



Donaldsonville Historic District Commission

DESIGN STANDARDS

(Adopted by the Donaldsonville Historic District Commission August 29, 2018)



City of Donaldsonville

609 Railroad Ave | Donaldsonville, LA 70346

(225) 473-4247

www.donaldsonville-la.gov

CONTENTS

Introduction.....	6
Design Standards Users.....	7
Property Owners.....	7
The Historic District Commission.....	7
City Staff.....	8
Other Design Standards Users.....	8
Regulatory Framework.....	9
Zoning Code.....	9
Historic Preservation Ordinance.....	9
Where the Design Standards Apply.....	10
Locally-Designated Historic District	10
Donaldsonville’s Local Historic District.....	10
Map of Donaldsonville Historic District	11
Background Resources	12
Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.....	12

Chapter 1 **Using the Design Standards**

This chapter provides a guide to the design review process and use of the *Design Standards*. It also includes a summary of the application process for improvements to locally-designated individual historic landmarks and properties in locally-designated historic district.

Making Your Case: How to Present to the Historic District Commission	14
Application Process.....	15
Contributing vs. Non-Contributing Properties	15
Demolition Considerations	15
Application Information	16
Administrative Approval.....	16
Appeals.....	17
Other Permits or Applications Reviewed by the Historic District Commission.....	17
Interpreting Design Standards	17
Preservation Project Planning Steps	18

Chapter 2

Design Standards for All Historic Preservation Projects

This chapter provides general *Design Standards* for improvements to locally-designated individual historic landmarks and contributing properties in the locally-designated historic district. The standards in this chapter do not apply to new construction.

General Preservation Principles	20
Standards for the Treatment of Historic Features.....	22
Materials and Finishes.....	22
Wood	26
Masonry	26
Metal	27
Paint	27
Building Elements.....	28
Windows	28
Shutters	30
Awnings	31
Doors	31
Roofs	32
Architectural Details.....	34
Adaptive Reuse.....	35
Historic Additions.....	36
Accessibility.....	36
Communications Equipment	37
Utility Equipment.....	37
Sustainability Standards for Historic Properties.....	38
Planning a Rehabilitation Project for Energy Efficiency.....	38
Maintaining the Inherent Energy Efficiency of a Historic Building	39
Enhancing Energy Performance of Historic Structures.....	40
Using Energy-Generating Technologies	41
General Guidelines for New Construction – Residential and Commercial	42

Chapter 3

Design Standards for Residential Properties

This chapter builds on the general preservation standards presented in Chapter 2 with specific *Design Standards* for residential properties, including new **residential** construction in the locally-designated historic district.

Design Standards for All Residential Properties.....	44
Residential Site Standards.....	44
Sidewalks and Walkways	44
Yards	45
Fences and Walls	46
Parking and Driveways	47
Planting	47
Lighting	48
Residential Building Standards.....	48
Roofs	48
Windows	49
Garage Doors	50
Porches and Decks	50
Standards for Residential to Commercial Conversion.....	51
Design Standards for Residential New Construction and Additions	52
Site Standards for New Residential Construction.....	52
Massing Standards for New Residential Construction.....	53
Building Standards for New Residential Construction.....	54
Architectural Character	54
Porches and Entries	55
Building Materials	55
Standards for New Secondary Buildings on Residential Properties.....	56
Standards for Residential Additions.....	57

Chapter 4

Design Standards for Commercial Properties

This chapter builds on the general preservation standards presented in Chapter 2 with specific design standards for commercial properties, including new **commercial** construction in the locally-designated historic district.

Design Standards for All Commercial Properties.....	59
Commercial Site Standards.....	59
Parking	59
Connectivity	60
Landscaping	60
Site Lighting	61
Plazas, Courtyards and Patios	61
Sidewalk Amenities and Street Furniture	62
Public Art	63
Service Areas	64
Commercial Building Standards.....	65
Commercial Façades.....	65
Commercial Canopies.....	66
Exterior Color	67
Commercial Signage Standards.....	68
Treatment of Historic Signs	68
Design of New and Modified Signs	69
Traditional Sign Types	71
 Design Standards for New Commercial Construction and Additions.....	 73
Massing Standards for New Commercial Construction.....	73
Building Standards for New Commercial Construction.....	75
Commercial Façade Character.....	75
Architectural Character	76
Materials	76
 Standards for New Commercial Structures in Residential Districts	 77
Standards for Commercial Additions.....	78

Appendices

Appendix I: Guide for Administrative Approval	80
Appendix II: Resources	81
Appendix III: Case Steps of a Historic District Commission Meeting	82
 Acknowledgements	 83

INTRODUCTION

Donaldsonville is one of Louisiana's oldest incorporated cities and is nationally recognized for its historic resources. These are enjoyed by residents, business owners and visitors as links to the City's heritage while also setting the stage for a vibrant future. Preserving these assets is essential to Donaldsonville's well-being. The *Design Standards for Historic Properties* promote the community's vision for sustainable preservation by guiding appropriate stewardship of historic resources and compatible redevelopment in our locally-designated historic district.

The Design Standards guide rehabilitation, alteration, expansion and new construction projects involving locally-designated individual historic landmarks and properties in locally-designated historic districts. They also guide Historic District Commission review of such projects, helping the City and property owners maintain the special qualities of Donaldsonville's historic resources.

By preserving existing buildings and guiding compatible redevelopment, the Design Standards promote the three key elements of community sustainability:

Economic Sustainability.

The economic benefits of protecting historic resources include higher property values, job creation in rehabilitation industries and increased heritage tourism.

Environmental Sustainability.

Rehabilitation of historic resources directly supports environmental sustainability through conservation of embodied energy, adaptability, and maintenance of sustainable development patterns.

Cultural/Social Sustainability.

Preserving historic places and patterns promotes cultural and social sustainability by supporting everyday connections between residents and the cultural heritage of the community.



When is a building considered to be “historic”?

Typically, buildings that are 50 years or older and retain their character (look like they did 50+ years ago) are considered to be historic. Additions or modifications which are 50+ years old may also be considered as contributing to the building's historic character.

DESIGN STANDARDS USERS

The *Design Standards* are used primarily by property owners, design professionals, City staff, and the Historic District Commission. While they are written for use by the lay-person to plan improvements, property owners are strongly encouraged to enlist the assistance of qualified design and planning professionals, including architects and preservation consultants.

Property Owners

Property owners should consult this document to help determine what types of alterations, restorations, rehabilitations and other changes are appropriate to maintain the integrity of locally-designated individual historic landmarks and properties in locally-designated historic districts.

Note that the Design Standards apply only to the exterior of properties. For example, the Historic District Commission reviews applications for new fences porches and steps, shutter installations, additions, new construction and exterior renovation or rehabilitation. The Commission **does not review interior remodeling**.

Property Owner's Responsibilities and Benefits

Ownership of locally-designated individual historic landmarks and properties in locally-designated historic districts comes with responsibilities and benefits.

Owners have the right to the use and enjoyment of their property and may make interior modifications to their properties without special review. However, they must also maintain the historic integrity of their property and the character of the City's historic district. At the same time, owners also benefit from historic designation through increased property values and specific incentive and benefit programs.

Owners of historic properties must make exterior alterations and undertake new construction that meets the Design Standards and follows the application and permit process described in "Application Process". They may also appeal City staff or Historic Preservation Commission decisions.

Studies around the nation have demonstrated that historic district protections help stabilize, and even enhance, property values. Additional benefits available to owners of historic properties may include tax credits for rehabilitation.

The Historic District Commission

The Historic District Commission is a citizen board charged with using the *Design Standards for Historic Properties* to review and regulate the rehabilitation, restoration, expansion, alteration or demolition of locally-designated individual historic landmarks and contributing properties in Donaldsonville's locally-designated historic district. The Commission also reviews and regulates new construction in local historic districts. When the Commission has reviewed and approved a project using the process outlined in "Application Process", they issue a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA).

City Staff

City staff (mayor, code enforcement officer, city attorney, Donaldsonville Main Street director, etc.) assist the Commission with administration of the *Design Standards*. Staff provide recommendations to the Commission regarding approval of projects. The designee appointed by the Donaldsonville City Council may administratively approve certain projects as noted in the relevant *Design Standards*.

Other Design Standards Users

The overall community and businesses or residents seeking to acquire or use historic resources may also use the *Design Standards* to better understand appropriate rehabilitation strategies and the City's expectations for treatment of its historic resources.

What is a Design Standard?

Design standards provide a qualitative framework for making consistent decisions about the appropriate design of sites and buildings. In addition, they serve as educational and planning tools for property owners and their design professionals who seek to make improvements. Such standards are also often referred to as "design guidelines" because they guide a review process that determines the appropriateness of specific designs. Design standards are more flexible than zoning regulations, and require interpretation by a qualified review board or City staff.



The Historic District Commission conducts design review using the *Design Standards for Historic Properties*. As described in "Administrative Approval", the Commission has delegated review authority for some types of projects to the City's Historic Preservation Officer or other designated City staff. **For a list of the types of projects which may be administratively approved, see Appendix I (page 80).**

Historic District Commission Membership

This seven-member commission is appointed by the mayor, from a list of nominees submitted by the mayor and council. There may be alternate members who may participate in meetings when commissioners are absent from meetings. Qualifications may include owners of businesses or property inside the local historic district, professionals in a field related to the concerns of the Historic District Commission (history, architecture, landscape architecture, planning, archaeology, preservation, etc.). A complete description of the Historic District Commission rules may be found in the Code of Ordinances for Donaldsonville, in Division 2.

If you would like to serve on the Historic District Commission, please speak with the Mayor's Office.

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The *Design Standards* are part of a framework of regulatory tools that shapes development in Donaldsonville. The tools include zoning standards that relate to all properties in the city and a historic preservation ordinance that outlines specific regulations that apply to locally-designated individual historic landmarks and properties in locally-designated historic districts.

Zoning Code

The zoning code sets forth the basic rules that shape development throughout the city. The zoning code includes a special overlay that enables Commission review of improvement projects in local historic districts. The Donaldsonville Historic District Commission is further defined in the Donaldsonville Code of Ordinances, Sections 2.61-2.78.

Zoning Standards address: Building Density; Use; Placement; Height and Lot Coverage

Design Standards address: Compatibility; Site Design; Building Scale, Orientation & Massing; Historic Rehabilitation; Entries and Windows



Historic Preservation Ordinance

The Preservation Ordinance is designed to achieve the following goals:

1. To conserve, preserve, protect, enhance and perpetuate historically, culturally, and architecturally significant sites, structures and landmarks which serve as visible reminders of the City's culture and heritage.
2. To promote the economic prosperity and welfare of the community by conserving the value of landmark buildings and encouraging the most appropriate use of such property within the city.
3. To foster and strengthen civic pride through neighborhood conservation.
4. To provide a review process for the appropriate preservation and development of important cultural, architectural and historic resources.
5. To ensure harmonious, orderly, safe and efficient growth and development of the City, without compromising its historical and architectural integrity.
6. The resource identification, designation and review procedures established in the ordinance are regulatory tools that allow the City to maintain Certified Local Government status.

WHERE THE DESIGN STANDARDS APPLY

The *Design Standards* apply to the exterior of Donaldsonville Landmarks, including locally-designated individual historic landmarks and properties in locally-designated historic districts. The standards also apply to new construction and additions inside the bounds of locally-designated historic districts.

Locally-Designated Historic District

Donaldsonville has one locally-designated historic district. The *Design Standards* apply to properties in this district, as well as properties outside the district which have been designated as Local Landmarks, by the Historic District Commission and Donaldsonville City Council, by request of the owner.

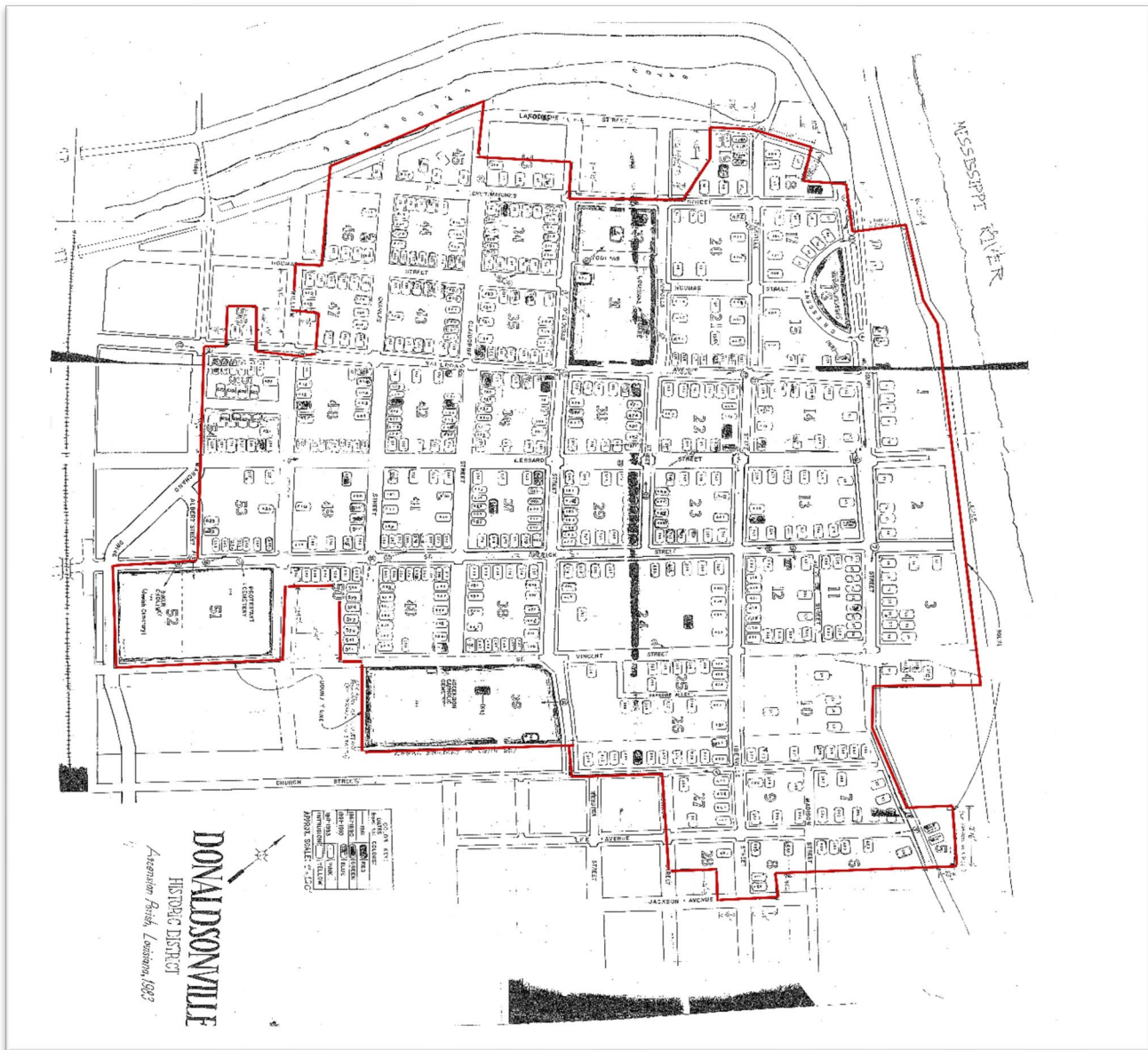
Locally-designated historic districts may also be National Register Historic Districts. However, not all National Register districts are also locally-designated historic districts.



