Town of Smyrna

Historic Overlay District

Design Guidelines

Developed for the Town of Smyrna by Janet L. Vinc, Special Project Coordinator, February 11, 2004

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In July of 2003, an ordinance to amend the town code of the Town of Smyrna by adding a new Chapter 19 entitled "Historic Preservation Ordinance" was adopted. The purpose and policy of this ordinance was declared to be a matter of public policy that safeguarded the heritage of the town, and would preserve and protect structures and districts having historic, architectural, cultural, and aesthetic values, which are in the best interests of the citizens of the Town of Smyrna.

Smyrna has a unique history which is reflected by its architecture and town plan. Over the years, much of the original architectural has been lost. Restoring it through rehabilitation is the key to making Smyrna an important historic site and creating an identity for the historic district that will attract tourists and increase community pride.

The historic design standards in this booklet provide the basis for recapturing the historically significant architectural identity of the Historic District Overlay Zone in a way that supports and promotes its contemporary use.

These standards take into consideration that rehabilitation *does not* mean the strict restoration of a building to a specific time or date – such as the treatment that a historic house museum would receive – but to recognize the need to adapt an historic property for new uses, while retaining the property's historic character as it has evolved over time.

By following these design standards, owner and merchants may become eligible for financial assistance for rehabilitation costs from both Federal and State historic tax credit programs. Having these standards in place will speed up and in some cases reduce the cost of the rehabilitation process.

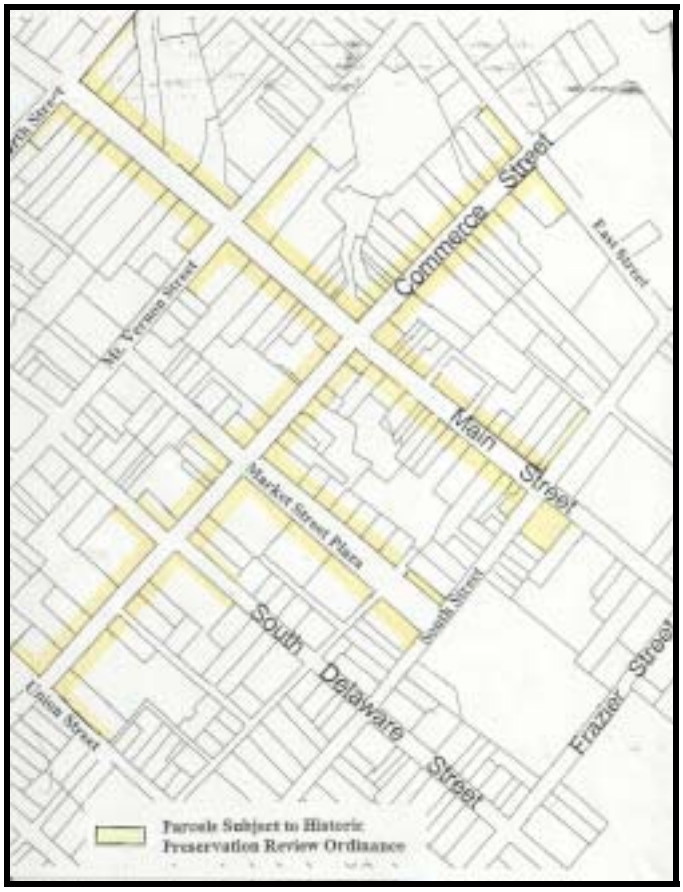
This booklet will first provide the background needed to understand the architectural history of the buildings, and identify architectural features that are historically significant (and ones that have been lost). Secondly, the design standards provide design solutions and ideas to help owners and architects plan repair and rehabilitation project that meet Historic District Review Board guidelines.

In 1978, a large portion of Smyrna was listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a Historic District. There are approximately 475 principal buildings in this historic district, situated on twenty-seven street blocks. This district is roughly bounded by North Street, East Street, Frazier Street and High Street, with extension from this main core to include the nineteenth century residential development on North and South Main Street and along East Commerce Street.

A Historic District Overlay Zone has been created to specifically include the street frontage on both sides of the street, whether occupied by a structure or not as follows:

- East Commerce Street from Main Street to East Street
- West Commerce Street from Main Street to Union Street
- Market Street Plaza from Commerce Street to South Street
- North Main Street from Commerce Street to North Street
- South Main Street from Commerce Street to South Street, and also including the property of the Smyrna Opera House and Library.

The District shall also include the structure at each corner of East Street, Union Street, Delaware Street, North Street, Mount Vernon Street, Market Street Plaza, and South Street at their intersections with Commerce Street or Main Street, as further designated on the district map in yellow.



These design standards have been approved by the Town Council (and the Historic District Review Board?) for use in the Historic District Overlay Zone. New construction or any changes to the exterior of buildings in the overlay zone must be approved by the Historic District Review Board.

The goals for the standards are to provide assistance to property owners prior to appearing before the Historic District Review Board with their plans. The standards will assist in making appropriate choices for renovations or repairs in building within the historic district, and outline expectations that the Historic District Review Board will have for renovation or construction proposals.

