

A detailed historical map of Roswell, Georgia, showing a grid of streets, numerous buildings of various sizes and colors (black, grey, red, blue), and a winding river or canal. The map is the background for the entire document.

HISTORIC GATEWAY

ROSWELL, GEORGIA

DESIGN GUIDELINES

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OVERVIEW

The City of Roswell has many valuable resources for guiding renovation, new construction, and additions in the Historic District. These include the three guidelines prepared by the University of Georgia in 1997, cultural resources surveys, and a set of Guidelines prepared by Georgia State University. Following the basic theme set in the LCI study of refining and refocusing preservation efforts, these Draft Design Guidelines are included to help ensure that guidelines are coordinated with the Master Plan and eventual Unified Development Code. These Guidelines are unusual in that they do not utilize historic building types and forms for reference, as has been requested by the City. Of the three basic ways to regulate buildings in a historic district (by style, by type, and by patterning), these Guidelines employ only patterning. Patterning is the most subjective means of regulation, and thus the guidelines utilize very general terms like balance, proportion, and harmony. Since the Guidelines regulate patterning only, there is no need to have separate guidelines for each different character area. The guidance provided is referenced to the surrounding buildings, no matter what type or style those buildings are. The same processes for gauging and responding to surrounding buildings works equally well in all settings and should not require separate documents.

The Guidelines should guide applicants as they prepare their submittals, and the Guidelines should also guide the commission as they review the submittals. There are several training opportunities for Commissioners who conduct Certificate of Appropriateness reviews, and it is advisable that all Commissioners attend such a training session as they come on the Commission. These training sessions are invaluable in helping to understand a set of guidelines and the methods of ensuring that interpretation and enforcement of the guidelines is predictable, consistent, and fair.

The strategy of the Guidelines is to support dialogue between Commission and Applicant. However, should disagreement arise between Commission and Applicant, the Guidelines in all cases resort to a very clear compatibility rule. This rule arbitrates disagreements by providing a clear formula for staying within the context of the near by historic buildings: the element in question must be neither smaller than the smallest, nor bigger than the biggest of those in the surrounding historic fabric. Negotiations can yield better outcomes, but should they fail, the more mechanical means of regulation at least prevents drastically bad outcomes.

For rehabilitation of existing historic structures, the Guidelines reference the Secretary of the Interior's rehabilitation standards. These standards are not only time-tested and well-proven, but they come with excellent supplemental resources all easily available on the Secretary's web site. The Secretary's standards are not only very good, but they are also updated and amended regularly as building codes change and as new products and methods come on the market. Why try to duplicate this resource at the local level?

For both new and existing construction, the Guidelines should focus on the building in relation to the public realm. The goal is to preserve a historic district, and generally speaking, it is advisable to focus on what can be seen from public spaces like parks and streets rather than what goes on around the back of the structure where it can not be viewed by the public. Allowing looser regulation in the non-exposed areas allows for modern additions and upgrades that will keep the property marketable and useful as the needs of residents and business owners change over time. In the many places that there are steep grades, this rule of thumb is complicated. The commission may need to consider the effects of proposed construction on the views available from other private spaces rather than just from the public realm.

The following recommendations will be useful when further developing Design Guidelines:

Modifiable- The guidelines documents should be in a simple, easily modifiable format like MS Word so that they are easily amendable. Currently, as the HPC's criteria and considerations evolve, the guidelines documents are not easily amendable, and as a result they gradually become obsolete and are ignored. An amendable document will ensure that the guidelines remain relevant and updated, and in regular use.

Specialized- It would greatly help focus preservation efforts if the large amount of very useful information in the current guidelines were separated into multiple documents, some serving as educational resources, and other serving to guide the relationship between applicant and Commission during review. Educational documents would thus be freed up to cover guidance materials far and beyond issues regulated by the HPC, while guideline documents would be able to hone in on the specific criteria and methods of the Certificate of Appropriateness review. Additionally, the guidelines should not duplicate or conflict with the standards established in zoning ordinances. If certain standards are set in zoning and building codes, and the HPC is not empowered to modify those standards, then they should simply be left out of the guideline document.