Donaldsonville Local Historic District (established 1983)

Donaldsonville's locally-designated historic district consists of approximately 50 blocks of the city's original residential and commercial area. Much of Donaldsonville's local historic district is also located within the bounds of a National Register Historic District. While the National Register listing has no additional review or protection, it is a source of civic pride to be recognized on a national level for maintaining our historic resources and unique identity.

Local historic districts may provide protection for historic resources and their historic character through a review process by the Historic District Commission. This is made possible through adoption of a zoning ordinance, which established the Historic District Commission and local historic district.



(See larger map image in the Appendix on p.85)

Local Historic District – follows the boundary of the National Register Historic District in Donaldsonville; provides review of modification and can provide protection from demolition or inappropriate alterations to exteriors.

National Register District – contributing structures may be eligible for Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits.

Donaldsonville Downtown Development District - Dedicated to the revitalization and preservation of Historic Downtown Donaldsonville.

LA State Cultural District – structures contributing to the district may be eligible for State Rehabilitation Tax Credits; formed at the recommendation of the municipality to foster the creation of a site for cultural gathering.

Main Street District – historic commercial core of a community; Main Street program strengthens the district by providing organization, promotion, design and economic vitality.

BACKGROUND RESOURCES

Background resources to support use of the *Design Standards for Historic Properties* are provided below. They include the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Properties and a listing of local, national and state organizations that provide education and support for preservation projects.

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

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings are general rehabilitation guidelines established by the National Park Service. These standards are policies that serve as a basis for the design principles presented in the Design Standards for Historic Properties. Think of them as "rules of thumb" which guide the decisions made in preserving historic resources.

The Secretary's Standards state that:

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

CHAPTER ONE

Using the Design Standards



Making Your Case: *How to Present to the Historic District Commission*

During the planning of the project, an applicant should research the history of the building and the neighborhood through various methods, when possible. City of Donaldsonville Sanborn Insurance Maps, tax records, city directories (or phone books) and historic photographs can often help support your goal of replacing missing design elements. These may be found in local libraries, family photo collections, newspaper archives and in digital collections online. **Information about the steps of a meeting may be found in Appendix III.**

These can be valuable tools to uncovering the evolution of a property and planning a rehabilitation or restoration project. For example, a historic family photograph taken in front of a house may be just the proof you need to show what a missing handrail looked like in the background. They may also show where awnings or balconies were once located. This makes the decision of the Historic District Commission quick and easy, when provided with clear historic documentation.

The applicant should submit all documentation that supports the proposed alterations to the property with the Historic District Commission application. The information submitted will be used to evaluate the project in conformance with the City of Donaldsonville Design Standards and to generate the Staff Report. Any information received after the submittal of the Historic District Commission application could cause delays in the generation of the staff report or the Commission's review, which can lead to a deferral request by Staff.

An applicant is encouraged to attend the Historic District Commission meeting to answer any questions the commission may have. However, if the applicant is unable to attend, a designated representative who understands the full scope of the project may answer questions from the commission. The representative must provide a signed statement from the owner, stating the project address and their permission to have their representative answer questions for them. A formal presentation of the request is not required.



Railroad Avenue in 1950s. Historic store being demolished, next to Commercial Bank and Trust Building.

Application Process

The Historic District Commission (or City staff where administrative approval is allowed) must issue a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for the following types of improvements to locally-designated individual historic landmarks and properties in the locally-designated historic district prior to application for a building permit:

Exterior construction

Reconstruction, rehabilitation or restoration of local landmarks and contributing structures in local historic districts

Relocation of a structure

Demolition of a structure

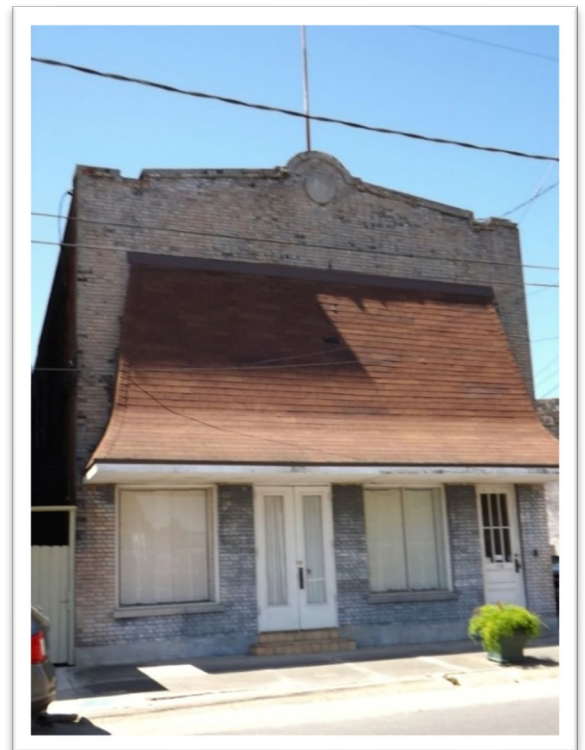
Contributing vs. Non-Contributing Properties

Within the locally-designated historic district, some structures are considered to be “contributing” to the historic significance of the district. Other structures may be considered to be “non-contributing” because they do not specifically contribute to the historic significance of the district. The contributing or non-contributing status of properties is often established in historic surveys. In some cases, however, it may be necessary for City staff or the Historic District Commission to determine contributing status during the design review process using their adopted criteria. In some cases, the Design Standards distinguish between contributing and non-contributing properties. For example, special standards apply to additions to contributing structures that do not apply to additions to non-contributing structures.

Demolition Considerations

The preservation of Donaldsonville’s historic resources helps maintain the community’s unique identity and quality of life. Demolition of any primary or secondary structure, or any portion of the exterior of a structure that is a locally-designated historic landmark or is considered to be a contributing structure in a locally-designated historic district will generally not be permitted. However, The Historic District Commission will consider requests for removal of inappropriate additions and alterations that are not original.

Donaldsonville’s zoning standards include the specific requirements for demolition applications, including the criteria for claims of economic hardship or unusual and compelling circumstances, and evaluation of threats to safety. Demolition requests will not be considered without prior approval by the Historic District Commission of the design for new construction, additions or improvements that must be completed shortly following the demolition. The Commission will review such plans using the Design Standards. It is the burden of the applicant to prove the necessity for demolition. **Applicants must provide proof of ownership and clear title before demolition applications will be considered by the Historic District Commission.**



Removal of the awning addition would enhance the historic character of this building.

Application Information

Applications for approval of improvements to locally-designated individual historic landmarks and properties in locally-designated historic districts are available from the Planning Division.

Applications to the Commission may be obtained from the City Hall and must be submitted to the Permitting Division by the deadline date (typically 15 business days prior to the scheduled hearing). Applications are also available online at the city website (www.donaldsonville-la.gov) or by email request by emailing rouso@donaldsonville.brcoxmail.com or by calling the Permitting Division at (225) 473-4247 ext. 20.

ALL required supporting materials must accompany the application, including paint colors, photos, sketches or drawings of proposed work, information sheets on proposed materials, etc.

The Historic District Commission conducts a public hearing once a month, typically on the last Wednesday of each month, at 6 p.m. However, applicants are responsible for verifying the date of the application deadline and public hearing for their case. Public hearing dates and application deadlines are available from the Permitting Division at (225) 473-4247 ext. 20. The City's Historic Preservation Officer (HPO) or designated representative are available to meet with property owners to help determine application requirements.

Applicants should attend the scheduled hearing and be prepared to answer questions from the Historic District Commission, in order to handle their request in a timely manner. The commission has the right to defer a case until a future date, when the applicant can attend or when their questions may be answered.

Administrative Approval

Many exterior improvements to locally-designated individual historic landmarks and properties in the locally-designated historic district may be administratively approved by the Historic Preservation Officer (HPO) or designated City representative without formal review by the Historic District Commission.

To be granted administrative approval, all proposed changes must meet the published *Design Standards*. Projects granted administrative approval do not need to appear before the Commission for a Certificate of Appropriateness.

The HPO or appointed city representative reserves the right to refer improvements that are eligible for administrative approval to the Historic District Commission.

For a list of actions eligible for administrative approval, see Appendix I (p. 80).



Repainting (using the existing colors) may be administratively approved.

Appeals

If the Historic District Commission denies an application, a modified application may be resubmitted by the next deadline. This will constitute a new case for consideration at a future Commission hearing. If the Commission denies the request, the applicant may appeal to the mayor and city council. A full description of the appeals process may be found in Section 2-78 of the Donaldsonville Zoning Ordinance. Any decision to reverse, change or modify a decision by the Historic District Commission must be approved by a majority vote.

Other Permits or Applications Reviewed by the Historic District Commission

The Historic District Commission also reviews the following types of changes involving locally-designated individual historic landmarks and properties in locally-designated historic districts:

- Requests for local designation of individual landmarks and historic districts
- Applications for Specific Use Permits (SUPs)
- Licenses to Use the City right-of-way
- Change of zoning requests
- Variance requests

The Historic District Commission will recommend approval (sometimes with conditions) or denial prior to Planning Commission or City Council action. The Planning Commission or Council are not required to act according to the Historic District Commission recommendation.

Applicants are encouraged to meet with the HPO or designated staff in the Planning Division to receive instructions for making applications to all relevant boards and commissions.

Interpreting the Design Standards:

The Historic District Commission and City staff shall take these factors into consideration when reviewing proposed work on a historic resource:

- The significance of the property
- Its context, with respect to other historic properties
- The location of any key, character-defining features
- The condition of those features

In addition, there are many cases in which the standards state that one particular solution is preferred, such as for the replacement of a damaged or missing feature, but the standard further notes that some alternatives may be considered if the preferred approach is not feasible. In determining such feasibility, the city will also consider:

- The reasonable availability of the preferred material
- The skill required to execute the preferred approach
- The quality, appearance and character of solutions, such as alternative materials.

Some design standards note that an alternative may be considered by the Historic District Commission on a “case by case basis.” This does not mean that the City may choose to waive the standard, but simply that its interpretation in a particular application may require closer consideration of the same factors that are described above.

Factors which should not have an impact on the decision of the Historic District Commission:

- **Whether the work was performed prior to getting a Certificate of Appropriateness;**
- **Whether the work was done in direct opposition to a ruling by the Historic District Commission;**
- **Whether correcting any inappropriate work will have a significant financial impact for the owner or contractor.**

Preservation Project Planning Steps:

Ask yourself these questions and provide as many answers as possible in your application to the HDC.

Why is the building significant? Understand the building’s context (age, connection to significant person, family or event, contribution to the character of the neighborhood, etc.)

What is the condition of the building and its key features? In what condition are the roof, windows, porch, siding and other elements? Can they be repaired? Must they be replaced? If so, can like materials be used?

What is the desired project? Is more space needed? Is there a new type of use going into the building? Describe in your application what changes will be made to the building and site, to give the Historic District Commission and city staff a better understanding of the project you’re requesting approval for.

What is the treatment strategy? Will new additions be treated differently than the original portion of the building? Will changes compliment the original design and feel of the building? When finished, would the building be recognizable by someone who lived at the time the building was built?

CHAPTER TWO

Design Standards for All Historic Preservation Projects



GENERAL PRESERVATION PRINCIPLES

A number of general principles apply to the preservation of both commercial and residential properties. These principles are briefly summarized below. The information and charts on the following pages augment the general preservation principles with more specific guidance for evaluating the appropriateness of projects involving historic properties.

Respect the historic character of a property.

- The basic form and materials of a building, as well as its architectural details, are a part of the historic character.
- Do not try to change the style of a historic resource or make it look older than its actual age.
- Confusing the character by mixing elements of different styles or periods can adversely affect the historic significance of the property.

Seek uses that are compatible with the historic character of the property.

- Converting a building to a new use different from the original use is considered to be an “adaptive reuse,” and is a sound strategy for keeping a building in service. For example, converting a gas station to a coffee shop is an adaptive use. A good adaptive use project retains the historic character of the building while accommodating a new function.
- Every reasonable effort should be made to provide a compatible use for the building that will require minimal alteration to the building and its site.
- Changes in use requiring the least alteration to significant elements are preferred. In most cases, designs can be developed that respect the historic integrity of the building while also accommodating new functions.

Working with Established Trees



The removal of any tree within the local historic district larger than eighteen inches in diameter at four-and-a-half feet above the ground requires a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA).

Remove a diseased, mature tree only on a written certification of its condition by an arborist, a landscape architect, a cooperative agent, or a city-designated agent. If it is necessary to remove a large tree or a hedge because of disease or storm damage, replace it with a new tree or hedge of the same species or with a similar appearance.

Pruning of large, mature trees that calls for the employment of a tree service also requires a Certificate of Appropriateness. Pruning techniques that promote the health and natural growth of the tree are encouraged. Unnatural pruning techniques such as topping, stubbing, dehorning or lopping are not appropriate.

It is not appropriate to install contemporary site features, such as swimming pools or decks, if they would compromise the historic character of the site or be visible from the street.

It is not appropriate to introduce gazebos, greenhouses, or playground equipment in front yards or front side yards.

Incorporate existing large trees and other significant landscape elements into plans for additions and new construction.

Care should be given during construction and site work not to compact the soil or damage the roots of large trees and shrubs or otherwise impact their safety and natural life.

Maintain significant features and stylistic elements.

Distinctive stylistic features and other examples of skilled craftsmanship should be preserved. The best preservation procedure is to maintain historic features from the outset to prevent the need for repair later. Appropriate maintenance includes rust removal, caulking and repainting. These features should not be removed.

Repair deteriorated historic features and replace only those elements that cannot be repaired.

Upgrade existing materials, using recognized preservation methods whenever possible. If disassembly is necessary for repair or restoration, use methods that minimize damage to original materials and facilitate reassembly.

When applying these basic preservation principles, some questions may arise about how they relate to conditions in which properties are badly deteriorated, and that may be unsafe. Some may argue that, in an urgent situation, they should not be held to these standards. In

other cases, they may contend that complying with them is not feasible. Fortunately, many products and trades have responded to the preservation market, and now offer products and services that are compatible with historic preservation principles. The city seeks to provide assistance to property owners in meeting their individual needs while also upholding the formally adopted policies for preservation. Either the city's appointed representative or someone in their network of preservation professionals should be able to answer questions about your project.



STANDARDS FOR THE TREATMENT OF HISTORIC FEATURES

Historic building features include architectural details, materials and specific building elements such as doors and windows. The proper treatment and preservation of such features is an important objective for historic properties in Donaldsonville.

The standards in this section apply to all projects involving work on a locally-designated individual historic landmark or a contributing structure in a locally-designated historic district. They do not apply to new construction in a locally-designated historic district.

Materials and Finishes

Primary historic building materials should be preserved in place whenever feasible. If the material is damaged, then limited replacement which matches the original should be considered. These materials should never be covered or subjected to harsh cleaning treatments. Preserving original building materials and limiting replacement to only pieces which are deteriorated beyond repair reduces the demand for, and environmental impacts from, the production of new materials and thus is sound sustainability policy.

Primary historic building materials found in Donaldsonville include wood, stone, brick, metal, stucco, plaster and concrete. Such materials should be preserved and rehabilitated whenever possible. The National Park Service publishes a series of "Preservation Briefs", which discuss proper treatment and repairs of various materials. These are free and may be easily found in an internet search.