This booklet is organized in five sections. The introduction contains a brief explanation of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*. The second section explores the historic development of the Town of Smyrna. The third section describes the architectural periods and styles in the Historic District Overlay Zone. The fourth section provides general recommendations for renovations and repairs for the major components of historic buildings, based on *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* published by the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. These building components include roofs, gutters, and downspouts; exterior trim and moldings; exterior windows and doors; exterior wall cladding including brick and siding; shutters; paint colors; and new construction.

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION

Rehabilitation projects may be eligible for financial assistance through Federal or State Historic Preservation Tax Credit programs if they meet the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. The *Secretary's Standards* is a document that establishes standards for appropriate treatment of historic buildings, and it is important to understand the terminology used in the *Standards* when planning a building project. The *Standards* outline appropriate preservation practices based on four possible approaches to treatment: **preservation, rehabilitation, restoration,** and **reconstruction.**

Preservation is the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of a historic property. Work, including preliminary measures to protect and stabilize the property, generally focuses upon the ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and features rather than extensive replacement and new construction. New exterior additions are not within the scope of this treatment; however, the limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional are appropriate within a preservation project.

Rehabilitation is the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.

Restoration is the act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of features from other periods in its history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period. The limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a restoration project.

Reconstruction is the act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location.

The National Park Service has assembled a series of standards to guide rehabilitation of historic structures. These guidelines, called the *Standards for Rehabilitation*, serve as the basis for the recommendations presented in this manual. These principles help to preserve the distinctive character of a historic building and its site while allowing for reasonable change to meet new needs. The standards apply to historic buildings of all periods, styles, types, materials, and sizes.

The Ten Standards for Rehabilitation

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationship.

2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.

3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding notional features or elements from other historic properties will not be undertaken.

4. Changes to a property that have acquired historical significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.

5. Distinctive materials, features, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.

6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.

7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.

8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measure will be undertaken.

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale, proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will 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 Key Ideas in the Standards

- Retain the historic use of the property, or find a new use that will allow as many historic features as possible to be retained.

- Preserve the historic character of the property by being sensitive to how the property has looked and been used over time.

- Stabilize, consolidate, and conserve existing historic materials whenever possible, rather than adding modern or reproduction materials.

- Replace a minimum amount of building features. If features of the building must be replaced, match the new features with existing historic features in design and material.

These standards are strongly recommended for renovation, rehabilitation, and repairs to buildings in the Town of Smyrna's Historic District Overlay Zone.

Smyrna originated in the third quarter of the eighteenth century to capitalize on the demand for goods and services by farmers populating the agricultural hinterlands of the area.

In 1768, Samuel Ball, a Philadelphia merchant and land speculator, purchased fifteen acres of land where the Kings Road crossed the Maryland Road. Ball realized the commercial potential of the crossroads, with the strategic command of prevailing overland trade routes and proximity to both Green's Landing a mile east, and to Duck Creek Village, a mile and a half to the north. Ball's investment quickly paid off and within two years an active settlement with several small shops sprang to life. Known as Duck Creek Crossroads, the town grew rapidly and by 1790 it contained more inhabitants than the state capitol, Dover, ten miles to the south. The cross roads, also known throughout the years as the Four Corners, formed the commercial nucleus and axis of the town.

The late eighteenth century commercial vitality of the town intensified throughout the course of the nineteenth century in direct response to the growing agricultural prosperity of the area. The large grain merchants, held positions of wealth and prestige in the community and constructed the grand early nineteenth century Federal mansions that survive today.

In 1806, the Delaware legislature passed an act which changed the name of Duck Creek Crossroads to Smyrna. As a prerequisite to incorporation, Smyrna's streets were officially surveyed and formally laid out in an intersecting grid pattern in 1817, and the town was incorporated that year by an act of the assembly. By 1820, Smyrna has matured into a bustling commercial town with many of the cultural amenities of larger areas. Manufacturing activity in the town involved small scale craft orientated operations such as basket making, tanning, blacksmithing, harness making, and other enterprises geared to fill the needs of the local agricultural economy. Other commercial enterprises were service orientated inn and taverns, which provided food and lodging to those brought to town on business. In 1822, the Bank of Smyrna was founded.

The decades following the Civil War witnessed commercial and residential growth every bit as energetic as in the preceding decades. Families who lived on nearby farms or resided in the surrounding area move "to town". New dwellings, both plain and fancy were constructed on existing streets. Older buildings of the Georgian and Federal style were modernized Victorian.

The erection of additional structures caused the extension of original streets or the opening of newer ones – such was the case on all of the land lying south of the south side of Cummins St and west of the east side of Delaware Street, beginning in 1880 several double houses were erected on the west side of Delaware Street between South and Frazier but then the trend stopped. However, in 1890 the boom started again with the most noted addition on West South Street Extended. Within 10 years, 18 houses were built "up the hill", they reflected the energy of the "gay 90's" and were the pride of the town.

