

KINGSPORT HISTORIC DISTRICT

DESIGN GUIDELINES:

MAIN STREET

ADOPTED

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KINGSPORT HISTORIC ZONING COMMISSION

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PURPOSE

Design guidelines are criteria and standards which the Kingsport Historic Zoning Commission will consider in determining the appropriateness of proposed work within an historic district. These guidelines are adopted to protect and preserve the historical and architectural value of structures located within the district by regulating the exterior design, arrangement, texture and materials proposed to be used on the structure's exterior. The purpose of such regulation is to ensure compatibility within the district, to create an appearance which complements the historic buildings or other structures, to stabilize and improve property values, and to foster civic beauty. It is the desire of the Kingsport Historic Zoning Commission to promote the use of historic districts for the education, pleasure, and welfare of the present and future citizens of Kingsport and Sullivan County through ensuring that properties in historic districts are not altered improperly or used in a manner that substantially detracts from the character of the district.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The following principles are the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation and shall be used in guiding decisions of the Commission for all proposals:

-- Every reasonable effort shall be made to provide a compatible use for a property, requiring minimal alteration of the building, structure, or site and its environment, or to use a property for its originally intended purpose.

-- The distinguishing original qualities or character of a building, structure, or site and its environment shall not be destroyed. The removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive architectural features should be avoided.

-- All buildings, structures, and sites shall be recognized as products of their own time. Alterations that have no historical basis and which seek to create an earlier appearance shall be discouraged.

-- Changes which may have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history and development of a building, structure, or site and its environment. These changes may have acquired significance in their own right, and this significance shall be recognized and respected.

-- Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship which characterize a building, structure, or site shall be treated with sensitivity.

-- Deteriorated architectural features shall be repaired rather than replaced whenever possible. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should match the material being replaced in composition, design, color, texture, and other visual qualities. Repair or replacement of missing architectural features should be based on accurate duplications of features, substantiated by historic, physical, or pictorial evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different architectural elements from other buildings or structures.

--The surface cleaning of structures shall be undertaken with the gentlest means possible. Sandblasting and other cleaning methods that damage historic building materials shall not be undertaken.

-- Every reasonable effort shall be made to protect and preserve architectural resources affected by, or adjacent to, any project.

-- Contemporary design for alterations and additions to existing properties shall not be discouraged when such alterations and additions do not destroy significant historical, architectural, or cultural material; and when such design is compatible with the size, scale, color, material, and character of the property, neighborhood, or environment.

-- Whenever possible, new additions or alterations to structures shall be done in such a manner that if the additions or alterations were to be removed in the future, the

essential form and integrity of the original structure would be unimpaired.

-- The historic architectural character of each building shall be maintained or restored. Buildings shall be rehabilitated to reveal their historic materials and details. Missing architectural elements shall be recreated wherever feasible. Significant existing materials shall be retained wherever possible, by stabilizing, repairing or matching them with compatible new materials as required.

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

The Historic Zoning Commission shall consider architectural character of any proposal submitted for approval. The architectural character of each historical period is made up of several key factors, and each period interpreted these in its own characteristic fashion. These factors are:

- Scale: relationship to human size, form and perception.
- Rhythm: the pattern or repeating elements such as windows, columns, arches and other facade elements.
- Form: overall shapes, combinations of shapes as seen from different perspectives, skylines and contours.
- Massing: height, setback and major dimensions.
- Proportion: the relationship among the dimensions of various elements.
- Features: building elements such as windows, doors, cornices, roofs, and decorative trim.
- Materials: the “skin” of each building, consisting traditionally of brick, cast iron, steel, sheet metal, wood, glass, terra cotta, slate, and stucco.

MAJOR BUILDING ELEMENTS

Most homes contain several major building elements including roofs, porches, windows, doors and lighting. In some situations walls and fences, landscaping, and signage also play an important role in making up the appearance of an area. These

items shall be reviewed by the Historic Zoning Commission as follows:

ROOFS. Features which give the roof its essential historical character shall be preserved or restored. The principal considerations include the original roof shape; original roofing materials or materials compatible with the old in composition, size, shape, color and texture; and architectural details such as dormer windows, cupolas, cornices, brackets, chimneys, cresting, and weather vanes.