2.1 Preserve original building materials.

Appropriate

- Repair deteriorated building materials by patching, piecing-in, consolidating or otherwise reinforcing the material.
- Remove only those materials which are deteriorated, and beyond reasonable repair.

Inappropriate

- Do not remove original materials that are in good condition (the Historic District Commission requires property owners to demonstrate that existing materials cannot be reasonably repaired prior to granting approval to remove original materials).

Using Alternative Materials on a Historic Structure

The Design Standards sometimes refer to the use of alternative materials when describing the appropriate treatment of historic building features and components such as moldings, windows, siding and other architectural details. An alternative material is one which is different from that used originally for a specific application. Such materials may also be called “substitute”, “replacement”, “synthetic” or “imitation” materials, and can include:

- Vinyl siding or fencing
- PVC decking or fencing
- Aluminum siding
- HardiePlank siding
- Cementitious fiber siding
- Spray-on coatings
- Synthetic stucco
- Panelized brick
- Vinyl, aluminum and other replacement windows
- Other non-original materials

Substitute materials can also include materials used to replace historic architectural features such as a resin cast cornice used in place of a stamped metal cornice. In other cases, an alternative material may be traditional when used for other applications, but not for the particular detail being considered. Using wood to replace an original stamped-metal cornice is an example.

Alternative materials may be considered by the Historic District Commission on a case-by-case basis as replacement materials or for use on a new addition or new building in a historic district. The Commission will consider factors including:

Potential Impact on Historic Significance. Removing original material diminishes the integrity of a historic property by reducing the percentage of building fabric that remains from the period of historic significance. Retaining the original material is always preferred. If this is not feasible, alternative materials may be considered.



Retain and expose original materials.

When used, an alternative material should convey the character, including detail and finish, of the original to the greatest extent feasible.

Durability. An alternative material should have proven durability in similar applications. While some new materials are very sturdy, others may degrade quickly and can be difficult to repair. It may also be unknown how new materials will react or stand up over long periods of time.

Appearance. An alternative material should have a similar profile, texture and finish as the original material. Some synthetic siding has an exaggerated, rusticated finish that is an inaccurate representation of original clapboard, and many vinyl products have a sheen that is out of character with that of painted wood and metal.

Location. Up close, it is easier to identify some alternative materials due to differences in texture, finish and feel. Tapping on a hollow plastic column or fence does not convey the same experience as the original. For this reason, locations that are more remote are better. Similarly, use of alternative materials is more appropriate on non-primary façades.

Cost. Some alternative materials are promoted because their initial costs appear to be less than repairing or replacing the original. When the other qualities of appearance and durability are proven, then the less expensive option may be appropriate. However, long-term, “life cycle” costs should also be weighed. Sometimes, the up-front saving is deceptive.

Environmental Impacts. The potential environmental impacts of alternative materials should also be considered including impacts associated with manufacture, transport, installation and ability to recycle.

Interaction with Historic Building Materials. Some alternative materials may interact negatively with historic materials. For example, some metals may corrode and stain original materials and some window and siding materials may expand and contract with temperature changes in ways that degrade weather protection properties.

2.2 Preserve the visibility of original historic materials.

Appropriate

- Consider removing later covering materials that have not achieved historic significance.
- Once a non-historic siding is removed, repair the original, underlying material.
- Carefully remove a later stucco finish if the process does not damage the underlying original building material.

Inappropriate

- Do not remove a later stucco covering if the process may damage the underlying original building material. Test the stucco to assure that the original material underneath will not be damaged.
- Do not cover or obscure original building materials.
- Do not add another layer of new material if a property already has a non-historic building material covering the original, as doing so would further obscure the original.

2.3 Use original materials to replace damaged materials on primary surfaces.

Appropriate

- Use original materials to replace damaged building materials on a primary façade. If the original material is wood clapboard, for example, then the replacement material should be wood that matches the original in finish, size and the amount of exposed lap.
- Replace only the amount of material required. If a few boards are damaged beyond repair, for example, then only they should be replaced, rather than the entire wall.
- Consider using an alternative material if a wood porch or deck floor needs replacement because of significant deterioration.

Inappropriate

- Do not replace building materials on a street-facing façade, such as wood siding and masonry, with alternative or imitation materials.

May be Considered on a Case-by-Case Basis by the Historic District Commission

- The Commission may consider alternative materials located on a residential accessory building, addition or façade which is not easily visible from the street.
- The Commission may consider alternative or imitation materials that match the style and detail of the original material to replace materials located above the pedestrian-level of a commercial building. For example, alternative materials may be considered for replacement of cornice elements.

2.4 When replacing material on a non-primary surface, match the original material composition, scale and finish.

Appropriate

- Use original materials to replace damaged materials on a non-primary façade.
- Use green building materials, such as those made with renewable and local resources to replace damaged materials on a non-primary façade if they do not impact the integrity of the building or its key features.

May be Considered on a Case-by-Case Basis by the Historic District Commission

- Alternative or imitation materials that match the style and detail (color, thickness, finish, etc.) of the original material to replace damaged non-primary building materials.

2.5 Use the gentlest means possible to clean façade materials.

Appropriate

- If cleaning is appropriate, a low-pressure water wash is preferred. Chemical cleaning may be considered if a test patch is first reviewed and negative effects are not found.
- Perform a test patch to determine that the cleaning method will cause no damage to the material surface.
- Be aware of the potential for hazardous materials (lead-based paint, asbestos, etc.) and use proper safety and disposal techniques.

Inappropriate

- Do not use harsh cleaning methods, such as sandblasting, which can damage historic materials, changing their appearance.

Historic Wood

Lap siding has always been the primary wood building material in Donaldsonville. It was used historically for exterior siding, trim and ornamental details. Most houses have a horizontal 6' bevel siding that is applied in an overlap fashion (4 1/2" of the siding exposed). Vertical board and batten siding is also used.

Early woodwork should be retained, and, if necessary repaired. When properly maintained, original wood has a long lifespan.

2.6 Protect wood features from deterioration.

Appropriate

- Maintain paint on wood surfaces.
- Provide proper drainage and ventilation to minimize decay.
- Maintain protective coatings to retard deterioration and ultraviolet damage.

Historic Masonry

Brick, stone, terra cotta, stucco and concrete are the primary historic masonry building materials in Donaldsonville. They are used as building walls, site walls, steps, and walkways. Historic masonry and concrete should be repaired and preserved whenever possible .

2.7 Preserve original masonry materials.

Appropriate

- Preserve masonry features that define the overall historic character, such as walls, cornices, pediments, steps and foundations.

Inappropriate

- Avoid rebuilding a major portion of exterior masonry walls that could be repaired.

2.8 Do not paint brick or stone that was not painted historically.

Appropriate

- Maintain the natural uncovered water-protective layer, or patina, to protect masonry from the elements.

Inappropriate

- Do not paint masonry walls (this can seal in moisture, which may cause extensive damage over time).

2.9 Re-point deteriorated masonry mortar joints.

Appropriate

- Duplicate original mortar in strength, composition, color and texture.
- Duplicate the mortar joints in width and profile.

Inappropriate

- Avoid using mortar with a high Portland cement content, which will be substantially harder than the original. Over time, water and wind will erode the softer, historic brick, leaving a cavity.



Historic Metal

Metals were used for a variety of applications including columns, roofs, fences and decorative features. They include cast iron, steel and copper. Traditional metals should be preserved.

2.10 Preserve significant architectural metal features.

Appropriate

- Provide proper drainage on metal Surfaces. to minimize water retention.
- Maintain protective coatings, such as paint, on exposed metals.

2.11 Repair metal features by patching, splicing or otherwise reinforcing the original metal whenever possible.

Appropriate

- When replacement is necessary, the new metal shall be compatible with the original.



Historic Paint

Historically, most wood surfaces on the exterior of a building were painted to protect them from weathering. Concrete and stucco structures were also sometimes painted.

Note that all projects must meet lead-based paint requirements. Preservation Brief 37 from the National Park Service describes options for working with building materials which may contain lead paint.

2.12 Plan repainting carefully.

Appropriate

- Always prepare a good substrate. Prior to painting, remove damaged or deteriorated paint only to the next intact layer, using the gentlest means possible .
- Use compatible paints. Some latex paints will not bond well to earlier oil-based paints without a primer coat.



Building Elements

Individual historic building elements should be repaired and preserved whenever possible .

Historic Windows

The character-defining features of a historic window should be preserved. Historic windows can be repaired by re-glazing and patching and splicing wood elements such as muntins, frame, sill and casing. Repair and weatherization is more energy efficient, and less expensive than replacement. If an original window cannot be repaired, new replacement windows should be in character with the historic building. These shall match the size, look and profile of the window being replaced.

2.13 Preserve the functional and decorative features of a historic window.

Appropriate

- Preserve historic window features including the frame, sash, muntins, mullions, glazing, sills, heads, jambs, moldings, operation and groupings of windows.
- Repair, rather than replace, frames and sashes, whenever possible.

2.14 Maintain original window proportions and components.

Appropriate

- Preserve the position, number and arrangement of historic windows in a building wall (flexibility in modifying a window on the rear of a contributing structure may be considered).
- Maintain the original size, shape and number of panes.
- Repair and maintain windows regularly, including wood trim, glazing putty and glass panes.
- Maintain historic art or stained glass.

Inappropriate

- Do not enclose a historic window opening or add a new opening.
- Do not significantly increase the amount of glass on a primary façade as it will negatively affect the integrity of the structure.

2.15 Preserve the proportions of historic window openings.

Appropriate

- Restore altered window openings on primary façades to their original configuration, when feasible.

Inappropriate

- Do not reduce an original opening to accommodate a smaller window or increase it to accommodate a larger window.

2.16 Match replacement window design to the original.

Appropriate

- If the original is double-hung, use a double-hung replacement window, or a window that appears to be double-hung.
- Give special attention to matching the original design on a street façade.

2.17 Use materials that appear similar to the original when replacing a window.

Appropriate

- Use the same material as the original window, especially on character-defining walls (preferred approach).
- Consider an alternative material only if the appearance of the window components will match those of the original in dimension, profile and finish.
- Use clear window glazing that conveys the visual appearance of historic glazing (transparent low-e glass is preferred).
- Replacement windows on street facades must match original window material. Wood or metal clad windows may be considered on a case-by-case basis for secondary facades, but must follow the same sash pattern.

Inappropriate

- Do not use vinyl and unfinished metals as window materials.
- Do not use metallic or reflective window glazing.
- Do not use synthetic glazing materials (Plexiglas, clear acrylic, etc.) on the exterior, which will discolor and scratch over time.

2.18 Match the profile of the sash and its components to that of the original sash.

Appropriate

- Maintain the profile depth of the sash, which steps back to the plane of the glass in several increments.

2.19 Convey the character of historic sash divisions.

Appropriate

- Use genuine muntins that divide a window into smaller panes of glass on key walls and other highly visible places.

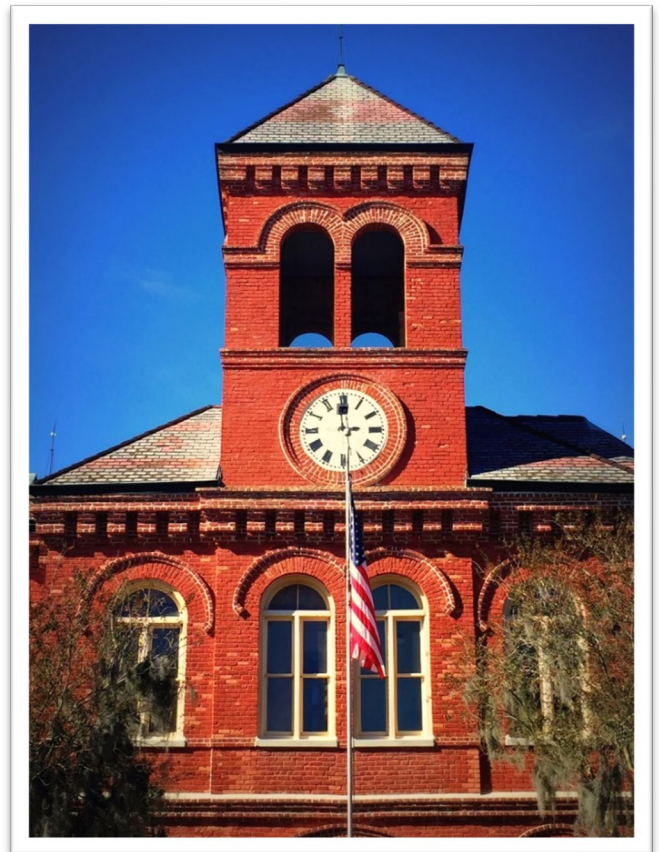
Inappropriate

- Do not use strips of material located between panes of glass to simulate muntins.

2.20 Enhance the energy efficiency of an existing historic window, rather than replace it.

Appropriate

- Add weather stripping and caulking around the window frame.
- Install an insulated window shade, or interior insulating window to increase efficiency and reduce noise.
- Use clear UV films on the interior of windows to reduce solar heat gain.



Interior insulating windows can increase energy efficiency and reduce outside noise while maintaining historic wood windows.

Historic Shutters

Wood shutters are common to Donaldsonville buildings and have been used since the 19th century. Shutters provide protection from the heat and provide some protection from storms. Louvered or slatted shutters, also known as blinds, were placed on most window openings and many door openings. The louvers were usually operable.

2.21 Maintain existing wood shutters.

Appropriate

- Preserve and repair existing wood shutters.

Inappropriate

- Do not remove original shutters. The shutters serve as accents, provide security, and offer protection against the climate.
- Insure that if replacement shutters are necessary, that they are appropriately sized to match the window (provide full covering of the window when closed).
- Bermuda (or top-hinged shutters) are not allowed on street facades without evidence of prior use.



Historic wood shutters serve a purpose and add greatly to the historic character of a building.

2.22 Replace shutters where they previously existed.

Appropriate

- Use replacement shutters that match the size and scale of the original shutters.
- Match the width of new or replacement shutters to the width of the associated window or opening.
- Use replacement shutters that appear to be operable (even if they are not).
- Use replacement shutters that match the size of the window openings.

Inappropriate

- Do not use metal or vinyl storm shutters on windows that are visible from the street.
- Do not install shutters that are narrower than the associated window or opening.

May be Considered on a Case-by-Case Basis by the Historic District Commission

- The Historic District Commission may consider metal or vinyl shutters for windows that are not visible from the street.

Awnings

Awnings are appropriate for traditional locations such as over windows and doors or attached to porches. Awnings should only be applied when evidence suggests that they are appropriate. Evidence could include photographic documentation, physical evidence on the house, or identical houses with evidence. However, not all houses with awnings today had awnings historically. Thus, they are not always appropriate.

2.23 Use material for awnings that is durable and weather resistant.

Appropriate

- Use canvas or a similar woven material (preferred approach).
- Use awning colors that blend with colors of the structure. Darker color awnings will fade faster.
- Consider using wood slat awnings if there is evidence that this awning type was used historically.

Inappropriate

- Do not use awning materials without proven durability or that have a gloss finish.
- Avoid placing the business name on awnings.

2.24 Install an awning to fit the opening.

Appropriate

- Use a shed type awning for a rectangular window or door opening.
- Use curved or rounded awning forms over arched windows to match the curve of the opening.

Inappropriate

- Do not install a bubble or curved form awning on a rectangular opening.
- Do not install awnings that cover or conceal significant architectural details such as the window hood molding.
- Do not install awnings so that they cover transom lights or decorative millwork.