The north side of Mt. Vernon Street from Delaware to Union also reflects this trend. By the turn of the century, a row of 8 detached late Victorian style houses had been built, each one exhibiting its own separate style, yet all contained porches, eave overhangs, finials, bay windows and set back from the brick pavement.

Forward strides were made in the town's physical being by the installation of a municipal water system with over 4 miles of pipe laid down, curbing, guttering, oyster shelled streets, gas lights and the extension of the railroad from the top of West Commerce Street to a lot near the center of Benson Street where a freight station was erected.

It was a time of numerous civic improvements, including a new brick town hall built in 1869 and enlarged in 1887, a brick public school in 1884, In addition, the Citizens Hose Company No. 1 was formed in 1886.

The expanded needs of business were met by the establishment in 1876 of a second bank. The Fruit Growers National Bank of Smyrna in June of that year opened for business on the south side of West Commerce Street. This building was later demolished after the bank moved to its new neoclassical style building, which opened its doors on April 17, 1926. Marble, granite, bronze and bricks were common materials used public buildings constructed during this time period.

As the end of the 19^{h} century came to a close, so did the growth and boom, the 1900s to the beginning of WW I were relatively quiet. Streets other than Main (which had been bricked in the late 1800s were macadamized, electric lamps replaced gas lamps, and a new school building was built in 1923, replacing the previous school.

When the depression hit the area, Smyrna was a primarily agrarian community, a fact which helped to soften the drastic effects of the depression, business was almost at a standstill but the banks did not fail.

In an effort to boast the economy, the US Govt. initiated the WPA work program, which helped to complete the present southbound lanes of the duPont parkway.

Recovery from the depression was slow, but it was evidenced by the town's purchase of Lake Como, the building of its beach, the selling of lots in Como Gardens, the opening of Market Street plaza and the beginning of a new industry named Wilson Cabinet. Empty land on either side of the parkway began to be built up with private residences and businesses.

This population growth along the highway led to migration of businesses from the downtown area. As businesses moved out, the downtown area declined. This is the present situation we are faced with today.

Period I – Georgian Style
Circa 1700-1780

Buildings constructed in the Georgian style are typically simple boxes with a symmetrical façade, two rooms deep, often with a side gabled roof. Constructed of brick, the ornamentation is restrained and commonly confined to the roof *cornice* and detailing around the entrance door. Front entrances often have a paneled door, capped by an elaborate decorative crown or *entablature* supported by decorative columns or *pilasters* usually with a row of small rectangular panes of glass beneath the crown, either within the door or in a *transom* just above. The cornice is usually emphasized by decorative moldings, most commonly with tooth-like *dentils*. Windows are double hung with nine to twelve panes of glass in each *sash*.

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Period II – Federal or Adam Style
Circa 1780-1820 and beyond

Compared with the Georgian Style that preceded it, the Federal Style is noted for its simplicity and delicate form. Greatly influenced by the work of Robert Adam, little or no distinction is made between the terms Adam Style and Federal Style.

Buildings constructed in the Federal or Adam Style are typically simple boxes with symmetrical facades, two to three rooms deep, often with a side gabled roof and *dormers*. Unlike Georgian houses, the simple box may be modified by projecting wings. Constructed in wood or brick, the ornamentation is restrained and commonly confined to the roof *cornice* and detailing around the entrance door. Front doors often have a semicircular *fanlight* or *transom* above the door, often with *sidelights* on each side. The entryway may also include a decorative crown or small entry porch. The *cornice* is usually emphasized by decorative *moldings*, most commonly with tooth-like *dentils*. Windows are double hung with six panes of glass in each *sash* and often have shutters.

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Period III – Greek Revival Style
Circa 1825-1860

The Greek Revival style is based on the Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian orders in ancient Greek architecture. The Greek Revival style was commonly employed in the construction of public and religious buildings, but also came to be closely associated with the country's prosperity in the early 19th century. The entry often contains a paneled door with a surround of engaged columns and a transom and sidelights. The cornice lines may be emphasized with a wide band of trim or a band of windows in the frieze. Front-gabled examples often lack colonnaded porches but usually have pilasters and elaborate door and cornice details. The Odd Fellows Hall, located at 34 South Main Street is an example of the Greek Revival Style.

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Period IV – Gothic Revival Style
Circa 1835-1870

The Gothic Revival style is emphasized by one-story wide porches, multiple gables, decorative vergeboards and lancet windows. Buildings constructed in the Gothic Revival style typically have a steeply pitched roof, with steep cross gables; decorative verge boards are common beneath the eaves of the steep gables. Most Gothic Revival houses have at least one window with Gothic detailing. When only a single window is elaborated, it usually occurs in the most prominent gable. Windows with Gothic detailing have a pointed-arch shape and may consist of two or three such arches clustered together. Front entrances often have a paneled door with a pointed arch.