Original roof materials and color should be retained. If replacement is necessary, original materials should be used. Composition shingles will be considered for substitution of original roofing when it is not economically feasible to replace or repair with original materials or when the original roof is beyond repair. The color and texture of shingles should be appropriate to the architectural style and period of the structure.

WINDOWS: The original size, shape, number of windows, and arrangement of panes shall be maintained, and the color of glass in doors and windows shall be consistent with the original, including stained glass. If the characteristic window shape in the area is vertically rectangular, higher than it is wide, horizontal windows and picture windows are generally not appropriate. Windows of different design on elevations not in public view may be considered.

New window openings shall not be introduced unless they match the existing window configuration and their placement harmonizes with the existing rhythm of openings. Original windows shall not be filled in.

Original windows shall be retained but may be repaired to improve thermal efficiency. Where replacement is essential, new windows shall match the originals with regard to original window type (hung sash, casement, pivot, awning, etc.) as shall be the appearance of the individual lights of glass formed by the muntin grid. The original width and depth of the individual elements (such as exterior molding and/or casing,

exterior frame, exterior sash members, and exterior muntin) shall be reproduced or be closely approximated.

If storm windows are to be used, they shall be applied from the interior. Shiny, raw aluminum storm windows and screens are not appropriate; however, blind stop storm windows, painted to match sash color, may be appropriate.

Replacement windows shall be of the same size and material as the original windows, fill the entire window opening and be recessed in the opening the same depth as the original window. Shutters, unless appropriate to the style of the building, shall not be introduced. If shutters are deemed appropriate, they must be of a size to fit an opening in height and width so that, if they were closed, they would close exactly.

DOORS. Existing doors, transoms, side lights, shape of door openings, and hardware, shall be rehabilitated wherever possible. Where doorways and entranceways must be altered to meet current building code and safety requirements, they shall be designed to respect the exterior architectural integrity of the building. Replacement doors shall be compatible with original doors in terms of style and material. Flush doors are generally inappropriate.

LIGHTING. The character of original light fixtures shall be retained. Carriage lamps mounted on the wall or hanging from the ceiling of a house are inappropriate. Recessed or ceiling mounted fixtures not visible from the street are appropriate.

LANDSCAPING. All aspects of the site's development shall be sympathetic to the character of landscape development, types of plants and spatial treatment of adjacent properties. Planting shade trees and shrubs shall be encouraged where they would enhance the historic character or create more inviting spaces. Removal of healthy trees shall be discouraged, except where they threaten existing structures.

SIGNAGE. All new signs, and all changes in the appearance of existing signs require a Certificate of Appropriateness. If there is a conflict between these standards and the requirements in the City Sign Ordinance, the stricter shall apply. The appearance, size, position, method of attachment, texture of materials, color, and design of signs shall be in keeping with the collective characteristics of the structures surrounding the property on which the sign will be located.

Off-premise advertising signs shall be prohibited, but off-premise sign directory boards for the district may be permitted in certain locations where visibility is a significant problem and where they can be harmoniously integrated into the surroundings.

Signs may be illuminated by remote light sources, provided that these light sources are shielded to protect adjacent properties. Internal illumination is generally discouraged, but it may be appropriate in certain circumstances, such as individual back-lit letters which are silhouetted against a softly illuminated wall. Neon signs may be permitted in exceptional cases where they are custom designed to be compatible with the building's historic and architectural character.

Individual letters shall be at an appropriate scale for pedestrians and slow-moving traffic, and the lettering be easy to read and compatible with the style of the building. No more than two different lettering styles shall be used on the same sign, and the letters shall be carefully formed and spaced, to be neat and uncluttered. Generally, no more than 60% of the total sign area shall be occupied by lettering.

Colors shall be chosen to complement, not clash with, the facade color of the building. Signs should normally contain no more than three different colors.

The use of durable and traditional materials is strongly encouraged (metal and wood). Paper signs for advertising or identification purposes shall be allowed only on a 30-day basis as temporary signage. Real Estate signs shall be removed no more than four (4) days after the closing of a sale of a house or lot.