Historic Doors

There are many different types and styles of front doors on historic Donaldsonville buildings. Most common are single doors with wood panels, wooden doors with glass lights, or wooden doors with sidelights and/or transoms.

The character-defining features of a historic door and its distinct materials and placement should be preserved. When a new door is needed, it should be in character with the building, especially when it is located on a primary wall.

Preserve the decorative and functional features of a primary entrance door.

Appropriate

- Repair locks and other hardware if feasible.
- Preserve original and decorative features, including door frames, sills, heads, jambs, moldings, detailing, transoms and flanking sidelights.

Inappropriate

- Do not change the historic position of doors on primary façades.
- Do not add additional doors on primary façades.
- Do not enclose transoms or sidelights.

2.26 Maintain the original position and proportions of a historically significant door.

Inappropriate

- Do not alter the original size and shape of a historic door.

2.27 Repair or replace a damaged historic door to maintain its general historic appearance.

Appropriate

- Use materials that appear similar to that of the original.
- When replacing a historic door, use a design that appears similar to the original door.

Inappropriate

- Do not use solid core or flush doors.

2.28 If necessary, install simple screened doors.

Appropriate

- Use painted wooden screen and storm doors or louvered wooden doors that are backed with screening.

Inappropriate

- Do not use screen doors with highly decorative designs (metal scrollwork, etc.)



Maintain historic doors, which lend greatly to a building's historic character.

Historic Roofs

The character of a historic roof should be preserved, including its form and materials, whenever feasible.

2.29 Preserve the original roof form of a historic structure.

Appropriate

- Maintain the perceived line and orientation of the roof as seen from the street.

Inappropriate

- Avoid altering the angle of a historic roof.

2.30 Preserve the original eave depth of a roof.

Appropriate

- Maintain traditional overhangs because they contribute to the perception of the building's historic scale.

Inappropriate

- Do not cut back roof rafters and soffits.

2.31 Repair and maintain original roof materials wherever possible.

Appropriate

- Avoid removing historic roofing material that is in good condition.
- Patch and replace damaged areas of existing roof.
- Preserve decorative elements, including crests and chimneys.
- Retain and repair roof detailing, including gutters and downspouts.

Inappropriate

- Do not remove original roofing that can be repaired.

2.32 Use new roof materials that convey a scale and texture similar to those used traditionally.

Appropriate

- Consider the architectural style of the structure when choosing roof replacement materials. Use materials with a similar texture, pattern and finish to the original roof material (materials with earth tones are generally best).
- Consider using an architectural shingle roof. Use a color similar to the original, or of the material in weathered condition.
- If installing a new metal roof, apply and detail it in a manner that is compatible with the historic character of surrounding structures. Use a ribbed roof or one with a standing metal seam to break up the surface.
- Use metal with a matte, non-reflective finish.
- Install the roof to have low profile seams.
- Finish roof edges in a similar fashion to those seen traditionally.
- If repairing specialty roof materials such as glazed clay tile or barrel shingle, use a matching replacement material. Consider using cement tiles when replacing clay tile roofs on larger buildings.
- If using shingles with embedded photovoltaic systems, use a dark color.

Inappropriate

- Do not use rolled roofing material except on flat roofs.

2.33 Minimize the visual impact of skylights and other rooftop devices.

Appropriate

- Locate skylights below the ridgeline of the roof (a skylight that is flush with the roof plane may be considered where it remains visually subordinate).

Inappropriate

- Do not interrupt the plane of the historic roof with a skylight.

Architectural Details

Architectural details contribute to the character of a structure and some details are associated with specific architectural styles. Those details that are key character-defining features should be preserved. The method that requires the least intervention is preferred.

2.34 Preserve significant stylistic and architectural features.

Appropriate

- Retain and treat exterior stylistic features and examples of skilled craftsmanship with sensitivity.
- Preserve storefronts, cornices, turned columns, brackets, exposed rafter tails, jigsaw ornaments and other key architectural features.
- Employ preventive maintenance measures such as rust removal, caulking and repainting.
- Minimize damage to historic architectural details when repairs are necessary.
- Document the location of a historic feature that must be removed and repaired so it may be repositioned accurately.
- Patch, piece-in, splice, consolidate or otherwise upgrade deteriorated features using recognized preservation methods.
- Stabilize or fix isolated areas of damage using consolidants. Epoxies and resins may be considered for wood repair.
- Protect significant features that are adjacent to the area being worked on.

Inappropriate

- Do not remove or alter distinctive architectural features that are in good condition and can be repaired. This includes cast iron storefronts, columns, windows, molding and trim, and cornices.

2.35 Preserve historic features.

Appropriate

- Preserve carriage step blocks
- Preserve hitching posts
- Preserve wooden water towers and cisterns in rear yards

2.36 Use technical procedures for cleaning, refinishing and repairing architectural detail that will maintain the original finish.

Appropriate

- Use the gentlest means possible that will achieve the desired results.
- Employ treatments such as rust removal, caulking, limited paint removal and reapplication of paint or stain where appropriate.

2.37 If repair is not possible, replace an architectural feature accurately.

Appropriate

- Use a design that is substantiated by physical or pictorial evidence to avoid creating a misrepresentation of the building's history.
- Use the same kind of material as the original detail when feasible. However, an alternative material

may be acceptable if the size, shape, texture and finish conveys the visual appearance of the original. Alternative materials are usually more acceptable in locations that are remote from view or direct contact.

- If reconstructing an architectural detail is impossible, design a compatible interpretation by using a new feature that is similar to comparable features in general size, shape, texture, material and finish. The replacement must match the original in material, composition, design, color, texture and other visual qualities.

Inappropriate

- Avoid adding architectural details that were not part of the original structure. For example, decorative millwork should not be added to a building if it was not an original feature or of a different design. Doing so would convey a false history.

Adaptive Reuse

Preserving rather than replacing a building can significantly reduce environmental impacts. Re-using a building preserves the energy and resources invested in its construction, and removes the need for producing new construction materials.

The best use for a historic structure is that for which the building was designed or a closely related one. Every effort should be made to provide a compatible use for the building, one that will require minimal alteration to the building and its site. An example of an appropriate adaptive use is converting a residence into a Bed and Breakfast. This can be accomplished without major alteration of the original building fabric.

It may be that in order to adapt a building to the proposed new use, such radical alteration to its significant elements would be required that the entire concept is inappropriate. In most cases, however, designs can be developed that respect the historic integrity of the building while also accommodating new functions.



Adaptive reuse of a former filling station and garage on Railroad Avenue maintained the historic character of the building.

2.38 Select uses that are compatible with the historic character of the building.

Appropriate

- When a significant change in use is necessary to keep a building in active service, select a use that requires the least alteration to significant elements.

Inappropriate

- Do not select a use that requires alteration of the structure's character-defining features.
- Do not select a use that adversely affects the historic integrity of the building.

Historic Additions

In some cases, a previously constructed addition may have taken on historic significance of its own. One constructed in a manner compatible with the original building and associated with the period of significance may merit preservation in its own right. These existing additions should be evaluated for potential re-use.

In contrast, more recent additions may detract from the character of the building and could be considered for modification or removal.



2.39 Preserve an older addition that has achieved historic significance in its own right.

Appropriate

- For example, a kitchen wing located on a residential building may have been added in its history. Such an addition is usually similar in character to the original building in terms of materials, finishes and design.

Accessibility

Where it applies, owners of historic properties should comply to the fullest extent possible with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), while also preserving the integrity of the character-defining features of their buildings and sites.

2.40 Design accessibility solutions to minimize impacts of the significant features of historic structures.

Appropriate

- Identify the historic building's character-defining spaces, features and finishes so that accessibility code-required work will not result in their damage or loss.
- Provide barrier-free access that promotes independence for the disabled to the highest degree practicable, while preserving significant historic features.
- Locate lift systems at one end of a porch, and at a rear/side location where visual impacts will be minimized. (where possible).
- Screen lift systems that are visible from the public right-of-way and paint screens to match the historic porch and structure.

Inappropriate

- Do not install accessibility solutions that do not minimize impacts on historic character or that alter key historic features.

Communications Equipment

Communications equipment includes antennae, satellite dishes, telecommunication dishes and cell phone equipment. Most such equipment has diminished greatly in size in recent years. The placement of communications equipment in a historic district requires prior approval by the Historic District Commission, if the equipment will be visible from the public right-of-way.

2.41 Minimize the visual impacts of communications equipment.

Appropriate

- Position communications equipment to be hidden or minimally-visible from public streets (including both streets when located on corner lots).
- Remove communications equipment that is no longer functional and patch/paint areas to prevent rot.
- Combine multiple antennae into one array wherever possible.
- Install satellite and telecommunications dishes that are minimal in size.

Inappropriate

- Do not damage exterior woodwork or trim detail during installation of communications equipment.
- Do not print or affix advertising on communications equipment, including satellite dishes.

Utility Equipment

Utility equipment includes junction boxes, external fire connections, telecommunication devices, cables, conduits, HVAC equipment and other devices. When installed on historic properties, utility equipment should be visually unobtrusive and integrated into the design of the site and building.

2.42 Minimize the visual impacts of utility equipment on the public way and the surrounding neighborhood.

Appropriate

- Screen equipment from view.
- Use low-profile or recessed mechanical units on rooftops.
- Locate utility and mechanical equipment out of public view.
- When possible, consider locating utility lines underground, to minimize visual impact.

Inappropriate

- Avoid locating equipment on a primary facade
- Do not damage character-defining features of historic structures when installing utility equipment.

2.43 Minimize the visual impacts of utility lines, junction boxes and similar equipment.

Appropriate

- Locate utility lines and junction boxes on secondary walls and group them, when feasible.
- Group lines in one conduit, when feasible.
- Paint these elements, to match the existing background color, when feasible.
- Locate utility pedestals (ground mounted) to the rear of building.

SUSTAINABILITY STANDARDS FOR HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Objectives for historic preservation and community sustainability are often in alignment. This section provides solutions for maintaining and improving resource and energy efficiency in a historic building, as well as methods for approaching energy conservation and generation technologies. Other sustainability standards throughout this document will also apply.

Planning a Rehabilitation Project for Energy Efficiency

Follow these basic steps when considering a rehabilitation project for energy efficiency:

Step 1: Establish Project Goals

Develop an overall strategy and project goals to maximize the effectiveness of a project. Developing overall project goals will establish a broad view that can help place individual actions into context. Project goals should focus on minimizing use of resources and energy, minimizing negative environmental impacts, and retaining the historic integrity of a property. Strategies should maximize the inherent value of the historic resource prior to considering alterations or energy generation technology.

To inform a project strategy, conduct an energy audit. Energy audits can give a comprehensive view of how energy is currently used, in the daily and seasonal cycles of use, and can also provide perspective on the payback of investment for potential work on the building. For example, an energy audit, when examined based on an overall strategy, may demonstrate that priorities should be on increasing insulation in walls, ceilings and foundations, rather than replacing windows.

Step 2: Maintain Building Components in Sound Condition.

Maintaining existing building fabric reduces negative environmental impacts. Re-using a building preserves the energy and resources invested in its construction, and removes the need for producing new construction materials.

Step 3: Maximize Inherent Sustainable Qualities.

Typically, historic buildings were built with resource and energy efficiency in mind. Construction methods focused on durability and maintenance, resulting in individual building features that can be repaired if damaged, thus minimizing the use of materials throughout the building's life cycle.

Buildings were also built to respond to local climate conditions, integrating passive and active strategies for year-round interior climate control, which increase energy efficiency. Passive strategies typically include building orientation and features such as roof overhangs and windows to provide both natural day lighting as well as management of solar heat gain. Active strategies typically include operable building features such as awnings and double-hung and transom windows.

Identify a building's inherent sustainable features and operating systems and maintain them in good operating condition. In some cases these features may be covered, damaged or missing; repair or restore them where necessary.

Step 4: Enhance Building Performance.

A historic building's inherent energy efficiency should be augmented using techniques which improve energy efficiency without negatively impacting historic building elements. Noninvasive strategies such as increased insulation, weatherization improvements and landscaping should be employed.

Step 5: Add Energy-Generating Technologies Sensitively.

The flexibility of many historic structures allows for the respectful integration of energy efficient technologies. Energy-generating technologies are the most commonly known strategies. However, the efficiency of a historic structure will often be great enough that generation technologies aren't the most practical solutions. Utilize strategies to reduce energy consumption prior to undertaking an energy generation project.

Maintaining the Inherent Energy Efficiency of a Historic Building

Original sustainable building features and systems should be maintained in good operating condition.

2.44 Preserve the inherent energy efficient features of the original building.

Appropriate

- Identify a building's inherent sustainable features and operating systems and maintain them in good condition.
- Repair or restore covered, damaged or missing features where appropriate.
- Retain and repair original roof material.

2.45 Maintain a buildings' sustainability features in operable condition.

Appropriate

- Retain original shutters, awnings, canopies and transoms. Operable features such as these will increase the range of conditions in which a building is comfortable without mechanical climate controls.
- Install draft stoppers in a chimney. Open chimney dampeners can increase energy costs by up to 30 per cent.

Enhancing Energy Performance of Historic Structures

Improvements to enhance energy efficiency should complement the original building. The structure, form and materials should be sensitively improved in energy efficiency terms to preserve the building's character.

2.46 Use noninvasive strategies when applying weatherization improvements.

Appropriate

- Weather-stripping, insulation and storm windows are energy efficient, cost effective, and historically sensitive approaches.
- Weather-strip original framework on windows and doors.
- Install additional insulation in an attic, or crawl space (with appropriate vapor barrier) as a simple method to make a significant difference in a building's energy efficiency. Provide sufficient ventilation to avoid moisture build-up in the wall cavity.
- Install weatherization strategies in a way that avoids altering or damaging significant materials and their finishes.
- Use materials which are environmentally friendly and that will not interact negatively with historic building materials.
- When a roof must be replaced, consider installing a radiant barrier.

2.47 Enhance the energy efficiency of original windows and doors.

Appropriate

- Make best use of original windows; keep them in good repair and seal all leaks.
- Retain early glass, taking special care in putty replacement.
- Maintain the glazing compound regularly. Remove old putty with care.
- Use operable systems such as storm windows, insulated coverings, curtains and awnings to enhance performance of original windows.
- Weather strip and caulk original framework.
- Double pane glazing may be acceptable where original glazing has been lost and the frame can support the weight and profile.

2.48 Design site and landscape improvements to promote energy efficiency.

Appropriate

- Use drought tolerant plants to reduce the need for irrigation.
- Plant trees and shrubbery to serve as windbreaks and provide seasonal shading.

2.49 Avoid adverse impacts to a historic building when installing a green roof.

Appropriate

- A green roof provides thermal mass to help regulate internal temperature, as well as helps to reduce the urban heat island effect.
- Green roof material should not replace significant roofing materials.
- The weight of the green roof should not threaten the structural integrity of the building. If additional structural support is needed, it should avoid adverse impact to the building's historic significance.

Using Energy-Generating Technologies

When integrating modern energy technology into a historic structure, maintain the resource's historic integrity and the ability to interpret its historic significance. Use of energy-generating technologies should be the final option considered in an efficiency rehabilitation project. Utilize strategies to reduce energy consumption prior to undertaking an energy generation project. Consider the overall project goals and energy strategies when determining if a specific technology is appropriate for your project.

As new technologies are tried and tested, it is important that they leave no permanent negative impacts to historic structures. The reversibility of their application will be a key consideration when determining appropriateness.