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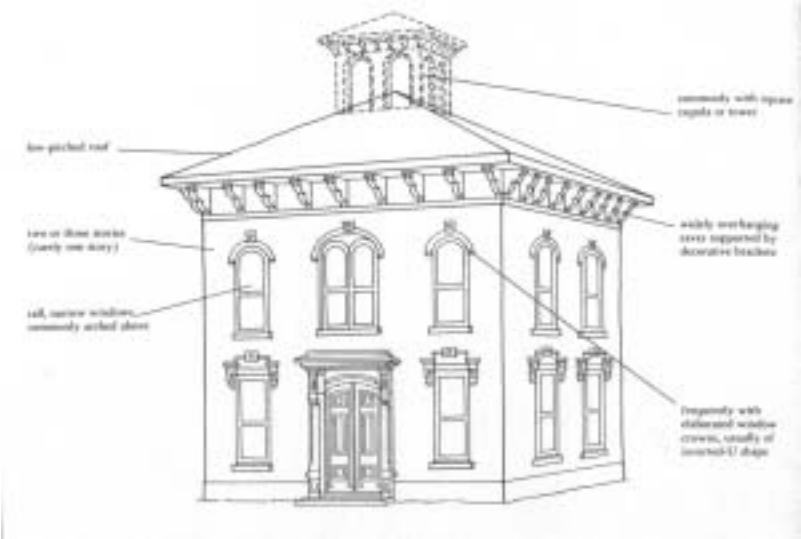
Period V – Italianate Style
Circa 1840-1885

Two distinct forms of Italianate architecture were constructed in Smyrna during the mid-to-late nineteenth century – the large freestanding house and the urban style building suited to narrow commercial lots. The style is decorative and can be applied to any house form. Typically two to three stories, both forms have low-pitched roofs and wide overhanging eaves with decorative brackets beneath. Windows are tall, narrow windows that are almost always hooded, bracketed or framed with ornate molding. Window sashes are either two-over-two or one-over-one and often paired. Arched and curved window types are common, along with the traditional rectangular top. The cornice of the building is always bracketed with ornately carved-paired brackets. Like the windows, the entrances are highly decorated with elaborate surrounds that are hooded, bracketed, or arched. The roof is flat or has a low-pitched pedimented hip. Porches are relatively restrained in elaboration and are of single story height. The house located at 129 North Main Street is an example of the Italianate Style.



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Period VI – Second Empire Style

Circa 1860-1885

This style is characterized by its distinctive mansard roof. Dormers and dormer windows appear in a great variety of style. Molded cornices bound the lower roof slope both above and below and decorative brackets are usually present beneath the eaves. Window, door, and porch details are similar to those used in the Italianate design however, Second Empire style houses have less eave overhang than do Italianate styles. Dormers and dormer windows appear in a great variety of styles. The house located at 111 North Main Street is an example of the Second Empire Style.

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Period VII – Victorian – Queen Anne Style

Circa 1880-1910

Queen Anne houses are irregular in plan with hipped or gable roofs that are sometimes punctuated by towers or cupolas. One of the most pronounced characteristics of the style is the porch. On larger high-style houses, it wraps around two or more facades and is supported by milled columns, balusters, and brackets. The front facade is often dominated by a cross gable or tower with canted comers. Decorative wood shingles in multiple patterns and jig-sawn vergeboards elaborate the gable fields. Door and window surrounds tend to be simple. Windows are usually one-over-one double-hung sash, with colored border glass common in the upper sash. Doors commonly have delicate incised decorative detailing and single large pane of glass set into the upper portion. Frame houses were clad with weatherboard and painted bright colors. The house located at 138 North Main Street is an example of the Queen Anne Style.

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The Stick Style is a decorative treatment included in the context of the Queen Anne form. Victorian buildings constructed in Stick style are commonly characterized by steeply pitched, intersecting gabled roofs with cross gables that typically show decorative trusses and overhanging eaves, usually with exposed rafter ends. Clad with either wooden shingles or boards, Stick style buildings typically exhibit raised, decorative patterns of horizontal, vertical, or diagonal boards. This detailing was commonly applied to one-story porches, either entry or full width. The house located at 107 North Main Street is an example of the Stick Style.

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Period VIII – Bungalow/Craftsman
Circa 1905-1930

The Bungalow style became the most common national style in the early part of the twentieth century. Bungalows are characterized by square plans with low pitch gable or hipped roof. Windows are double-hung sash with three or more vertical lights in the top sash and a single-light bottom sash. Like the Queen Anne houses, bungalows are characterized by their porches, which usually extend across the front facade and are supported by tapered columns resting on stone, frame or brick piers. In contrast to the vertical emphasis in Victorian styles. Bungalows emphasized the horizontal, with wide windows and wide roof eaves. In many examples, rafter ends and knee braces are visible below the eaves. The houses located at 130 and 134 North Main Street are examples of the Bungalow Style.

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WINDOWS

Window size, shape, and materials are often characteristic of different architectural styles and historical periods. The size and shape of individual windows is the result of the size of glass panes available to the builder. The size of glass panes in the window sash typically increased from the Georgian period, when smaller panes were typical, to the modern period, when large panes of glass were easily manufactured and set into windows.

Double-hung and single-hung window sash were most typically used in building throughout Smyrna's history. A double-hung window has two moving sashes hung one above the other. Only one sash is movable in the single-hung type.

