984)
- No. 13: *The Repair and Thermal Upgrading of Historic Steel Windows*. Sharon C. Park, AIA. (1984)
- No. 14: *New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings: Preservation Concerns*. Kay D. Weeks. (1986)
- No. 15: *Preservation of Historic Concrete*. Paul Gaudette and Deborah Slayton. (2007)
- No. 16: *The Use of Substitute Materials on Historic Building Exteriors*. Sharon C. Park, AIA. (1988)
- No. 17: *Architectural Character - Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving Their Character*. Lee H. Nelson, FAIA. (1988)
- No. 18: *Rehabilitating Interiors in Historic Buildings: Identifying Character-Defining Elements*. H. Ward Jandl. (1988)
- No. 19: *The Repair and Replacement of Historic Wooden Shingle Roofs*. Sharon C. Park, AIA. (1989)
- No. 20: *The Preservation of Historic Barns*. Michael J. Auer. (1989)
- No. 21: *Repairing Historic Flat Plaster - Walls and Ceilings*. Marylee MacDonald. (1989)
- No. 22: *The Preservation and Repair of Historic Stucco*. Anne E. Grimmer. (1990)
- No. 23: *Preserving Historic Ornamental Plaster*. David Flaharty. (1990)

- No. 24: *Heating, Ventilating, and Cooling Historic Buildings: Problems and Recommended Approaches*. Sharon C. Park, AIA. (1991)
- No. 25: *The Preservation of Historic Signs*. Michael J. Auer. (1991)
- No. 26: *The Preservation and Repair of Historic Log Buildings*. Bruce L. Bomberger. (1991)
- No. 27: *The Maintenance and Repair of Architectural Cast Iron*. John G. Waite. Historical Overview, Margot Gayle. (1991)
- No. 28: *Painting Historic Interiors*. Sara B. Chase. (1992)
- No. 29: *The Repair, Replacement, and Maintenance of Historic Slate Roofs*. Jeffrey S. Levine. (1993)
- No. 30: *The Preservation and Repair of Historic Clay Tile Roofs*. Anne E. Grimmer and Paul K. Williams. (1993)
- No. 31: *Mothballing Historic Buildings*. Sharon C. Park, AIA. (1993)
- No. 32: *Making Historic Properties Accessible*. Thomas C. Jester and Sharon C. Park, AIA. (1993)
- No. 33: *The Preservation and Repair of Historic Stained and Leaded Glass*. Neal A. Vogel and Rolph Achilles. (1993, updated 2007)
- No. 34: *Applied Decoration for Historic Interiors: Preserving Historic Composition Ornament*. Jonathan Thornton and William Adair, FAAR. (1994)
- No. 35: *Understanding Old Buildings: The Process of Architectural Investigation*. Travis C. MacDonald, Jr. (1994)
- No. 36: *Protecting Cultural Landscapes: Planning, Treatment and Management of Historic Landscapes*. Charles A. Birnbaum, FASLA. (1994)
- No. 37: *Appropriate Methods of Reducing Lead-Paint Hazards in Historic Housing*. Sharon C. Park, AIA, and Douglas C. Hicks. (1995, updated 2006)
- No. 38: *Removing Graffiti from Historic Masonry*. Martin E. Weaver. (1995)
- No. 39: *Holding the Line: Controlling Unwanted Moisture in Historic Buildings*. Sharon C. Park, AIA. (1996)
- No. 40: *Preserving Historic Ceramic Tile Floors*. Anne E. Grimmer and Kimberly A. Konrad. (1996)
- No. 41: *The Seismic Retrofit of Historic Buildings: Keeping Preservation in the Forefront*. David Look, AIA, Terry Wong, and Sylvia Rose Augustus. (1997)
- No. 42: *The Maintenance, Repair and Replacement of Historic Cast Stone*. Richard Pieper. (2001)
- No. 43: *The Preparation and Use of Historic Structure Reports*. Deborah Slaton. (2005)
- No. 44: *The Use of Awnings on Historic Buildings: Repair, Replacement and New Design*. Chad Randl. (2005)
- No. 45: *Preserving Historic Wooden Porches*. Aleca Sullivan and John Leeke. (2006)
- No. 46: *The Preservation and Reuse of Historic Gas Stations*. Chad Randl. (2008)
- No. 47: *Maintaining the Exterior of Small and Medium Size Historic Buildings*. Sharon Park. (2007)

Preservation Tech Notes [Some titles online](#)

The *Preservation Tech Notes* provide practical information on traditional practices and innovative techniques for successfully maintaining and preserving cultural resources. Please note that the web versions of the *Preservation Tech Notes* differ somewhat from the printed versions. Many illustrations are new, captions are simplified, illustrations are typically in color rather than black and white, and some complex charts have been omitted.

For information on obtaining single hard copies, please refer to the [online TPS Publications Catalog](#).