2.50 Locate energy-generating technology to minimize impacts to the historic character of the site and structure.

Appropriate

- Locate technology where it will not damage, obscure or cause removal of significant features or materials.
- Maintain the ability to interpret the historic character of the building.

2.51 Install new technology in a reversible manner.

Appropriate

- Install technology in such a way that it can be readily removed and the original character easily restored.
- Use materials which are environmentally friendly and that will not interact negatively with historic building materials.

Solar Collectors

Solar collectors should be designed, sized and located to minimize their effect on the character of a historic building.

2.52 Minimize adverse effects from solar collectors on the character of a historic building.

Appropriate

- Place collectors to avoid obscuring significant features or adversely affecting the perception of the overall character of the property.
- Size collector arrays to remain subordinate to the historic structure.
- Mount collectors flush below the ridgeline on a sloping roof. This will not cause a significant decrease in the device's solar gain capabilities.
- Install collectors on an addition or secondary structure.
- Minimize visual impacts by locating collectors back from the front façade.
- Ensure that exposed hardware, frames and piping have a matte finish, and are consistent with the color scheme of the primary structure.

2.53 Use the least invasive method feasible to attach solar collectors to the roof.

Appropriate

- Avoid damage to significant features.
- Install a collector in such a way that it can be removed and the original character easily restored.

Inappropriate

- Do not threaten the structural integrity of the building with collector arrays.

2.54 Consider using building-integrated photovoltaic technology where the use of new building material is appropriate.

Appropriate

- Plan installation of integrated photovoltaic systems so they will not hinder the ability to interpret the historic significance of the structure. For example, installation of solar shingles on a rear or secondary roof façade where the original roof material is missing or significantly damaged would be appropriate.



Solar panels on at the rear of a structure (roof of back porch).

CHAPTER THREE

Design Standards for Residential Properties



DESIGN STANDARDS FOR RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES (Existing & New)

Donaldsonville includes a diverse range of historic residential properties. The traditional character-defining features of the district should be preserved. It is also important for new construction in the historic residential areas to reinforce preservation objectives.

This chapter builds on the general preservation standards with specific design standards for residential properties including:

- Rehabilitation, alteration and expansion of locally-designated individual historic residential landmarks including houses and multi-family buildings.
- Rehabilitation, alteration and expansion of contributing residential structures in locally-designated historic districts, including houses and multi-family buildings.
- New residential construction or additions in any locally-designated historic district.

DESIGN STANDARDS FOR ALL RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES (Existing & New)

Maintaining the compatibility of historic residential sites and buildings is an important objective. The standards in this section apply to all residential projects. This includes work on a locally-designated individual historic residential landmark and work on a contributing historic structure or new construction in a locally-designated historic district. Note that standards for specific “historic” considerations such as the treatment of historic porches, do not apply to new construction or additions.

Residential Site Standards

The site layout of individual residential properties is an important characteristic of Donaldsonville’s historic residential areas. Important site considerations include walkways, yards, fences, parking and planting.

Sidewalks and Walkways

Historically, a variety of paving materials on Donaldsonville’s residential properties. Paths or walkways were gravel or oyster shell. Brick, unglazed tiles, slate, concrete, and packed earth were also used.

Sidewalks placed in City right-of-way must adhere to City Code requirements, with proper permits obtained from the Department of Public Works.

3.1 Maintain historic sidewalks.

Appropriate

- Maintain historic stamped sidewalk impressions. (These are the names of the contractors that installed the sidewalk)

3.2 Visually connect the street and building.

Appropriate

- Maintain or install a walkway leading directly from the sidewalk to the main building entry.

3.3 Install new sidewalks to be compatible with historic ones in the area.

Appropriate

- Maintain the existing width of neighboring sidewalks.
- Use traditional materials such as brick or concrete (oyster shells, unglazed tile, slate/stone, or loose gravel may be considered if they do not negatively affect accessibility and safety).

Inappropriate

- Pebble-surface concrete is not permitted.
- Asphalt is not permitted.

Yards

The progression of public to private space on a property is an important characteristic in Donaldsonville's residential districts. A grassy front lawn, with accent planting and shade trees are essential features.

3.4 Provide a landscaped front yard.

Appropriate

- Reserve most of the front yard area for a grass lawn.
- Consider using decorative modular pavers, grass and cellular paving systems in order to minimize the impact of hard surface paving where grass or other plant materials are not used.

Inappropriate

- Do not pave the front yard.



Fences and Walls

Fences and low walls have defined Donaldsonville's front yards since the 19th century. Wood picket and cast-iron fences were the most common historic fence materials. Some more elaborate fences have an unusual combination of cast and wrought-iron materials. Low walls that followed the sidewalk line were masonry and frequently stuccoed brick. Front yards were not enclosed with high walls; these were confined to rear yard areas.

Fences may be placed on the property line, but may not extend into the City right-of-way, without a License to Use Agreement with the City.

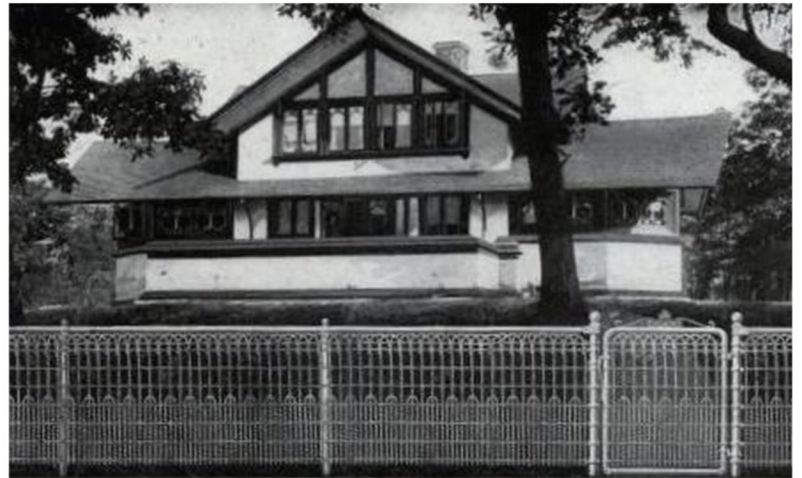
3.5 Maintain historically significant fences and site walls.

- Maintain historically significant wooden picket or cast iron fences.
- Maintain historically significant stuccoed brick or concrete masonry site walls.

3.6 Design a new fence to be compatible with the architectural style of the house and existing fences in the neighborhood.

Appropriate

- Install a painted wood picket fence (this is the preferred option in most historic residential areas, and is often the easiest to install).
- Install a simple wood-and-wire fence, provided that it is appropriate to the style of the house and does not exceed 48" in height.
- Install a cast-iron or other metal fence not exceeding 48" in height if located in the front yard.
- Install a fence that uses alternative materials that have a very similar look and feel to wood, proven durability, matte finish and an accurate scale and proportion of components.



"Double Loop" or woven wire fences were popular in the first half of the 20th century.

Appropriate for a Non-Corner Side or Rear Yard Fence

- Install a fence that uses alternative materials with proven durability, matte finish and an accurate scale and proportion of components.
- Install a simple wood-and-wire fence, provided that it is appropriate to the style of the house (may exceed 48" in height if compatible).

Inappropriate

- Do not install chain link fencing.
- Do not mix wooden and metal fence styles.
- Do not use heavy brick fence posts unless there is historic documentation of their use.

Parking and Driveways

Driveways placed in the city right-of-way must adhere to the requirements for sidewalks as prescribed by the City Code. The proper permits must also be obtained.

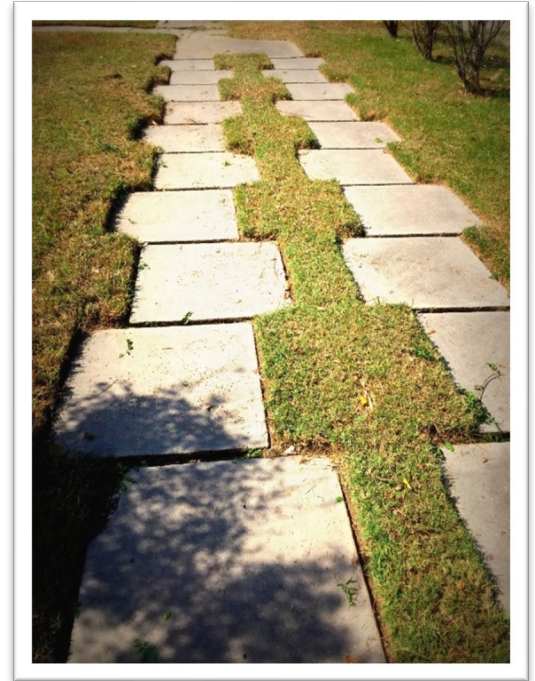
3.7 Minimize the visual impact of parking.

Appropriate

- Locate a parking area at the rear or to the side of a site whenever possible.
- Use landscaping to screen parking areas.
- Keep paved areas and curbs cuts for driveways to a minimum widths.
- Maintain historic strip driveways. These driveways, from the 1920s and 1930s, allow for better drainage and permit grass to grow between the concrete strips.

Inappropriate

- Paving the front yard for parking is not permitted.
- New driveways and garages that open onto a primary street are not permitted.
- A new semi-circular drive in a front yard is not permitted unless there is evidence of its previous existence.



Ribbon driveways minimize the amount of paved surface and help reduce street flooding.

Planting

When site development, such as parking, storage and equipment areas, creates an unavoidable negative visual impact on abutting properties or to the public way, it should be screened with landscaping that complements the existing natural character and context of the site.

Ordinarily, approval is not needed from the Historic District Commission for planting materials. Approval must be obtained from the City if the work involves removing trees or shrubs from the City's right-of-way. Removal of existing trees is discouraged. Consider the "full-grown" size of the tree or shrub when planting.

3.8 Use plant materials to screen utility installations and service and parking areas.

Appropriate

- Shrubs and trees that branch close to the ground are most effective.
- Keep trees and shrubs trimmed, both as a security precaution and to minimize storm damage.
- Use a flowering vine to cover an existing chain-link fence.
- Use landscaping to complement your building and its features.
- Keep landscaping simple and easy to maintain.

Lighting

Site and building lighting are important considerations for both historic buildings and new construction.

Lighting installation must adhere to City Code requirements. In addition, the Historic District Commission must approve the removal or addition of exterior light fixtures. The description, product data sheet, or sample light fixture should be submitted to the Commission for review.

3.9 Preserve and maintain original fixtures.

Appropriate

- Historic fixtures can be reconditioned and rewired.

3.10 Design lighting that is in character with the setting.

Appropriate

- Fixtures should be compatible with architectural and site design elements.
- Employ new fixtures that are modest in character.
- Mount new light fixtures on porch ceilings or adjacent to entrances.
- Inset ceiling lights that spread a soft light over a porch entrance are permitted.
- Mount a light fixture such that it will not interfere with the opening and closing of shutters or doors.
- Security lighting, such as floodlights, should be mounted on rear or side of a structure rather than on the front.
- Use incandescent lighting or sources that appear similar in character. Fluorescent and LED sources may be used when the color is similar to the light temperature color of incandescent (2400 K).
- Landscape or architectural lighting to highlight a building's features should be low-profile.

Inappropriate

- Avoid historic-looking new fixtures because they may convey a sense of false history.
- Do not use light sources that create a harsh glare or a color that is not similar to that of incandescent light.

Residential Building Standards

Historic Residential Roofs

Most roofs on older residential buildings have one of the following shapes: gable, hipped, pyramidal or a combination of a gable and hipped roof. Typical 19th and early 20th century roofing materials were slate, metal, wood shingles, asbestos tiles or composition materials.

When replacing a roof, select a material and a pattern that is historically appropriate to the house. Investigate whether coating or patching your historic metal roof is a viable option to replacement. If documentation of the original roof exists or an early roof on the house, use a comparable roofing material, similar in size, shape, texture, and color. If documentation is not available, precedents on similar buildings may be considered. Look at the roofing on building types that are similar to your house.



3.11 Preserve the original roof form of a historic residential structure.

Appropriate

- Maintain and repair the original size and shape of dormers.
- Avoid altering the angle of a historic roof.
- Installing a new dormer on a secondary roof plane may be considered when it will remain subordinate in scale and character to the roof itself. Proposals for new dormers on secondary façades require Historic District Commission approval.

Inappropriate

- Do not introduce new dormers on a visible street façade. Do not introduce skylights, vents or attic ventilators on street-facing roof slopes.
- New roofing systems that permanently damage or alter the existing historic roof are not permitted.

Historic Residential Windows

Windows in older Donaldsonville buildings are important character-defining features. Most windows are wooden, double-hung sash. This means that they have two balanced sashes, one sliding over the other vertically.

Each sash is divided into panes, also called “lights.” Windows are identified by the number of panes in each sash. For example, most windows are commonly 6/6 (“six over six”), 4/4, 2/2 or 1/1 (“one over one”) in style. You may sometimes find windows where the upper sash has more panes than the lower sash, like the example at right, with 12/1 windows on the second story.



3.12 When replacing a window, match the original design and pane configuration.

Appropriate

- Use wood frames and sashes for windows on a primary façade.
- Maintain the wood window trim if metal or vinyl windows are installed (non-street façades only).
- Reinstall windows and doors in previously enclosed openings. City staff will field verify all evidence of the feature’s previous existence prior to approval. Must provide evidence if not salvageable.
- Use clear replacement panes.

Inappropriate

- Vinyl or metal windows are not permitted on street façades
- Tinted glass is not permitted.
- Do not change the size or position of a window opening.
- The addition of large picture windows on the main façade is not permitted.
- Do not use dark window screens.
- Do not use unpainted metal sashes with a raw metal color.

Historic Residential Garage Doors

3.13 Use a wooden garage door to match the historic architectural style wherever possible.

Appropriate

- Keep details simple on a replacement wooden door.
- Paint a wooden garage door to help maintain its condition.
- Consider replacing a garage door on the primary façade with a metal door that has an appropriate look and finish if a wood door can't be found to meet requirements.

Inappropriate

- Do not use a metal garage door on the primary façade of a building.

Historic Residential Porches and Decks

Porches and galleries are, and always have been, the focal point of Donaldsonville houses. They frame and protect the main entrances. They also display a concentration of decorative details. In many neighborhoods, they continue to serve as outdoor living rooms. Some very simple houses have an uncovered porch or stoop at the entrance.

Most porches are built entirely of wood, in keeping with the frame house construction. There are some exceptions, such as Craftsman-style dwellings that have wooden tapered columns on top of masonry pedestals. A few early frame houses also have cast-iron balustrades that are original.

Preserving front porches is a high priority. Rear and side porches also may be important architectural features, especially for buildings that are located on corner lots, and their preservation is encouraged (although these may also be appropriate locations for new additions.)

3.14 Maintain an original porch or gallery on a house.

Appropriate

- Maintain the height and shape of the porch roof.
- Re-open an enclosed rear porch.
- Consider removing a non-historic rear access stair.

Inappropriate

- Do not enclose or screen a front porch.

3.15 If necessary, replace damaged porch elements.

Appropriate

- Use materials that are similar to the historic building materials.
- An alternative material may be considered for a porch in a secondary location, when the appearance is similar to that of the original.

3.16 If necessary, replace damaged porch railings and steps.

Appropriate

- Use as much of the original materials and ornamentation as possible.
- Where necessary, replace original railing and step materials with alternative materials that have a similar texture and finish to the original materials.
- Re-install porch rails to match existing rails when appropriate.