Wall signs shall generally be located no higher than the window sill line of the second story and shall not cover any architectural detail. The shape of the sign must be compatible with the period of the building to which it is affixed, and harmonize with the

lettering and symbols chosen for it. Brackets shall complement the sign design, and not overwhelm or clash with it. They must be adequately engineered to support the intended load, and generally shall conform to a 2:3 vertical horizontal proportion. Screw holes must be drilled at points where the fasteners will enter masonry joints, to avoid damaging bricks.

AWNINGS. Awnings are a lightweight, removable assembly of fabric or other flexible material stretched on a metal frame used to protect pedestrians from inclement weather. Aside from function awnings, when properly located and designed and maintained can contribute aesthetically to the streetscape. Individually, awnings give a façade three-dimensional form and add accent colors to the façade. Collectively, awnings with coordinated designs, complimentary colors, and related heights can serve as a strong unifying element for a commercial area. Unrelated awnings lack architectural character and unity. Used in a manner insensitive to adjacent buildings they create a visually cluttered streetscape.

Awnings should be located on a building at a height, which is sensitive to both the architectural features of the structure and to adjacent awnings, and pedestrians. In approving the size and location of an awning, attention should be given to see that no original detail is covered over or obscured. Striped, patterned, or dark colored awning shows the effect of dirt or fading less than plain light-colored awnings. Consideration may be given to using a durable material such as reinforced, placed coated fabric.

Color, material, and height of the awning should be related from building to building. A degree of continuity and cohesion between neighbors should be maintained. Consideration should be given to providing a more uniform and harmonious streetscape.

CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS

Original building materials include glass, wood, brick, stone, terra cotta, and stucco. Original roof materials include slate, metal, and asphalt shingles on twentieth century buildings. Every effort shall be made to utilize these materials within Historic Districts.

MASONRY. Masonry shall be returned to a serviceable and visually acceptable state by replacing missing masonry units and mortar with matching elements. The use of portland cement must be avoided when reporting old brick. Masonry repointing shall be done with care to match the original mortar color. Original tooling configuring and joint width shall be maintained.

Cleaning shall be done with the gentlest means possible. Sandblasting causes severe damage to brick and mortar and its use must be avoided.

The painting of brick or stone is inappropriate. If painting is necessary, the color shall be approved by the Historic Zoning Commission.

METALS. Missing or deteriorated architectural metal features shall be replaced with original or substitute metal fabrications. Other visually compatible and durable features manufactured from acceptable alternative materials will be considered.

WOOD. Original wood siding and wall shingles shall be retained. Original siding shall not be covered or replaced with material or texture not original to the building. Replacement wood siding must be consistent with the original in size, direction, lap dimension and profile.

Missing or deteriorated wood features shall be replaced with new wood milled to match the original elements, and existing features shall be repaired wherever necessary.

ADDITIONS AND/OR ALTERATIONS TO
EXISTING BUILDINGS

The Commission shall review: any proposed change in building materials; addition or elimination of any architectural feature of a structure; repairs that reconstruct any part of an existing building; additions that extend or increase floor area or height of any building; or construction of any appurtenance. Proposals for exterior work to be done on front and street-related elevations shall be more carefully reviewed than that to be done on other elevations.

Additions. Additions are areas that increase the living or working space of a structure, and shall follow the guidelines for new construction. This does not include the addition of architectural features. Generally, an addition shall not be to the front or sides of a building, but may be situated at the rear in such a way that it will not disturb either facade or elevations. Such additions shall be compatible with the existing architectural style of the building.

Alterations. Original details of a building shall not be removed. The replacement of irreparable details shall be a close visual approximation of the originals. Replacement of missing original details shall be an accurate duplication, or close visual approximation of the originals, based on historic, physical, or pictorial documentation.

Changes that have taken place in the course of time which are evidence of the history and development of a building and its environment may have acquired significance in their own right; their significance should be recognized, respected, and retained. However, architectural details of any period or style not original to the building shall not be introduced.