Concise- In order to serve regularly in the design and review processes, a guideline should be concise- perhaps no more than 10 or 20 pages. Less use of pictures and diagrams in the guidelines documents would also help. The majority of images in the current guidelines can be exported to the educational resources documents. Generally speaking, words are considered more precise and enforceable in legal contexts than images while images are more suggestive and illustrative are more useful in educational resources.

Targeted- the guidelines document should be clear about preservation goals: is the intent to preserve a cohesive district, the state of specific buildings, or both? District guidelines tend to focus only on aspects of the built environment that can be seen from streets, parks, or other public areas. What goes on at the rear of the building is not a concern unless the back is visible from the public realm. Guidelines more focused on building preservation may also include regulation of backyard elevations. Some areas of Roswell are built out on slopes and thus viewshed preservation becomes an issue. Viewshed preservation often has specific standards for rooftops and other areas that are visible from homes situated higher up the slope.

Integrated- the goals and objectives of the guidelines should be integrated with criteria used in surveying and evaluating historic properties. The Historic Properties Map should reflect the same values and intentions as the Guidelines, and critical to this goal will be that buildings are surveyed and categorized for the Map based on criteria similar to those of the guidelines. Both documents should align around a focused preservation policy that is cohesive from evaluation of buildings to approval of new construction.

ROSWELL HISTORIC GATEWAY DISTRICT GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

Before exterior work on a structure in the Historic District begins, the Historic Preservation Commission must approve any exterior alterations, new construction, demolition, or changes to important landscape features. Examples of work requiring the approval of the Commission include, but are not limited to, the following:

- * new buildings
- * landscaping
- * additions
- * HVAC equipment
- * garages
- * satellite dishes
- * new windows
- * electrical boxes and power lines
- * porches
- * exterior door or window replacement
- * roofing
- * siding or other changes to wall materials
- * fences
- * demolition of entire or parts of buildings
- * sidewalks
- * signs and sign posts
- * driveways
- * garages and outbuildings
- * swimming pools
- * trenching, grading, or other ground disturbance
- * awnings, canopies
- * removal of trees six inches or more in diameter
- * exterior lighting
- * chimneys
- * paint removal
- * masonry repairs
- * storm windows
- * storm and screen doors
- * patios, decks
- * arbors, gazebos
- * skylights
- * solar panels
- * wind turbines
- * alternative or new materials

The listings above are not meant to be all-inclusive, but they provide examples of the kinds of activities that require approval. If you have any questions about whether or not a permit is required, it is advisable to contact the City's Community Development staff.

1. NEW EXTERIOR ADDITIONS TO HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Visibility:

A new exterior addition to a historic building should be simple and unobtrusive in design. Large additions should not be highly visible from the public right-of-way or from surrounding homes and public spaces. A rear or other secondary elevation is the preferred location for a large new addition. Additions that are highly visible from the public right-of-way should be subordinate in both size and design to the existing structure.

Materials:

The construction materials and the color of the new addition should be harmonious with the materials of the existing structure.

Awnings should be of solid color and made of canvas. Metal, illuminated plastic, and plastic vinyl awnings are not appropriate and are discouraged from use in the Gateway Historic District.

All glass visible from the public right-of-way should be clear and not tinted or stained.

Proportion:

Building elements highly visible from the public right-of-way should be proportioned to one another. Maintain historic ratio of window to wall area. Retain and enhance rhythm of streetscape.

Balance:

Building facades should be balanced. Balance is not necessarily symmetry. Many historic buildings, such as Victorian houses, are balanced, yet asymmetrical.

Roof top Additions:

The same guidance applies to a rooftop addition, plus it should not be more than one story in height and should not detract from the view of the surrounding homes and public spaces. Generally, a rooftop addition is more likely to be compatible on a building that is adjacent to similarly sized or taller buildings.

Critical Details:

New addition foundations that are highly visible from the public right-of-way should be compatible with those of the existing structure.

If present, shutters should fit window openings and appear to work.

Skylights should not be visible from the public right-of-way.

Highly Visible New Addition Compatibility Rule:

The New Addition Compatibility Rule should be used to establish basic rules of thumb in designing a highly visible new addition. It is as follows:

The elements of the new addition that are highly visible from the public right-of-way, including but not limited to roof form, window types, and mass shall be compatible with those of like, contributing buildings (defined by use, type, and style) on that block face. If further elaboration is needed to this general rule, the comparable, highly visible elements shall be no smaller than the smallest, nor larger than the largest of all like elements of all like buildings on that block face.