Inappropriate

- Do not use cast-iron columns and railings where no evidence exists that they were used historically.
- Do not use brick bases for wood columns (exception is Craftsman styles).
- Do not use steel pipe columns.
- Do not use horizontal railings or railings that are too elaborate for the building (of a different style).
- Do not use concrete supports and/or steps.
- Do not relocate front stairs or steps

Standards for Residential to Commercial Conversion

In the historical districts, there are buildings that were built as residences and are now used for commercial or mixed commercial and residential purposes. Sometimes a change of use or an added use is acceptable. The design standards for existing residential buildings also apply to residential structures that are used for commercial activities. See the City's zoning code for guidelines pertaining to parking requirements, including Bed and Breakfast establishments.

In general, the conversion of a residential building to commercial uses is discouraged. The predominant original character of the districts and the buildings is residential.

3.20 Maintain a residential structure's character when converting to a commercial use.

Appropriate

- Ensure that a house continues to look like a house despite its change in use to commercial.



DESIGN STANDARDS FOR RESIDENTIAL NEW CONSTRUCTION AND ADDITIONS

This section presents design standards for the construction of new residential structures. They apply to the design of new infill in the residential historic areas of Donaldsonville’s local historic district. These guidelines also apply when alterations are being considered for non-contributing properties in those contexts. These “infill” principles relate to the fundamental relationships of a building to its context—such as mass, scale and form. These same principles are the most important for other, non-historic houses.

Designing a building to fit within the historic character of a neighborhood requires careful thought. Preservation in a historic district context does not mean that the area must be “frozen” in time, but it does mean that, when new building occurs, it should occur in a manner that reinforces the basic visual characteristics of the district. This does not imply, however, that a new building must look old. In fact, imitating historic styles is generally discouraged.

Rather than imitating older buildings, a new design should relate to the fundamental characteristics of the historic houses on a block while also conveying the stylistic trends of today. It may do so by drawing upon basic ways of building that make up a part of the character of the property. Such features include the way in which a building is located on its site, the manner in which it relates to the street and its basic mass, form and materials. When these design variables are arranged in a new building to be similar to those seen traditionally, visual compatibility results.

These basic design relationships are more fundamental than the details of individual architectural styles and, therefore, it is possible to be compatible with the historic context while also producing a design that is contemporary.

Site Standards for New Residential Construction

New residential construction in the locally-designated historic district should be sited and oriented to be compatible with surrounding neighborhood patterns. The below site standards for new construction apply in addition to the general residential site standards.

3.21 Locate a new structure to fit within the range of front yard setbacks on the block.

Appropriate

- Where front yard setbacks are uniform, place a new structure in general alignment with its neighbors.
- Where front yard setbacks vary, place a new structure within the established range of front yard setbacks on the block.

Inappropriate

- Do not locate a structure outside the range established range of front yard setbacks.

3.22 Maintain the side yard spacing pattern on the block.

Locate a structure to preserve the side yard spacing pattern on the block as seen from the street.

3.23 Orient the front of a house to the street and clearly identify the front door.

Appropriate

- Design the front entrance to be clearly identifiable.
- Use a porch to define the entry.
- Corner buildings shall be oriented to the major street and especially at the intersection of two major streets, may use a corner entrance.
- The orientation of corner buildings shall follow the precedent of the adjacent corner properties and other corner properties in the district.

Massing Standards for New Residential Construction

Donaldsonville's traditional residential structures have varied heights, articulated masses and pedestrian-scaled fronts that convey a sense of human scale.

While it may be larger than a traditional residential structure in the surrounding context, a new residential structure in a locally-designated historic district should appear to be similar in mass and scale to those seen historically in the block.

A special consideration is the design of a multifamily building in a single-family context. Where this is permitted by zoning, a new multifamily building in a single-family context should reflect façade widths of traditional single family structures in the area.

3.24 Construct a new structure to reflect the mass and scale of historic residential structures in the area.

Appropriate

- Subdivide the mass of a larger building into smaller "modules" that are similar in size to buildings seen traditionally.
- Design building features to incorporate traditional dimensions. Wall plate heights, window and door head heights and other vertical proportions should match the appropriate scale of the period.
- Design corner buildings to be similar in height to buildings along adjoining blocks.

3.25 Express façade components in ways that will help to establish a human scale and as appropriate to adjacent buildings and buildings in the contiguous block.

Appropriate

- Include horizontal elements in the design of residential buildings that help to express the height of floors and that relate visually to similar features in the block. For example, use a porch and groupings of windows to convey human scale.
- Articulate a building mass to create visual interest and convey a three-dimensional form. Provide vertical and horizontal wall offsets to reduce the overall scale of a building.
- Design a new residential façade to respect the traditional proportions of height to width.
- Use floor-to-ceiling heights that appear similar to those of existing historic buildings.
- Window proportions, pairing and trim should reflect the existing historic nature of the district as well as buildings located adjacent or in the contiguous block.

3.26 Position taller portions of a structure away from neighboring buildings of lower scale.

Appropriate

- Where permitted by the base zoning, taller structures should be located to minimize looming effects on lower scaled neighbors.
- The height of first floors should be aligned whenever possible.
- A building should step down toward any lower, adjacent historic properties.

3.27 Organize the massing of a new multifamily building to appear similar in scale to historic structures in the context.

Appropriate

- For larger buildings with more than two units, define individual units in modules that express traditional dimensions.

Building Forms

A similarity of building forms also contributes to a sense of visual continuity. In order to maintain this feature, a new building should have a basic form that is similar to that seen traditionally.

3.28 Use simple, rectangular building forms.

Appropriate

- Use building forms that appear similar to traditional forms.

Inappropriate

- Unless necessary, do not use building forms that do not have a traditional orientation to the street.

3.29 Use building and roof forms similar to those seen traditionally in the district.

Appropriate

- Use a pitched or gable roof form where they exist in the surrounding historic context.

Inappropriate

- Do not use an exotic roof form on the primary structure.
- Do not use shed roof forms except on porches or small additive forms attached to the primary structure.

Building Standards for New Residential Construction

New residential structures in the locally-designated historic district should incorporate building features that promote compatibility with the surrounding context.

Architectural Character

Design a new building to be visually compatible with nearby historic houses, while conveying the evolution and history of the area.

3.30 Design a new residential structure to reflect its time.

Appropriate

- Use contemporary interpretations of historic architectural styles when designing a new residential structure.

- Reflect current architectural trends in a new residential structure to convey the period in which it is built and continue to accurately portray the evolution of the community.

Inappropriate

- Do not imitate or copy the historic architectural styles of Donaldsonville in the design of a new building.
- Do not imitate or copy historic architectural styles that are not native to Donaldsonville to avoid confusing the architectural traditions of the community.

3.31 Use new interpretations of architectural features that are common to historic residences in the district.

Appropriate

- Use porch columns, balustrades, brackets, rafter ends, windows, doors and other historically-appropriate trim elements.

Inappropriate

- Do not use historic details that were not found in Donaldsonville.

3.32 Use new interpretations of architectural features that are common to historic residences in the district.

Appropriate

- Use porch columns, balustrades, brackets, rafter ends, windows, doors and other historically-appropriate trim elements.

Inappropriate

- Do not use historic details that were not found in Donaldsonville.

Porches and Entries

A street-oriented front porch and entry is a distinctive characteristic of most historic houses in Donaldsonville, and should be incorporated into new construction.

3.32 Design a front entry to be compatible with the historic context.

Appropriate

- Orient a front porch towards the street and sidewalk.
- Proportion a front porch to be compatible with the architectural style of the building and surrounding historic context.

3.33 Design a porch to be compatible with the historic context.

Appropriate

- Use materials similar to those seen historically. Wood balustrades and porch posts (sometimes with brick piers) were most common.
- Use sufficiently substantial porch posts and columns so that the porch does not appear to float above the entry.

Inappropriate

- Do not visually overwhelm the primary façade.

Building Materials

Use building materials that appear similar to those used traditionally in Donaldsonville. Building materials of a new structure should be compatible with adjacent historic houses. They should appear similar to those seen traditionally to establish a sense of visual continuity.

3.34 Use building materials that are compatible with the surrounding context.

Appropriate

- Use wood siding with a weather-protective, painted finish, or masonry (brick, stone or genuine stucco) as the primary exterior building material (preferred approach).
- Consider using alternative materials that are similar to traditional materials in scale, proportion, texture if they have proven durability in the local climate (i.e., cementitious fiber board with a smooth finish).
- Acceptable roofing materials are architectural composite shingles, corrugated and R-panel standing seam metal roofing.

Inappropriate

- Do not use highly reflective materials such as glass or polished metal as a primary building material.
- Three (3) tab shingles.

3.35 When using horizontal lap siding, ensure that it is applied in a manner similar to that seen historically.

Appropriate

- Use new siding that is similar to the lap exposure, texture and finish of traditional wood siding.
- When possible, use trim boards that show depth and typify high-quality construction.

Inappropriate

- Do not use a finish that is out of character, such as a raised grain, or rusticated surface.

3.36 When using masonry, ensure that it appears similar in character to that seen historically.

Appropriate

- Use brick with a modular dimension similar to that used traditionally.
- Consider using stucco for appropriate architectural styles.

Standards for New Secondary Buildings on Residential Properties

These *Design Standards* apply to the design of a new secondary structure. These include garages, garage apartments, garden sheds and alley houses.

3.37 Design a secondary structure to be subordinate in scale to that of the primary building.

Appropriate

- If a proposed secondary building is to be wider than one lot, break up the mass into smaller modules that reflect traditional secondary structures.

3.38 Locate a new secondary structure to be in line with other structures in the district.

- Traditionally, these are located along an alley edge or near the back of a lot.

3.39 Use materials that appear similar in character to those of the primary structure.

Inappropriate

- Metal buildings and long-term shipping containers are not permitted in the local historic district.

Standards for Residential Additions

Additions to locally-designated historic residential landmarks and residential structures in locally-designated historic districts should be compatible with the original structure and surrounding historic context.

Additions to Historic Residential Structures

A new addition, if appropriately designed, can be made to a historic building without compromising its historic character. When making an addition to a locally-designated individual historic residential landmark or contributing residential structure in a locally-designated historic district, it is important to consider the relationship with the surrounding historic context and the scale, placement and materials of the addition.

3.40 Design an addition to a historic residential structure to be clearly differentiated from the original structure.

Appropriate

- Use a lower-scale connecting element to join an addition to a historic residential structure.
- Differentiate an addition from the historic original using changes in material, color and/or wall plane.

3.41 Keep an addition to a historic residential structure simple in size, shape, materials, color and detail.

Inappropriate

- Do not try to make an addition appear older than it is. This creates a false sense of history and is not permitted.
- Do not disturb the street sides of existing buildings whenever possible.

3.42 Design an addition to a historic residential structure to be subordinate to the primary structure.

Appropriate

- Place an addition to the side or the rear.
- Vertical additions must be placed in the rear so they are not visible from the street or right-of-way.

CHAPTER FOUR

Design Standards for Commercial Properties



DESIGN STANDARDS FOR COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES

Donaldsonville features an intact historic commercial core centered around Railroad Avenue and Mississippi Street. Historic commercial buildings are also located in some residential historic districts. Historic commercial resources require careful stewardship. It is also important for new construction in historic commercial settings to reinforce preservation objectives.

This chapter builds on the general preservation standards with specific design standards for commercial properties including:

- Rehabilitation, alteration and expansion of locally-designated individual commercial historic landmarks
- Rehabilitation or alteration of contributing commercial structures.
- New commercial construction or additions.

DESIGN STANDARDS FOR ALL COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES

This section applies to all commercial projects in a historic context. This includes work on locally-designated individual historic landmarks and all commercial rehabilitation and new construction projects in the locally-designated historic district.

Commercial Site Standards

Parking

The visual impact of surface parking should be minimized. On-site parking should be subordinate to other uses and the front of the lot should be screened.

Also see the City Code for requirements relating to parking lots.

4.1 Minimize the visual impact of on-site surface parking.

Appropriate

- Locate a parking area to the rear or to the interior of a block whenever possible. This is especially important on corner properties. Corner properties are generally more visible than interior lots, serve as landmarks and provide a sense of enclosure to an intersection.

Inappropriate

- Do not use the front setback of a property for parking.

4.2 Site a surface lot so it will minimize gaps in the continuous building wall of a commercial block.

Appropriate

- Where a parking lot shares a site with a building, place it at the rear of the site, or if this is not feasible, to the side of the building.

4.3 Provide a visual buffer where a parking lot abuts a public sidewalk.

Appropriate

- Use a landscaped strip or planter. A combination of trees and shrubs can be used to create a landscape buffer.
- Consider the use of a low or decorative wall as screen for the edge of the lot. Materials should be compatible with those of nearby buildings.

Connectivity

4.4 Retain the historic network of streets and alleys.

Appropriate

- Retain the historic network of streets and alleys as public circulation space and for maximum public access.
- Link to existing public right-of-ways, when feasible.

Inappropriate

- Do not enclose streets and alleys, or close them to public access.

Landscaping

When site development, such as parking, storage and equipment areas, creates an unavoidable negative visual impact on abutting properties or to the public way, it should be mitigated with landscaping or a wall to buffer or screen it.

See the city ordinance for any additional landscaping requirements.

4.5 Provide a visual buffer for a parking lot or service area.

Appropriate

- Provide a landscape buffer or screen wall at the street edge(s) of a parking lot.
- Provide a landscape buffer or screen wall/fence for ground mounted mechanical equipment, service and/or storage areas.
- Plant all trees buffering a parking lot or service areas in the ground rather than in planter boxes or containers.

Site Lighting

The light level at the property line is a key design consideration. This is affected by the number of fixtures, their mounting height, and the lumens emitted per fixture. It is also affected by the screening and design of the fixture. Light spill onto adjacent properties and into the night sky should be minimized.

See the City Code for requirements relating to parking lighting, and for additional site lighting requirements.

4.6 Shield lighting to prevent off-site glare.

Appropriate

- Incorporate cut-off shields into fixtures to direct light downward.
- Shield fixtures to minimize light spill onto adjacent properties and into the night sky.

Inappropriate

- Ensure that luminaires (lamps) are not visible from adjacent streets or properties.

4.7 Provide lighting for a pedestrian way that is appropriately scaled to walking.

Appropriate

- Mount lights for pedestrian ways on short poles or consider using light posts (bollards).

4.8 Ensure that light fixtures are in character with the setting.

Appropriate

- Use fixtures that are compatible with architectural and site design elements.
- Maintain existing spacing patterns for light fixtures.
- Use incandescent light or “warm” light sources.

Plazas, Courtyards and Patios

Small plazas and courtyards are appropriate in historic commercial areas, as are raised or at-grade patios and seating areas. Such site features should be designed to promote active, pedestrian-oriented streets while protecting the surrounding historic character.

4.9 Locate a public plaza or courtyard to complement the character of the surrounding context.

Appropriate

- Ensure that the gap in the streetwall is proportioned to maintain the strong, urban line of buildings.

4.10 Design a plaza or courtyard to be activated by pedestrian activity.

Appropriate

- Locate a plaza or courtyard to be level with, and directly accessible from, the public sidewalk.
- Include amenities that invite the use of a public plaza or courtyard such as:
 - Street furniture
 - Public art
 - Historical/interpretive marker

4.11 Locate patios and dining areas and raised decks to minimize visual impacts on the streetscape.

Appropriate

- Consider locating an at-grade dining area to the side or rear of a property.
- Place decks to the side or rear of a property (preferred).
- Set back a rooftop deck from the building façade. Decks located near the front façade should include only seating areas.