NEW CONSTRUCTION WITHIN
HISTORIC DISTRICTS

The Commission shall review proposed construction of any freestanding structure on any property in an Historic Zoning District. Since construction in an historic district has usually taken place continuously from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a variety of building types and styles result which demonstrates the changes in building tastes and technology over the years. New buildings may continue this tradition while complementing and being compatible with other buildings in the area.

Reproduction may be appropriate when it reproduces facades and other elevations of a building which no longer exists, if the building contributes to the historical character of the area, or if it will be compatible in terms of its architectural character with the buildings immediately surrounding the lot. Any reproduction shall be accurately based on pictorial architectural documentation.

Because new buildings usually relate to an established pattern and rhythm of existing buildings, both on the same and opposite sides of a street, the dominance of that pattern and rhythm must be respected and not disrupted. New construction should be consistent with existing buildings along a street in terms of the following:

Height. New buildings must be constructed to a height which is compatible with the height of adjacent buildings.

Scale. The size of a new building; its mass in relation to open spaces; and its windows, doors, openings, and porches shall be visually compatible with the surrounding buildings.

Setback and Rhythm of Spacing. The setback from front and side yard property lines established by adjacent buildings must be maintained. When a definite rhythm along a street is established by uniform lot and building width, infill new buildings shall maintain the rhythm.

Relationship of Materials, Texture, Details, and Material Color. The relationship and use of materials, texture, details, and material color of a new building's facades shall be visually compatible with and similar to those of adjacent buildings, or shall not contrast conspicuously.

Roof Shape. The color and shape of roofs for new buildings shall be visually compatible with the roof shape and orientation of surrounding buildings.

Orientation. The site orientation of new buildings shall be consistent with that of adjacent buildings and shall be visually compatible. Directional expression shall be compatible with surrounding buildings, whether that expression is vertical, horizontal, or non-directional.

Proportion and Rhythm of Openings. The relationship of width to height of windows and doors, and the rhythm of solids to voids in new buildings shall be visually compatible with the surrounding buildings.

Character. Any construction on currently vacant sites should create an environment reflecting the traditional character of the historic district.

Continuity. New buildings shall not be designed as free-standing objects, but instead should conform with the tradition of continuous structures holding the lines of the street.

Ground-Level Design. Commercial streets, ground-level building design shall follow existing patterns created by the type and scale of shops, street facades, sign design, shop window configurations, and existing materials.

Materials. New buildings shall utilize exterior materials in keeping with the exteriors utilized by other structures within the district. Colors shall generally be compatible with the surrounding streetscape.

INFILL STRUCTURES

New construction is considered “infill” if it shares a common wall with one or more existing structures. An infill must blend in with the existing architectural fabric as seen from the street, and reinforce the feeling of continuity rather than stand out individually. The following shall be addressed in proposing infill development.

Height. Infill structures shall relate closely to the height of the immediately adjacent buildings.

Setback. Infill structures shall continue the street setback parameters established by adjacent buildings, but exceptions can be made for designs containing recessed fronts at sidewalk level.

Roofs. Infill structures shall not introduce new roof shapes, pitches or colors not found on traditional buildings located in the same block.

Wall Openings. Infill structures shall respect the alternation of window area to wall area, and the width-to-height ratio of windows and doors, in the facades of surrounding structures. Introducing incompatible façade patterns that upset the rhythm of openings established in historic buildings in the immediate area is discouraged.

DEMOLITION

Since the purpose of historic zoning is to protect historic properties, the demolition of a building which contributes historically or architecturally to the character and significance of the district or the community is inappropriate and shall be avoided.

Demolition is defined as any act that destroys the external walls in whole or in part of a structure. The following shall govern the Commission's decision when considering a request for demolition.

Demolition is inappropriate:

- if a building is of such architectural or historical interest and value that its removal would be detrimental to the public interest;
- if a building is of such old, unusual, or uncommon design and materials that it could not be reproduced or be reproduced without great difficulty and expense; or
- if its proposed replacement would make a less positive visual contribution to the district, would disrupt the character of the district, or would be visually incompatible.