Different building styles are characterized by specific window types. Window openings in Georgian, Federal, and Greek Revival style buildings are regularly placed single units with small square panes in each sash. The windows in buildings of these styles are typically single hung.

Windows in the Italianate, Second Empire periods are usually double-hung with two long rectangular pans of glass per sash. Many houses in this period also have a large single pane of glass in each sash.

Windows in the Queen Anne style typically consist of a single pane in each sash, which is frequently surrounded by additional small panes on one or more sides.

Bungalow style windows were generally divided into smaller lights or with the upper sash divided into narrow vertical lights.

The location and size of original window openings are definitive features of a residence. Historic window openings generally emphasize the vertical with the height at least double the width. Window alterations on rear facades are discouraged but may be allowed as long as these alterations are not readily visible. Window design is an integral part of a residence's character and alterations and replacement should be with materials and designs to match the original.

- The original window pattern should be maintained.
- Original window openings should not be enclosed, reduced, expanded, or concealed.
- New window openings should not be added to the primary facade or readily visible secondary facades.
- Maintain and preserve original window details.
- The configuration of the original window sash should not be altered.
- Fixed single light windows, picture windows and modem metal windows should not be added on primary or readily visible secondary facades.

- Original windows should be maintained and repaired with matching materials. Original windows should be replaced only if there has been demonstrable deterioration. Replacement windows should match the original in dimension and design.

- Original decorative surrounds, sills, lintels, and molding should be preserved when original sashes are replaced.

- Original stained glass, leaded glass, and other decorative glass details should not be removed from window openings. Conversely, elaborate stained glass or other decorative glass lights shall not be added to a residence's primary or readily visible secondary facades if there is no evidence that such window features were ever present.

- Snap-in muntins should not be added to an original window sash.

- Broken glass lights should be replaced with glass lights identical to the original. Replacement glass lights should be of clear glass on primary and readily visible secondary facades. Tinted glass may only be installed on rear or secondary facades not visible from the street.

- Window sash and frames may be painted to contrast the color of the house to provide depth to the window openings.

STORM WINDOWS

- The design of the storm windows should not interfere with the design of the original windows. Meeting rails between the sashes should match up so that the storm window becomes virtually invisible against the original sash. Single light storm windows are most appropriate for small openings. The installation of aluminum or metal storm windows is acceptable if the metal surface is primed and painted. Dark colors like brown and gray are appropriate as is white depending on the overall color of the building.

- Appropriate finishes for storm windows are baked enamel or anodized aluminum. Interior storm windows may be installed if they match the original window opening.

- Interior storm windows may be installed if they match the original window opening.

- Although addition of new storm windows is allowed, much energy savings can be achieved through careful caulking and sash maintenance of the original windows, without adding storm windows.

SHUTTERS

Shutters are common on buildings in the Smyrna Historic District overlay zone. Although few are utilized to their intended use, their original purpose was to provide security and privacy, and to permit ventilation while keeping rain and sunlight out. Presently, shutters are most often fixed in place and serve as attractive elements in the designs of the facades of the buildings in the Historic District overlay zone. However, shutters have historically served more functional purposes. First floor shutters were constructed of solid panels and were shut over windows in order to provide extra security for the building at street level. Shutters on the upper levels were typically louvered in order to provide ventilation while also shielding the rooms from sun or bad weather conditions. Shutters were proportioned to completely cover the windows and were always operable.

Original shutters are important components of window design and should be maintained and preserved. The following guidelines pertain to shutters on buildings in the Smyrna Historic District Overlay Zone:

- Original wood shutters should be preserved and maintained, whenever possible.
- Any repairs should be made with materials and designs that match the original as closely as possible. If the need for replacement of original shutters is demonstrated, replacement should be with materials and proportions to match the original shutters.
- New shutters should be of the size necessary to cover the window opening when closed.
- Louvered or paneled wood shutters are appropriate. (Typically paneled shutters were used only on the lower floors.)
- Replacement shutters should be of the size necessary to cover the window opening when closed.
- Shutters should operate or at least give the appearance of being operable.
- Window openings that have never had shutters or blinds should be left in this condition.
- Shutters and blinds should be painted to contrast the color of the house and should match the color of the window trim.

ARCHITECTURAL ORNAMENTATION

Late 19th century homes were often embellished with such decorative milled wood elements as brackets, spindles, and verge boards. These elements are essential to the character of a residence and should not be removed or obscured. Large brackets and exposed eave rafters are popular forms of ornamentation on Bungalows.

- Ornamentation which should be maintained and preserved includes brackets, braces, dentils, cornices, molding, and decorative siding that often appears in gable fields.

- Elements that are deteriorated should be repaired or replaced if necessary with materials and profiles to match the original.

- Architectural ornamentation that is not based on photographic or physical evidence should not be added to the residence. The addition of such ornamentation would not be accurate and would create a misleading appearance not in accordance with the original design and style.