2. REHABILITATING HISTORIC BUILDINGS

General:

These Rehabilitation Guidelines document the principles that the Roswell Historic Preservation Commission will use in evaluating plans for the rehabilitation of historic buildings. The Guidelines are adapted from the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings, and the detailed Standards in the Secretary's document and summarized on the National Park Service website (http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide/rehab/rehab_standards.htm) serve to further elaborate the intent of these Guidelines. The Guidelines are as follows:

Identify, Retain, and Preserve Historic Materials and Features:

Identify the form and detailing of those architectural materials and features that are important in defining the building's historic character and which must be retained in order to preserve that character. The character of a historic building is defined by the form and detailing of exterior materials, such as masonry, wood, and metal; and exterior features, such as roofs, porches, and windows, as well as structural and mechanical systems.

Protect and Repair of Historic Materials and Features:

After identifying those materials and features that are important and must be retained in the process of rehabilitation work, then those elements should be protected and repaired as necessary. Protection generally involves the least degree of intervention and is preparatory to other work. For example, protection includes the maintenance of historic material through treatments such as rust removal, caulking, limited paint removal, and re-application of protective coatings. Repair includes the least degree of intervention possible such as patching, piecing-in, splicing, consolidating, or otherwise reinforcing or upgrading important features (for example, brackets, dentils, or steps).

Replacement Deteriorated Historic Materials and Features:

In some cases an entire character defining feature (for example, an exterior cornice; an interior staircase; or a complete porch or storefront) is beyond repair and must be replaced with new material. If the essential form and detailing are still evident so that the physical evidence can be used to re-establish the feature as an integral part of the rehabilitation, then its replacement is appropriate. The preferred option is always replacement of the entire feature in kind, that is, with the same material.

Design for the Replacement of Missing Historic Features:

When an entire interior or exterior feature is missing (for example, an entrance, or cast iron facade; or a principal staircase), it no longer plays a role in physically defining the historic character of the building unless it can be accurately recovered in form and detailing through the process of carefully documenting the historical appearance. Although accepting the loss is one possibility, where an important architectural feature is missing, its replacement is always recommended as the first or preferred, course of action. Thus, if adequate historical, pictorial, and physical documentation exists so that the feature may be accurately reproduced, and if it is desirable to re-establish the feature as part of the building's historical appearance, then designing and constructing a new feature based on such information is appropriate. However, a second acceptable option for the replacement feature is a new design that is compatible with the remaining character-defining features of the historic building. 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 for the New Use:

Some exterior and interior alterations to a historic building are generally needed to assure its continued use, but it is most important that such alterations do not radically change, obscure, or destroy character-defining spaces, materials, features, or finishes. Alterations may include providing additional parking space on an existing historic building site; cutting new entrances or windows on secondary elevations; inserting an additional floor; installing an entirely new mechanical system; or creating an atrium or light well. Alteration may also include the selective removal of buildings or other features of the environment or building site that are intrusive and therefore detract from the overall historic character.

Energy Efficiency/Accessibility Considerations/Health and Safety Code Considerations:

In some instances work must be done to meet accessibility requirements and health and safety code requirements; or retrofitting measures to improve energy efficiency. Although this work is quite often an important aspect of Rehabilitation projects, it is usually not a part of the overall process of protecting or repairing character-defining features; rather, such work is assessed for its potential negative impact on the building's historic character. For this reason, particular care must be taken not to radically change, obscure, damage, or destroy character-defining materials or features in the process of meeting code and energy requirements.

Critical Details:

The void created by piers underneath the house was historically left open or filled with a simple covering. If

the space between the piers is to be filled, new material should be recessed four to six inches to create a shadow reveal. The fill should match the masonry of the existing piers in mortar, color, shape, brick size and pattern or can be concrete masonry unit (CMU) with a darker stucco covering.

3. NEW BUILDINGS

General:

New construction should be compatible and harmonious with the existing streetscape and the character of the Historic District. Each project will be evaluated individually based on general design requirements below.

No new building South of Marietta Highway shall exceed at any point the elevation of the ridge of Barrington Hall.

Materials:

The construction materials and the color of the new addition should be harmonious with the historic building materials of that block face.