Demolition may be Considered:

- if a building has lost its architectural and historical integrity and importance, and its removal will result in a positive or more appropriate visual effect on the district;
- if a building does not contribute to the historical or architectural character and importance of the district and its removal will result in a more positive, appropriate visual effect on the district;
- if the use of the property after demolition relates better to the district than does the existing building.

Requirements for Demolition. A prerequisite for demolition shall be a financial report detailing the costs of rehabilitation, and evidencing that the existing building is incapable of producing a reasonable economic return on the investment. The maximum rate of return which is theoretically possible on the land, with new buildings, shall not constitute such evidence, if the existing buildings can generate a reasonable return.

Any request for demolition shall be based on structural instability or advanced deterioration, as determined in a technical report prepared by an architect or professional engineer licensed in the State of Tennessee. This report shall detail the nature and extent of the specific problems, and provide reasonably accurate cost estimates for replacement.

A standard condition of approval for demolition shall be the documentation of the building's elevations, including details of specific notable architectural features (windows, doors, cornices, etc.), through measured drawings and photographs.

Applications for permission to demolish existing structures shall be accompanied by complete plans for the new development proposed on the site, together with a timetable and a budget for both the demolition and the reconstruction.

RELOCATION

Relocation is any change of the location of a structure in its present setting or another setting. Buildings shall be retained on their present sites whenever possible, and relocation shall be considered only as an alternative to demolition. The moving out of the district of an existing building which retains architectural and historical integrity and which contributes to the architectural and historical character of the district shall be avoided. However, the moving out of the district of a building which does not contribute to the historical and architectural integrity of the district shall be appropriate if its removal or the proposal for its replacement will result in a more positive, appropriate visual effect on the district. Buildings shall be relocated to sites within an Historic District where they would be compatible with the architectural, cultural and landscape surroundings. The following shall be considered in any proposed relocation:

Reconstruction. Relocated homes must be carefully rebuilt to retain and maintain original architectural details and materials.

Relocation Into a District. A building may be moved into the district if it maintains a sense of architectural unity in terms of style, height, scale, massing, materials, texture, and setback with existing buildings along the street.

Relocation Within a District. A building may be moved from one site to another in the district if the integrity of location and setting of the building in its original location has been lost or is seriously threatened or if the new location will be similar in setting and sitting to the original.

The relocated building shall be compatible with the buildings adjacent to the new location in style, height, scale, materials and setback, and the relocation shall not result in a negative visual effect on the site and surrounding buildings from which it will be removed.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Streetscape. While pedestrian amenities must be compatible with the district's historic character, variations shall be permitted in order to respect the vitality and the variety of the City's different thoroughfares and neighborhoods. Different types of public spaces should respond to the following general performances criteria:

- Streets shall be treated simply with maximum open sidewalk space, minimal obstruction on the ground and pedestrian preference for street crossing.

- Existing historic storefronts shall be retained and rehabilitated. Storefronts which have been altered or removed shall be restored or compatibly redesigned. Research must be done to discover each storefronts' original appearance, and to learn what architectural features might be covered by existing siding or facing materials.

- Parking areas shall be carefully designed and landscaped in conformance with the landscape ordinance.
- The existing streetscape should be enriched, especially around historic buildings and heavily used pedestrian areas. Historically appropriate improvements should create some consistency while avoiding complete uniformity.
- Historic paving features should be retained wherever possible and incorporated into the streetscape improvements.
- Subtle variations in paving patterns and materials shall be used to enrich sidewalks and plazas, such as by highlighting patterns in street lights, trees, furniture, street crossings, and entryways.
- Placement of street furniture which is appropriate, attractive, and durable shall be encouraged. Placement of furniture shall be based upon careful study of how people tend to use a street. Placement of flag poles shall be approved by the Historic Zoning Commission.
- Public signs shall utilize compatible graphics, color, proportions, dimensions, and fabrication methods, in order to create greater consistency and improve their compatibility with their historic setting.
- Street lights shall be designed to harmonize with their surroundings, and traffic signal poles and mounts shall be as unobtrusive as possible, both physically and visually.