Historically, architectural ornamentation and the exterior siding of a residence were rarely painted the same color. Decorative elements were usually painted to highlight their designs. Paint manufacturing and color-mixing processes greatly increased in the late 19th century which allowed a wide variety of colors to be available to homeowners. These developments coincided with the application of millwork decoration in the Italianate and Queen Anne styles which resulted in a shift toward a larger variety of colors applied to houses. Most houses from the 1870's to the early 1900's displayed a wide variety of shades and contrasting colors. Tans, greens, reds, and grays were all widely used. Bungalows were generally of darker colors such as browns and grays. The use of stained shingles on upper facades of Bungalows was also used to provide color.

Many houses in Smyrna are of brick construction and have been left unpainted over the years. Paint is found only at wood eaves, window and door surrounds, and roof dormers. Appropriate paint colors are an important defining feature of a building and aid in highlighting details and trim. In addition to accenting decoration, paint is an excellent preservative and regular painting and maintenance can add years to the life span of a house's architectural ornamentation. Property owners are encouraged to select paint colors in keeping with the building's style and design.

- Exterior paint colors should be in keeping with a building's style and time period.

- Paint should not be removed from wood or brick surfaces by sandblasting or other abrasive methods.

- Masonry that has not been painted should remain unpainted except in cases where the brick or mortar has been patched, repointed, or repaired with significantly contrasting materials, colors, and textures.

- Paint colors should be in keeping with a building's style and period. Original color schemes based on historic evidence and research are encouraged.

- Exterior surfaces of stained wood shingles should be retained as opposed to painted.
- The exterior siding or body of a residence should be painted a dark or muted color. Contrasting colors should be used to highlight architectural trim and ornamentation.
- Accent colors generally should be limited to two in addition to the background color.

PORCHES

The porch is one of the major defining elements of a residence's style, age, and character. Basic components of porches include the porch floor, columns, railings, decorative trim and ceilings. Porches are used not only as sheltered outdoor space but also serve to provide a transition between the exterior and the interior of a house. While the overall plan and form of porches remained much the same, porch treatments changed often between 1880 and 1940. The preservation of pre-1940 porch elements on residences is one of the primary guidelines for historic neighborhoods. Porches are one of the most significant defining features of a house and original forms, designs, and details should not be altered.

- An original porch should not be removed from its original location. The removal of a porch from its original location on the house is inappropriate and results in the loss of the building's integrity.

- Original porch elements, such as columns, floors, and rails should not be removed or concealed.

- Porch elements that have become deteriorated should be repaired rather than replaced. When the severity of deterioration requires replacement the new feature should match the original in design, color, texture, and where possible, materials.

- Porches may be enclosed with screen panels as long as the screens are adequately supported by framing members to prevent sagging. Screen panels should be recessed behind existing porch columns. Framing members should be wood, not metal.

- Porches located on primary facades should not be enclosed to create interior living space. Porches on secondary facades may be enclosed with glass set behind the original columns. The number of framing elements should be minimal.

- Porch reconstruction may be allowed, if there is architectural or documented historical evidence that supports the previous existence of a porch.

- Porches and decks may be added to rear facades as long as they are not easily visible from the street.

FLOORS

The most common type of wood floor is made of narrow tongue and groove boards that are interlocked and laid in one direction over a Structural framework. Porch floors require frequent maintenance because they are exposed to extreme outdoor conditions. The replacement of the original wood floors with concrete or brick is inappropriate. Poured concrete floors became common after 1910 and require periodic maintenance. Cracks should be repaired and the surface should be painted a uniform color.

- Original porch floors of wood or concrete should be preserved and maintained.
- Original wood floors should not be replaced with concrete or brick.
- Repair deteriorated floors with matching materials.

COLUMNS

- Deteriorated columns should be repaired rather than replaced. Preserve as much of the original column as possible when doing repair work. For example, if the base is all that is damaged, then replace only the base.
- Substitute materials should not be used when repairing deteriorated columns.
- Original porch columns are usually of wood and should not be repaired with or replaced by metal or synthetic materials.
- If replacement is necessary, use wood columns that match the original wood columns on primary facades.
- Aluminum or metal columns may be used to repair porches on secondary and rear facades but are discouraged on primary porches.
- Original wood or brick columns or piers should not be replaced with decorative wrought iron supports.

RAILINGS

- Original porch rails and balusters should be maintained and preserved.
- Repair of original porch rails and balusters is preferable to replacement.
- Replacement materials should match the original materials.
- Porch railings should not be added where one had not previously existed. If safety considerations require the addition of a porch rail; the design should be simple with square balusters.

STAIRS

- Original concrete, brick, or wood stairs that lead to an exterior entrance should be preserved and maintained whenever possible. Replacement stairs should be similar in design and materials to the original stair.
- Pre-cast concrete stairs should not be placed on the primary facade.
- Metal or wrought iron railings or handrails, if required for safety, should be simple in design with square balusters. The use of scroll decorative railings or balusters should be avoided.
- Handicapped ramps should be located at a secondary or rear entrance where they do not detract from the visual impact of the primary facade.
- New ramps should be constructed of wood in simple design that complements the structure or detracts the least from the integrity of the house.