Doors

- No. 1: *Historic Garage and Carriage Doors: Rehabilitation Solutions*. Bonnie Halda, AIA. (1989)

Exterior Woodwork

- No. 1: *Proper Painting and Surface Preparation*. Sharon Park, AIA. (1986)
- No. 2: *Paint Removal from Wood Siding*. Alan O'Bright. (1986)
- No. 3: *Log Crown Repair and Selective Replacement Using Epoxy and Fiberglass Reinforcing Bars*. Harrison Goodall. (1989)
- No. 4: *Protecting Woodwork Against Decay Using Borate Preservatives*. Ron Sheetz and Charles Fisher. (1993)

Finishes

- No. 1: *Process-Painting Decals as a Substitute for Hand-Stencilled Ceiling Medallions*. Sharon Park, FAIA. (1990)

Historic Glass

- No. 1: *Repair and Reproduction of Prismatic Glass Transoms*. Chad Randl. (2002)
- No. 2: *Repair and Rehabilitation of Historic Sidewalk Vault Lights*. Cas Stachelberg and Chad Randl (2003)

Historic Interior Spaces

- No. 1: *Preserving Historic Corridors in Open Office Plans*. Christina Henry. (1985)
- No. 2: *Preserving Historic Office Building Corridors*. Thomas Keohan. (1989)
- No. 3: *Preserving Historic Corridor Doors and Glazing in High-Rise Buildings*. Chad Randl. (2001)

Masonry

- No. 1: *Substitute Materials: Replacing Deteriorated Serpentine Stone with Pre-Cast Concrete*. Robert M. Powers. (1988)
- No. 2: *Stabilization and Repair of a Historic Terra Cotta Cornice*. Jeffrey Levine and Donna Harris. (1991)
- No. 3: *Water Soak Cleaning of Limestone*. Robert M. Powers. (1992)
- No. 4: *Non-destructive Evaluation Techniques for Masonry Construction*. Marilyn E. Kaplan, Marie Ennis and Edmund P. Meade. (1997)

Mechanical Systems

- No. 1: *Replicating Historic Elevator Enclosures*. Marilyn Kaplan, AIA. (1989)

Metals

- No. 1: *Conserving Outdoor Bronze Sculpture*. Dennis Montagna. (1989)
- No. 2: *Restoring Metal Roof Cornices*. Richard Pieper. (1990)
- No. 3: *In-kind Replacement of Historic Stamped-Metal Exterior Siding*. Rebecca A. Shiffer. (1991)
- No. 4: *Rehabilitating a Historic Iron Bridge*. Joseph P. Saldibar, III. (1997)
- No. 5: *Rehabilitating a Historic Truss Bridge Using a Fiber-Reinforced Plastic Deck*. Chad Randl (2003)
- No. 6: *Repair and Reproduction of Metal Canopies and Marquees with Glass Pendants*. Lauren Van Damme and Charles E. Fisher (2006)

Museum Collections

- No. 1: *Museum Collection Storage in a Historic Building Using a Prefabricated Structure*. Don Cumberland, Jr. (1985)
- No. 2: *Reducing Visible and Ultraviolet Light Damage to Interior Wood Finishes*. Ron Sheetz and Charles Fisher. (1990)

Site

- No. 1: *Restoring Vine Coverage to Historic Buildings*. Karen Day. (1991)

Temporary Protection

- No. 1: *Temporary Protection of Historic Stairways*. Charles Fisher. (1985)
- No. 2: *Specifying Temporary Protection of Historic Interiors During Construction and Repair*. Dale H. Frens. (1993)
- No. 3: *Protecting A Historic Structure during Adjacent Construction*. Chad Randl. (2001)

Windows

- No. 10: *Temporary Window Vents in Unoccupied Historic Buildings*. Charles Fisher and Thomas Vitanza. (1985)
- No. 11: *Installing Insulating Glass in Existing Wooden Sash Incorporating the Historic Glass*. Charles Fisher. (1985)
- No. 13: *Aluminum Replacement Windows with Sealed Insulating Glass and Trapezoidal Muntin Grids*. Charles Parrott. (1985)
- No. 17: *Repair and Retrofitting Industrial Steel Windows*. Robert M. Powers. (1989)
- No. 19: *Repairing Steel Casement Windows*. Chad Randl. (2002)
- No. 20: *Aluminum Replacement Windows for Steel Projecting Units with True Divided Lights and Matching Profiles*. Chad Randl. (2003)
- No. 21: *Replacement Wood Sash Utilizing True Divided Lights and an Interior Piggyback Energy Panel*. Charles E. Fisher. (2008)
- No. 22: *Maintenance and Repair of Historic Aluminum Windows*. Kaaren R. Staveteig. (2008)
- **Please note:** No. 1-9 ONLY available for purchase in *The Window Handbook: Successful Strategies for Rehabilitating Windows in Historic Buildings*.