Inappropriate

- Do not obstruct a sidewalk with an at-grade patio or dining area. Provide ample room for egress.
- Do not use projecting or cantilevered decks unless they are appropriate for the specific setting or are located on the rear of the building and do not negatively impact neighboring historic resources.

Sidewalk Amenities and Street Furniture

Sidewalk amenities and street furniture consist of items normally located in or adjacent to the city right-of-way and are intended for the benefit of the public. Sidewalk amenities include sidewalk paving and curbing materials, handicap access ramps, etc., newspaper racks, benches, planters, phone booths, bike racks, trash receptacles, etc. are all referred to as street furniture. The pedestrian way should always be preserved for safe and convenient movement. The restoration of curbing using original materials is encouraged. The original curb and sidewalk material can sometimes be found under the surface materials and those features should be preserved.

4.12 Preserve historic sidewalk materials.

Appropriate

- Preserve poured concrete walkways and curbs.
- Preserve brick, limestone and granite features.

4.13 Design new sidewalks to be consistent with the existing context.

Appropriate

- Ensure that new sidewalk materials have a color and texture consistent to the building and the surrounding paving.
- Ensure that sidewalk elevations are consistent with adjacent sidewalks.

4.14 Design site furnishings to complement the character of a building or site.

Appropriate

- Install compatible trash receptacles. Please consult City staff for information on approved receptacles and the sidebar on “Obtaining a Permit to Use the City Right-of-Way.”
- Consolidate newspaper stands and racks into modular newspaper dispensers whenever possible.
- Use simple containers that complement the surrounding context when planting small potted plants and ornamental trees in front of buildings.

4.15 Design and place umbrellas to maintain pedestrian circulation.

Appropriate

- Install no more than one umbrella for every 14 linear feet of storefront to be placed according to the individual sidewalk amenities at the site.
- Use umbrellas that are no greater than 7' diameter and are associated with table and chairs.
- Install an umbrella to maintain a minimum clearance of 7' above the surface of the sidewalk elevation in order to provide adequate circulation space below.
- Keep umbrellas upright; no tilting of the umbrellas will be permitted. The umbrellas shall be set back from adjacent business right-of-way by 1'.
- Construct an umbrella pole of either wood or powder coated metal.
- Use a canvas-type umbrella material suitable for outdoor use. No plastic fabrics, plastic/vinyl laminated fabrics, or any type of rigid materials, are permitted for use as umbrellas within an outdoor seating area.
- Ensure that umbrellas placed in the right-of-way match the placement and the design shown in the site plan.
- Ensure that all items are removed from the right-of-way at end of business hours.

Inappropriate

- Do not use umbrellas with decorative borders such as fringes, tassels, or other such ornamentation.
- Do not use umbrellas with any fluorescent or other strikingly bright or vivid color. Umbrella covers must be of one solid color from the approved color palette.
- Do not use umbrellas that include signage for the business or for any other entity in the form of working, logos, drawings, pictorial or photographic representations, or any other likewise identifying characteristic.
- Do not bore into the sidewalk to install an umbrella (not that the applicant must provide umbrella holders).

Public Art

Public art is welcomed as an amenity. It should be serve as an integral component of the urban environment and be strategically located to serve as accent to a streetscape, plaza, park or other public area.

Note that the Historic District Commission will not review the content of public art, but will evaluate its location and potential impact on a surrounding historic district.

4.16 Use public art whenever possible.

Appropriate

- Incorporate art that complements the historic context.
- Strategically place public art at civic facilities to serve as accents.

4.17 Ensure that public art is compatible with the historic context.

Appropriate

- Ensure that art installation does not impede interpretation of the historic character of the district.
- Locate public art such that the ability to perceive the character of historic buildings nearby is maintained.

Inappropriate

- Do not place a large sculpture in front of a historic building.

4.18 Locate public art to enhance the urban environment.

Appropriate

- Locate artwork in strategic locations such as gateways or as focal points in public plazas or parks.
- Incorporate public art with streetscape furnishings. An artist could “customize” or reinterpret conventional features of a streetscape. For example, an artist might design a gate feature, tree grate or planter.

Service Areas

A service area should be visually unobtrusive and should be integrated with the design of the site and the building.

4.19 Orient a service entrance, waste disposal area and other similar uses toward service lanes and away from major streets.

Appropriate

- Screen a service entrance with a wall, fence or planting.

4.20 Position a service area to minimize conflicts with other abutting uses.

Appropriate

- Minimize noise impacts by locating sources of offensive sounds away from other uses.
- Use an alley when feasible.

4.21 Minimize the visual impacts of service areas.

Appropriate

- Screen a service area with a wall, fence or planting.
- Screen and paint restaurant vent areas.
- Ensure that a service area is in character with the building and site it serves.

Commercial Building Standards

Historic Commercial Facades

Historic commercial façades in Donaldsonville typically have a number of character-defining features that convey the historic significance of the property and also promote visual interest. Such features should not be altered, obscured or removed.

4.22 Preserve the character-defining elements of a historic commercial façade.

Appropriate Features to Preserve

Cornice molding: A decorative band at the top of the building.

Upper-story windows: Windows located above the street level often have a vertical orientation.

Mid-belt cornice: A decorative band at the top of the first floor.

Sign band: A flat band running above the transoms to allow for the placement of signs.

Transom: The upper portion of the display window, separated by a frame.

Display windows: The main portion of glass on the storefront, where goods and services are displayed.

Entry: Usually set back from the sidewalk in a protected recess.

Kickplate: Found beneath the display window.

4.23 Repair an altered storefront to its original design.

Appropriate

- Use historic photographs when determining the original character of a storefront design.
- Consider alternative designs that are contemporary interpretations of traditional storefronts where the historic façade is missing and no evidence of it exists (the new design should continue to convey the character of typical storefronts).

4.24 Retain the kickplate as a decorative panel.

Appropriate

- If the original kickplate is covered with another material, consider exposing the original design.
- If the original kickplate is missing, develop a sympathetic replacement design (Wood is an appropriate material for a replacement on most styles but alternative materials may also be considered when appropriately used with the building style).

4.25 Preserve the character of the cornice line.

Appropriate

- Continue the repetition of the cornice line along the street to contribute to the visual continuity on the block.
- Reconstruct a missing cornice when historic evidence is available.
- Use a simplified interpretation for a replacement cornice if evidence of the original is missing (appropriate replacement materials include brick, stamped metal, wood and some durable synthetics).

4.26 Retain the original shape of the transom in a historic storefront .

Appropriate

- Do not remove or enclose a transom (the upper glass band of traditional storefronts which introduce light into the depths of the building and save on light costs).
- Preserve the historic transom shape and configuration.
- Use new glass if the original glass is missing. However, if the transom must be blocked out, be certain to retain the original proportions. One option is to use it as a sign panel or decorative band.

Commercial Canopies

Traditionally, canopies were noteworthy in the commercial areas of Donaldsonville. They provided a continuous, shaded walkway that protected pedestrians from the elements. Canopies also provided an extension of the interior space that helped cool the building. Their continued use is encouraged.

4.27 Consider reconstructing a commercial canopy that existed historically.

Appropriate

- Accurately reconstruct a missing historic canopy based on sufficient documentation.
- Position a canopy to be consistent with historically-established canopy heights. When the original height is not known, use a height level with the second floor or that of other canopies on the block.
- Do not use architecturally salvaged canopy poles without adequate documentation & supporting historical research.

4.28 Minimize impacts to historic buildings and canopies when adding new balcony railings balustrades or barriers.

Appropriate

- Use both design and materials to differentiate a new railing or barrier from historic balcony designs.
- Design a new railing or barrier to be simple and compatible with the architecture of the building.
- Ensure that the railing or barrier is as transparent as possible while still adhering to the City's adopted building code.
- Install a railing or barrier so that it may be removed in the future without impairing the essential form and integrity of the historic building and canopy.

Inappropriate

- Do not obscure character-defining features of the building with a barrier or railing.
- Do not replicate existing building features that can create a false sense of historical development.
- Do not destroy or damage character-defining features of the historic building or canopy when installing a railing or barrier.

4.29 Design a new canopy or awning to be in character with the building and streetscape.

Appropriate

- Design a new canopy to follow the historical precedent of the district and building (where previously existing).
- Mount an awning or canopy to accentuate character-defining features.
- Fit the awning or canopy with the opening of the building.
- Design an awning to be a subordinate feature on the façade.
- Use colors that are compatible with the overall color scheme of the façade. Solid colors are encouraged.
- Use simple shed shapes for rectangular openings; round or convex awnings for corresponding openings
- Use metal canopy columns that are relatively slender in diameter, typically four to six inches (4" to 6"), and have little or no ornamentation.
- Design a canopy with a relatively narrow fascia having no more than 8-12".
- Locate the face of a canopy/awning a minimum of 24" inset from the curb.
- There shall be a minimum clearance of 7' from the bottom of the awning and all points of the sidewalk.
- Awnings and canopies shall be kept in good repair and replaced when needed.

Inappropriate

- Do not install a canopy when utility easements exist in the city right-of-way.
- Awnings should not cover more than 1/3 of storefront window area.
- Do not place the support poles for a canopy in the middle of a sidewalk. Poles must be placed as close to the curb as allowed (24").
- Do not use canopy poles that are highly decorative.
- Do not use odd shapes, bull nose awnings and bubble awnings.
- Avoid placing signage on balconies and awnings. In unusual circumstances where signage is allowed on awnings, the square footage of that sign shall count toward the total square footage allowed for the subject building.
- Do not internally illuminate an awning.

Exterior Color

The Historic District Commission reviews exterior color for projects in the locally-designated historic district.

Choosing the right combination of colors for a historic rehabilitation or new construction project can unify building elements with the façade and highlight important architectural detailing. Paint color selection should be appropriate to the architectural style and complement the building and its surroundings.

4.30 Use a façade color scheme that reads as a single composition.

Appropriate

- Use color schemes that are simple in character.
- Use one base color for the building walls and another for the roof.
- Use one to three accent colors for trim elements.
- Return the building to its historic paint colors if adequate archival information is available.

4.31 Use muted base or background colors.

Appropriate

- Use muted colors for building features.
- Use harmonizing or contrasting colors for trim accents.
- Use matte or low luster finishes instead of glossy ones.
- Use non-reflective, muted finishes on all features if possible.

Inappropriate

- Do not use accent colors that contrast so strongly as to not read as part of the composition.
- Do not paint unpainted stone, brickwork or terra-cotta.
- Do not use sandblasting to clean historic surfaces and/or to remove old paint.
- Do not use colors associated with a company's "brand", where they are historically inappropriate.

Appropriate Color Combinations

- Three colors are generally sufficient to highlight a building façade.

Base Color. This appears on the upper wall and frames the storefront. The major expanses of space on a storefront will be painted this color.

Roof Color. A metal roof the requires painting should only be painted the color of its original material.

Major Trim. This defines the decorative elements of the building and ties the upper façade trim with the storefront. The major trim color must complement the base or body color. Elements include:

- Building and storefront cornice
- Window frames, sills and hoods
- Storefront frames, columns, bulk-heads and canopies.

Minor Trim. This is intended to enhance the color scheme established by the base and major trim colors and may be used for window sashes, doors & selective details. It is typically a darker shade of the major trim color.

Approval of Paint Colors

Several paint colors have been pre-approved by the Historic District Commission for use in the locally-designated historic district. Painting projects using these colors, or the original building colors may be administratively approved by the city's representative, without design review by the Commission.

Commercial Signage Standards

Signs are used to identify the location of a business and attract customers. Signs on historic commercial properties should be integral to the design of the building and noticeable to customers.

The City's zoning ordinance provides the basic requirements for signs throughout Donaldsonville. The following design standards supplement the code.

Treatment of Historic Signs

Historic signs contribute to the character of Donaldsonville and have individual value. Historic signs should be retained whenever possible, especially when they are a significant part of a building's history or design.

4.32 Consider history, context, and design when determining whether to retain a historic sign.

Retaining a historic sign is especially important when it is:

- Associated with historic figures, events or places
- Significant to the building or historic district, or as evidence of the history of the product, business or service advertised
- Characteristic of a specific historic period
- Integral to the building's design or physical fabric
- Attached in a way that removal could harm the integrity of a historic property's design or damage its materials
- An outstanding example of the sign maker's art because of its craftsmanship, use of materials or design
- Recognized as a popular focal point in the community.



True Friends Benevolent Association Sign on Lessard Street.

4.33 Maintain historic wall signs whenever possible.

Appropriate

- Leave historic painted wall signs, or "ghost signs", exposed whenever possible.

Inappropriate

- Do not over-restore historic wall signs to the point that they no longer provide evidence of a building's age and original function.

May be Considered on a Case-by-Case Basis by the Historic District Commission

- The Commission will consider historic wall sign restoration, following appropriate procedures.

Design of New and Modified Signs

Whether it is attached to a historic building or associated with new development, a new or modified sign should exhibit qualities of style, permanence and compatibility with the natural and built environment. It should also reflect the overall context of the building and surrounding area.

Total Sign Area

The City's zoning code limits the total area of signs on properties throughout Donaldsonville. The following design standards supplement those regulations. When considering a request for additional signage, the Historic District Commission will consider the proportions and design of the façade, the total number of businesses or services per building and the design of the sign(s).

4.34 Limit the total area of signs.

Appropriate

- Design street-level signage so as not to overwhelm the street level of the building façade.
- Use only one upper-level wall sign per building façade.

Sign Installation on a Historic Building

When installing a new sign on a historic building, it is important to maintain the building's key architectural features and minimize potential damage to the historic façade.

4.35 Avoid damaging or obscuring architectural features when installing a sign on a historic building.

Appropriate

- Minimize the number of sign anchor points when feasible.
- Use an existing sign bracket if possible.
- Design a sign to integrate with the architectural features of a historic building.

Inappropriate

- Do not penetrate brick when attaching a sign to a masonry building.
- Do not obstruct the character-defining features of a building with signage.

Grandfathered Signs

Some historic signs may not conform with the City's current sign regulations. However, such signs are generally "grandfathered" and are allowed and encouraged to remain in place with sensitive maintenance and repair.

The City's Historic Preservation Officer or staff representative must approve all changes to grandfathered signs other than color, copy or content. Note that sandwich board signs are not grandfathered.

Sign Location

A new sign should be located to preserve traditional signage patterns and help direct users toward the primary building entrance.

4.36 Use a compatible sign location.

Appropriate

- Locate a sign above or near the primary entrance to an establishment.
- Locate a sign to emphasize design elements of the historic building façade.
- Mount a sign to fit within existing architectural features using the shape of the sign to reinforce the horizontal lines of the building façade. Projecting wall signs should not be placed higher than the sill of the second story window and be level with the top of the storefront for single story buildings.

Sign Character, Content and Lighting

A sign should be in character with the materials, colors and details of the building and its content should be visually interesting and clearly legible.