DOORS

Doors have always been considered one of the main focal points of the house and often have been embellished with decorative panels and moldings. The houses in Smyrna's historic district displays a wide variety of entrances on the main facades. Italianate and Queen Anne styles often display four panel doors of elaborate wood panels and raised moldings. Many excellent examples of Queen Anne style doors exist with such detailing as incised panels, stained glass lights, or milled decoration. Sidelights, transoms and milled surrounds are also common historic elements.

- Replacement of original doors, as well as decorative features should be done only in cases of significant deterioration. Replacement materials should match original doors and decorative features materials where new or replacement doors on primary and visible secondary facades should be of appropriate design for pre-1940 residences. For residences built between 1880 and 1915 this may include single light glass and wood doors with four or five recessed panels.

- Doors with multiple glass light designs or single light designs are appropriate for residences built between 1915 and 1940.

- Original doors should not be replaced with modern solid core wood doors or other similar variations.

- The original appearance of entrance doors should be preserved. Doors which have not been previously painted should be left in their natural condition. The painting of doors which have a grained or stained finish should only take place if the finish is severely weathered.

- It is acceptable to replace an original door on a primary facade with an original door from a rear or secondary façade.

- Screen doors with wood framing members and large screened areas are most appropriate. Framing should be minimal. Screen doors that match the framing arrangement on doors are especially appropriate.

- Screen and storm doors shall match the proportions and design of the entrance.

- Original wood screen doors should be preserved and maintained.

- New screen doors should be constructed of wood in simple designs, which match the framing design on the original door. Doors with ornate designs of wrought iron or similar metals should not be installed.

- Screen doors should be painted with colors to match the entrance.

- New storm doors added to entrances on primary facades or visible secondary facades should provide a full view of the original entrance.

- Storm doors should be of wood or anodized aluminum in dark colors. Aluminum storm doors may also be installed as long as the door is primed and painted and the raw aluminum surface is concealed.

- Storm doors added to rear entrances or entrances on facades not readily visible from the street should be of plain, full view design. Doors of varying types of metal and glass panels are also acceptable. (The use of screen, security or storm doors on primary entrances is acceptable and appropriate as long as the design allows visibility of the original door.)

ROOFS

Roof forms in Smyrna are primarily variations of gable, flat and mansard designs. Other roof forms such hipped or shed roofs are rare or do not exist. Roofing materials at the turn of the century included slate, standing seam metal, metal shingles, clay tile, and wood shingles. After 1900, the use of asbestos or composition roofs became popular for their economy and fire protection.
The original roof forms and pitch are important to the character of the district and no major alteration to roofs should take place.

- Neither the form nor the pitch of the roof should be altered on primary or readily visible secondary facades.

- Original dormers and their decorative elements should be preserved and maintained.

- Original roofs should not be raised to allow for additional stories.

- The addition of new dormers or gables is discouraged. However dormers and gables may be added if they are in proportion to the building and are on a secondary facade, not readily visible from the street or sidewalk.

- Skylights may also be added to rear roof slopes if they are not readily visible from the street. Flush or flat skylights are preferred over raised or bubble lights.

- Original roof materials should be preserved. Original roofs of metal, slate, and tile should be maintained and preserved, unless significant deterioration has been demonstrated.

- If sections of original roofs are deteriorated they should be replaced with materials that match the original as closely as possible.

- Decorative ornamentation like finials and balustrades should not be altered or removed.

- Asphalt, asbestos or composition roofs that were added to homes after 1940 may be replaced with new asphalt roofs.

- Residences that have had wood shingle roofs may be re-roofed with replacement wood shingles if desired. The shingles should match those used for the original roof. Residences that have never had wood shingle roofs should not be re-roofed with wood shingles.

- Dark colors for asphalt roofs are preferred over lighter colors. Black, dark red, brown and dark green are acceptable colors.

GUTTERS AND DOWNSPOUTS

- Concealed or box gutters should be preserved and repaired whenever possible. If concealed gutters cannot be repaired feasibly, they should be sealed and covered to match existing roof and replaced with a hanging gutter as necessary.

- Exposed gutters or downspouts should be painted to match the trim color orhouse body color, whichever is appropriate. To prevent paint from peeling, new metal should be thoroughly cleaned and painted with galvanized steel primer before applying finish coats of paint.

- Where hanging gutters and downspouts are required the half round type is appropriate.

CHIMNEYS

Brick chimneys are common features of buildings in the historic district of Smyrna. Chimneys are still, in many cases, functioning parts of a house's heating system as well as significant architectural features. Residences often feature interior as well as exterior brick chimneys. Chimneys of stone or stone veneer are much less common. Exposure to the weather elements and pollutants often results in deterioration of a chimney's brick and mortar, Improper care of the flashing around the chimney can result in deterioration and water leakage. For safety purposes, chimneys should be maintained and inspected regularly and repaired in accordance with the previous masonry guidelines.

- Preserve and maintain original chimneys.

- Masonry chimneys should not be removed above the roofline.

- Repair and repointing of brick chimneys should be done with brick and mortar that match the original. If a match proves unfeasible, painting of chimneys is acceptable in shades of dark red and burgundy.