The exterior finish material on all Facades shall be limited to brick, wood siding, cementitious siding and/or traditional stucco.

Building wall materials may be combined on each facade only horizontally, with the heavier below the lighter.

Balconies and porches shall be made of painted wood.

Proportion:

Building elements should be proportioned to one another. Maintain ratio of window to wall area that is exhibited in the surrounding like contributing buildings. Façades of the new buildings should approximate height to width proportions of surrounding like buildings. Floor to floor heights should appear similar and in proportion to those of historic buildings in the area.

Balance:

Building facades should be balanced. Balance is not necessarily symmetry. Some historic buildings, such as Folk Victorian houses, are balanced, yet asymmetrical.

Critical Details:

Foundations shall constitute a distinct building design element and shall contrast with the primary facade siding material.

When visible from the public right-of-way, foundation materials should be similar to that found on like buildings in the block face, generally brick, stone, or stucco. Exposed concrete or CMU foundation walls are prohibited as a finished surface.

When visible from the public right-of-way, the material and pattern of roofing should be similar to that found on like buildings in the block face. The roof pitch should be no less than the lowest roof pitch and no greater than the steepest roof pitch in the block face. Porch shed roofs may be no less than 2:12.

When visible from the public right-of-way, the size and shape of windows should be similar to those found on like, contributing buildings in the block face. Use window types and designs similar to those in like contributing buildings in the block face. Pane configuration is not regulated, but when visible from a public street or park, windows that have a multi-pane appearance must be either true divided lights (TDLs) which have the muntins integral to the sash or simulated divided lights (SDLs) which have three dimensional muntins permanently affixed to the exterior face of the glass. Flat or sandwiched grilles are not allowed.

If present, shutters should fit window openings and appear to work.

All glass visible from the public right-of-way should be clear and not tinted or stained.

Openings above the first Story shall not exceed 50% of the total building wall area, with each Facade being calculated independently.

Doors and windows that operate as sliders are prohibited on any wall visible from the public right-of-way.

Skylights should not be visible from the public right-of-way.

Brick used for new construction should be a single color, preferably dark red, with little to no texture, and should be of the same size and profile as the brick used on historic buildings. Brick is the preferred material for new commercial construction.

If ornamentation is included on new construction, it should not exceed the size and quantity which is typical of the block face. Ornamentation patterns and placement must follow that of the tradition on the block face, but style of ornament is not regulated.

When any portion of a chimney protrudes from an exterior wall that is visible from the public right-of-way the chimney shall originate at grade.

Awnings should be of solid color and made of canvas. Metal, illuminated plastic, and plastic vinyl awnings are not appropriate and are discouraged from use in the historic areas of Roswell.

Flat roofs shall be enclosed by parapets a minimum of 42 inches high, or as required to conceal mechanical equipment to the satisfaction of the HPC.

New commercial building exterior elevations should include a base, middle and cap. Traditionally buildings were composed of these basic elements. Use of this traditional idea will help reinforce the visual continuity of the area.

New Building Compatibility Rule:

The New Building Compatibility Rule should be used to establish basic rules of thumb in designing a new building in the Historic District. It is as follows:

The elements of the new building highly visible from the public right-of-way, including but not limited to over all height, width, massing, roof form, and window sizes/proportions shall be compatible with those of like, contributing buildings (defined by use, type, and style) on the

that block face or the opposing block face. If further elaboration is needed to this general rule, the comparable highly visible elements shall be no smaller than the smallest, nor larger than the largest of all like elements of all like, contributing buildings on that block face or the opposing block face. Exceptions to this rule may be provided for important corner locations where greater prominence of the building may warrant larger or more dramatic building elements.

4. SITE AND LANDSCAPE

New construction projects must make provisions prior to construction to protect historic landscapes and mature trees on the site from damage by machinery, chemicals, and soil compaction. This includes consideration of subsurface root zones.

Retaining Walls:

Historic stone retaining walls should be preserved and maintained.

New retaining walls should be or appear to be of stacked stone. The use of visible poured concrete, wood timbers, or cross ties is not appropriate for retaining wall.

New fencing in yards fronting a public right-of-way should use historic wooden, picket, or simple post-and-wire designs. Chain link and split rail fences are not allowed.

Brick, granite, and concrete are appropriate paving materials.

New curbing material should match the existing surrounding curbing material.