- If a chimney is in poor condition or has been extensively patched and repointed, it is acceptable to cover the exterior surface with stucco. Stucco should only be used where a chimney's appearance detracts from the appearance of a residence.

- Decorative brick corbelling and clay chimney caps should not be removed.

- Clay, slate, or stone chimney caps are preferable to metal chimney caps.

- Removal of brick chimneys or the replacement of chimneys with metal or other material should not occur.

HVAC AND AIR CONDITIONING UNITS

The most common types of visible HVAC units are exterior air conditioning and heat pumps placed directly adjacent to a building and air conditioning units placed in windows. Heating and cooling units such as these shall not be restricted, but their situation and screening is a primary concern.

- The installation of window air conditioning units should not result in the removal or replacement of original window sash or the alteration of window framing or surrounds.
- Window air conditioners should be installed in windows on secondary or rear facades rather than on primary facades.
- Exterior HVAC units should be installed at rear facades or non-visible areas of secondary facades.
- All readily visible exterior HVAC units that are located at grade should be screened with wood or brick fencing, lattice panels, and/or landscaping.
- HVAC units adjacent to facades not readily visible or placed below grade do not require screening.
- HVAC units should not be placed on the roofs of residential buildings.

NEW CONSTRUCTION

Direct replication of historic designs should be avoided. The reproduction of historic styles will blur the line between which structures are genuinely historic and which are new. Appropriate new construction in historic residential areas repeats the basic design elements inherent in the district but creates different forms of expression.

Building heights for residences in Smyrna vary from one to three and-one-half stories. New structures should respect the height of adjacent buildings and dominant building heights along the block or street. One-story buildings, for example, are not appropriate for blocks dominated by two-story structures.

- In the residential area infill, new construction shall reflect its period. Historic reproductions are-to be avoided.

- Historic buildings which have been clearly documented (original floor plans, drawings or photographs) may be reconstructed on the original site.

- Reconstructed buildings should be constructed with materials, details, and decorative features to match or closely approximate the original building.

- Reconstructed buildings must be compatible with other structures in the neighborhood.

- Reconstructed buildings must be clearly designated so as not to misrepresent them as being historic.

- New structures should be compatible in height with adjacent structures and should not vary from the average building height along the block.

Preservation Briefs

The Technical Preservation Services Division of the National Park Service provides advice for people involved in the care and maintenance of old and historic buildings. A series of Preservation Briefs, partially listed below, may be ordered from the U.S. Government Printing Office or downloaded from the internet. For ordering information or to view the publications online, visit the Heritage Preservation Services/Preservation Briefs website: http://www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/tpscat.htm.

1. Assessing Cleaning and Water-Repellent Treatments for Historic Masonry Buildings
2. Re-pointing Mortar Joints in Historic Brick Buildings
3. Conserving Energy in Historic Buildings
4. Roofing for Historic Buildings
5. The Preservation of Historic Adobe Buildings
6. Dangers of Abrasive Cleaning to Historic Buildings
7. The Preservation of Historic-Glazed Architectural Terra-Cotta
8. Aluminum and Vinyl Siding on Historic Buildings
9. The Repair of Historic Wooden Windows
10. Exterior Paint Problems on Historic Woodwork
11. Rehabilitating Historic Storefronts
12. The Preservation of Historic Pigmented Structural Glass
13. The Repair and Thermal Upgrading of Historic Steel Windows
14. New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings: Preservation Concerns
15. Preservation of Historic Concrete: Problems and General Approaches
16. The Use of Substitute Materials on Historic Building Exteriors
17. Architectural Character: Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as and Aid to Preserving their Character
18. Rehabilitating Interiors in Historic Buildings
19. The Repair and Replacement of Historic Wooden Shingle Roofs

20. The Preservation of Historic Barns

21. Repairing Historic Flat Plaster – Walls and Ceilings

22. The Preservation and Repair of Historic Stucco

23. Preserving Historic Ornamental Plaster

24. Heating, Ventilating, and Cooling Historic Buildings: Problems and Recommended Approaches

25. The Preservation of Historic Signs

26. The Preservation and Repair of Historic Log Buildings

27. The Maintenance and Repair of Architectural Cast Iron

28. Painting Historic Interiors

29. The Repair, Replacement, and Maintenance of Historic Slate Roofs

30. The Preservation and Repair of Historic Clay Tile Roofs

31. Mothballing Historic Buildings

32. Making Historic Properties Accessible

33. The Preservation and Repair of Historic Stained and Leaded Glass

34. Applied Decoration for Historic Interiors Preserving Composition Ornament

35. Understanding Old Buildings: The Process of Architectural Investigation

36. Protecting Cultural Landscapes: Planning, Treatment and Management of Historic Landscapes

37. Appropriate Methods for Reducing Lead-Paint Hazards in Historic Buildings

38. Removing Graffiti from Historic Masonry

39. Holding the Line: Controlling Unwanted Moisture in Historic Buildings

40. Preserving Historic Ceramic Tile Floors

41. The Seismic Retrofit of Historic Buildings: Keeping Preservation in the Forefront

42. The Maintenance, Repair, and Replacement of Historic Cast Stone

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