4.37 Use simple, context-specific sign designs.

Appropriate

- Relate sign content to a business within the building.
- Design a sign to be subordinate to the historic building façade and other neighboring signs.
- Limit the number of colors used on a sign (three primary colors and additional accent colors are generally sufficient).
- Use one to three simple, easy-to-read typefaces that are similar to traditional typeface designs along the street or block.
- Signs should be simple, only state the name of the business and its circa. It should express a direct message and be easily read.
- Professionally made signs are encouraged. Handmade signs should be by a professional sign maker.
- New signs are preferred to be flush with the building façade.
- Ground floor businesses shall be limited to two signs (projecting and flush). Upper tenants shall use painted window signs. If multiple tenants occupy a building, a directory sign should be used.

4.38 Use sign materials that are compatible with the character and materials of the building.

Appropriate

- Use permanent, durable materials that reflect the Donaldsonville context, such as wood, metal, glass or paint/gold leaf and should be painted, incised or of raised lettering.

Inappropriate

- Do not use highly reflective materials on a sign.
- Neon, internally lit, backlit plastic signs, flashing signs and roof signs are not allowed.

4.39 Where necessary, use a compatible, shielded light source to illuminate a sign.

Appropriate

- Direct lighting toward a sign from an external, shielded lamp.
- Use a warm light, similar to daylight.
- If halo lighting is used to accentuate a sign or building, locate the light source so that it is not visible.

Inappropriate

- Do not overpower the building or street edge with lighting.

Traditional Sign Types

A variety of sign types may be appropriate in Donaldsonville, if the sign contributes to a sense of visual continuity and does not overwhelm the character of the building façade.

The City's zoning code includes location and design standards for several specific sign types. The following design guidelines supplement code standards for several sign types that are potentially appropriate in Donaldsonville.

Awning or Under Canopy Signs

An awning sign lies flat against the surface of the awning material. An under canopy sign is one that is suspended below a canopy and is usually perpendicular to the building face, but may sometimes be parallel.

Awning or under canopy signs are appropriate for areas with high pedestrian activity. They may also be used when other sign types would obscure architectural details. Under canopy signs that are parallel to the building façade should not extend beyond the building wall.

Wall Signs and Window Signs

A window sign is any sign, picture, symbol or combination thereof, designed to communicate information about an activity, business, commodity, event, sale or service that is placed inside within one foot of the inside window pane or upon the windowpanes or glass, and which is visible from the exterior of the window.

Window signs should minimize the amount of window covered and preserve transparency at the sidewalk edge.

Tenant Panel/Directory Signs

A tenant panel or directory sign displays tenant names and locations for a building containing multiple tenants.

Locating a consolidated tenant panel or directory sign near a primary entrance on the first floor wall of a building can help minimize the total number of signs on a building and reduce visual clutter.

Projecting Signs

A projecting sign is attached perpendicular to the wall of a building or structure.

A projecting sign should be designed and located to relate to the building façade and entries. It is appropriate to locate a small projecting sign near the business entrance, just above or to the side of the door or to mount a larger projecting sign higher on the building, centered on the façade or positioned at the corner. The bracket for a projecting sign should complement the sign composition.

Pole Mounted Signs

A pole-mounted/freestanding sign is generally mounted on one or two simple poles.

Pole-mounted signs are not allowed.

Murals

A mural is a painting located on the side of the building. Mural content should generally reflect a cultural, historic or environmental event or subject matter related to Donaldsonville.

Existing historic murals should be restored whenever possible. The Historic District Commission may consider a new mural painted on the side of a building (a new mural may not be located on the primary building façade) that depicts cultural, historic or environmental events or subject matter from Donaldsonville. It is not appropriate to depict a commercial product brand name or symbolic logo of a product that is currently available, nor is it appropriate to obscure key features of a historic building with a mural. Trompe l'oeil murals that depict architectural features or scenes from Donaldsonville are appropriate.

An accurate color rendering of any proposed mural must be presented to the Historic District Commission. All murals are considered on a case-by-case basis.

Sandwich Board and Temporary Signs

A sandwich board sign is any freestanding "A-frame type" sign supported by the ground which may or may not be attached to the ground or other objects. Temporary signs include banners, decorations or bunting which commemorate special on-premise events, grand openings or promotional sales.

The City's zoning code provides the base requirements for sandwich board and temporary signs, including allowed location and duration. Sandwich board signs are generally appropriate only for ground floor businesses, but may be used to advertise upper-story businesses if the character of the sidewalk is not adversely affected. The Historic District Commission reserves the right to limit the number of sandwich board signs per block, to ensure public safety and the historic integrity of the district.

DESIGN STANDARDS FOR NEW COMMERCIAL CONSTRUCTION AND ADDITIONS

This section presents design standards for new commercial construction in the locally-designated historic district and design standards for additions to locally-designated commercial landmarks or contributing commercial structures in the locally-designated historic district.

Massing Standards for New Commercial Construction

Donaldsonville's traditional commercial structures have varied heights, articulated façades and pedestrian-oriented street levels that convey a sense of human scale. While they are often visually interesting, these structures are usually composed of simple rectangular forms that contribute to a cohesive streetscape.

A new commercial building in a locally-designated historic district should continue these traditions.

4.40 Maintain the traditional size of buildings as perceived at the street level.

Appropriate

- Design the façade height of a new structure to fall within the range seen historically in the area.
- Design the façade of a new structure to respect the traditional proportions of height to width.

4.41 Establish a sense of human scale in the building design.

Appropriate

- Use vertical and horizontal articulation design techniques to reduce the apparent scale of a larger building mass.
- Incorporate changes in color, texture and materials to help define human scale.
- Use architectural details to create visual interest.
- Use materials that help to convey scale in their proportion, detail and form.

4.42 Design building massing to maintain the visual continuity of historic commercial areas.

Appropriate

- Design a commercial façade to be composed of simple, rectangular forms that are consistent with the façade composition of the surrounding context. Any decorative elements and projecting or setback "articulations" should appear to be subordinate to the dominant form.
- Incorporate floor-to-floor heights that appear similar to those of traditional buildings in Donaldsonville, especially at the ground level.
- Design a new structure in to incorporate a traditional "base, middle and cap" configuration.

4.43 Maintain traditional spacing patterns created by the repetition of uniform building widths along the street.

Appropriate

- Proportion a new façade to reflect the established range of traditional building widths seen in Donaldsonville.
- Where a new structure must exceed a traditional building width, use changes in building configuration, articulation or design features such as materials, window design, façade height or decorative details to break the façade into modules that suggest traditional building widths.

4.44 Position taller portions of a structure away from neighboring buildings of lower scale.

Appropriate

- Where permitted by the base zoning, locate the taller portion of a new structure to minimize looming effects and shading of lower-scaled neighbors.
- Step down the height of a taller structure towards lower scaled neighbors, especially if they have a high level of historic significance.

Reflecting Traditional Building Widths

Historic commercial structures generally reflect the widths of the underlying lots. Designing a new structure to reflect this pattern will help maintain the visual continuity of historic commercial areas.

Traditional Building Widths

In Downtown Donaldsonville, traditional lot widths were generally rectangular, with the narrow side facing the street.

Traditional building widths often reflect this pattern, with a series of narrow building façades facing the street.

New Construction Reflecting Traditional Building Widths

While a new structure may be wider than was historically typical, it should incorporate design features that break it down into smaller modules that suggest the underlying historic lot pattern.

Changes in building configuration, articulation or design features can help visually break the structure down into smaller modules.

Building Standards for New Commercial Construction

The existing pattern of traditional commercial façades contributes to the continuity of Donaldsonville’s historic commercial areas. Although the imitation of historic architectural styles is discouraged, traditional façade and material patterns should inform the design of new commercial structures in the locally-designated historic district.

Commercial Façade Character

Traditional commercial façade compositions in Donaldsonville feature a clear differentiation between the street level and upper floors. The street level generally appears taller than other floors and has a high percentage of fixed plate glass with a small percentage of opaque framing materials, a kick-plate and a recessed entry. An upper floor, where it occurs, is the reverse—opaque materials dominate, and windows appear as smaller openings puncturing a more solid wall.

The key features of traditional commercial façade character should be referenced in a new commercial façade.

4.45 Maintain the distinction between the street level and the upper floor.

Appropriate

- Incorporate a high percentage of transparent glass into the first floor of the primary façade.
- Design upper floors to appear more opaque than the street level.
- Express the distinction in floor heights between street levels and upper levels through detailing, materials and fenestration. The presence of a belt course is an important feature in this relationship.

Inappropriate

- Do not use highly reflective or darkly tinted glass.

4.46 Maintain the traditional spacing pattern created by upper story windows.

Appropriate

- Use traditional proportions of windows, individually or in groups.
- Maintain the traditional placement of window headers and sills relative to cornices and belt courses.

4.47 Incorporate traditional façade elements in a new commercial structure.

Appropriate

- Express a kickplate, display window and transom in a new storefront design.
- Design storefront components and upper story windows to be similar in height, depth, profile and proportion to traditional downtown buildings.
- When portions of a storefront are folding, ensure that all of the storefront components are still visible.

4.48 Maintain traditional entry patterns along the street.

Appropriate

- Locate the primary entrance to face the street.
- On commercial type buildings, set a primary entry door back an adequate amount from the front façade to establish a distinct threshold for pedestrians. A recessed dimension of four feet is typical.
- Maintain the upper floor building line at the sidewalk edge where entries are recessed.
- Use a transom over a doorway to maintain the full vertical height of the storefront.

Inappropriate

- Do not use oversized or undersized entry designs.

Architectural Character

In order to assure that historic resources are appreciated as authentic contributors, it is important that new buildings be distinguishable from them. Therefore, new construction should appear as a product of its own time, while also being compatible with the historically significant features of the area.

4.49 Design a new building to reflect its time, while respecting key features of its context.

Appropriate

- Reference traditional articulation patterns on the façade of a new commercial structure.
- Use high quality design and depth of detail in building features to enhance compatibility with the historic context.
- Use contemporary details, such as window moldings and door surrounds, to create interest while expressing a new, compatible style.

4.50 Do not imitate historic styles in the design of a new structure.

Appropriate

- Design a structure in a contemporary style to avoid blurring the distinction between old and new, which makes it more difficult to visually interpret the architectural evolution of the historic district.
- Design a structure using a contemporary interpretation of a historic style that is authentic to the district while ensuring that it is distinguishable as being new.

Inappropriate

- Do not design a structure to appear old.

Materials

Building materials for new structures and additions to existing buildings should contribute to the visual continuity of the district and appear similar to those seen traditionally.

Masonry, including brick, stone and genuine stucco, was traditionally the primary building material in Downtown Donaldsonville. Traditional commercial structures in the city's historic residential areas use a wider range of building materials, often including wood siding.

4.51 Use building materials that are compatible with the surrounding context.

Appropriate along the Mississippi Street and Railroad Avenue Corridors

- Use brick as the primary exterior building material. Note that other masonry materials such as stone and genuine stucco may be appropriate in commercial locations outside of Mississippi Street and Railroad Avenue.

Appropriate for Commercial Buildings in Residential Historic Areas.

- Use wood siding with a weather -protective finish, or masonry (brick, stone or genuine stucco) as the preferred primary exterior building material.
- When necessary, use alternative materials that are similar to traditional materials in scale, proportion, texture and finish and have proven durability in the local climate.

Inappropriate in All Areas

- Do not use highly reflective finishes such as mirror glass or highly polished metal as a primary building material.

4.52 When using masonry, ensure that it appears similar in character to that seen historically.

Appropriate

- Use brick with a modular dimension similar to that used traditionally.
- Consider using cast concrete details that are designed to be similar to stone trim elements.

Standards for New Commercial Structures in Residential Districts

Outside of the Mississippi Street/Railroad Avenue corridors, Donaldsonville's locally-designated historic district is primarily residential. However, a number of commercial nodes and buildings have historically been located in residential districts, and are an important part of neighborhood identity.

Where permitted by the City's base zoning regulations, new commercial and mixed-use infill buildings are encouraged in residential historic districts. Such buildings should be oriented towards pedestrians and should be compatible with the mass and scale of nearby residential structures and uses. They should also be consistent with the neighborhood development patterns.

Note that the overall design standards for new commercial construction and additions are also generally applicable to new commercial and mixed-use construction in residential districts.

4.53 Design a new commercial or mixed-use structure to be compatible with the mass and scale of nearby residential structures.

Appropriate

- Break down the mass of a new structure into modules that relate to the size of nearby historic residential structures.
- Step down the mass and scale of a new structure towards adjoining residential structures.
- Provide a landscape buffer between a new structure and adjoining residential structures.

4.54 Design a new commercial or mixed-use structure to be pedestrian-oriented.

Appropriate

- Locate a substantial portion of a new commercial or mixed-use structure near the sidewalk edge.
- Provide outdoor seating or plaza areas adjoining the street.
- Locate the primary building entry to be directly accessible from the sidewalk.
- Provide a storefront or other space with a high level of transparency on the ground floor.

Inappropriate

- Do not place parking between the building and a primary street (note that parallel or other on-street parking is appropriate.)

Standards for Commercial Additions

Additions to locally-designated historic commercial landmarks and commercial structures in the locally-designated historic district should be compatible with the original structure and surrounding historic context.

Two distinct types of additions to historic commercial buildings may be considered. First, a ground-level addition that involves expanding the footprint of a structure. Such an addition should be to the rear or side of a building. This will have the least impact on the character of the building. Second, an addition to the roof may be designed that is subordinate in character and set back substantially from the front. In addition, the materials, window sizes and alignment of trim elements on the addition should be compatible with those of the existing structure.

Greater flexibility on less visible façades is appropriate.

4.59 Design an addition to be compatible with the main structure.

Appropriate

- Design an addition to appear subordinate to the original building in mass, scale, character, and form.
- Design an addition to be distinguishable as new, albeit in a subtle way.
- Use a compatible roof form. An addition with a pitched roof is usually inappropriate for a building with a flat roof.

Inappropriate

- Do not locate an addition to the front of the primary façade.

4.60 Do not damage or obscure architecturally important features when adding an addition.

Inappropriate

- Avoid damaging historic façades, cornice lines or other details.

4.61 Design a roof addition to be compatible with the historic structure.

Appropriate

- Set a roof addition back from the primary, character-defining façade, to preserve the perception of the historic scale of the building.
- Minimize the visibility of a roof addition from the street.
- Design a roof addition to be simple and modest in character, so it will not detract attention from the historic façade.

4.62 Design a side addition to be compatible with the historic structure.

Appropriate

- Recess the façade of a side addition at least 18" from the original building façade.

APPENDICES



APPENDIX I.

Guide for Administrative Approval - by City's Historic Preservation Officer (HPO)

Item	Material	Administrative Approval?	Commission Review?	Comments
Porches and Decks				
Rear porches or decks - new or alterations	Wood	Yes - if not visible from the public right-of-way	If visible from public right-of-way	New deck must be of a style compatible with the main structure. Deck may not permanently alter or damage the main structure.
Front Porch	Wood	Yes - if not visible from the public right-of-way	If change in material or design	Need clear evidence of original design
Windows and Doors				
Replacement Windows and Doors	Wood	Yes	If primary façade or change in materials	Secondary and rear facades only. New windows and doors must match existing historic feature in material and
Minor Architectural Changes				
Replacement of Missing Architectural Features	Wood	Yes	Change in materials. Lack of clear evidence or photographs	Need clear evidence of original design. Replacement shutters must match the original in size and scale
Alterations to non-historic residential buildings		Yes	HPO determines that the requested work does not conform to the Design Standards	Building must be deemed non-contributing or intrusion to the historic district. Must conform to the design standards.
Chimneys and Roofs				
New Roofs	Match existing	Yes	Change in materials - does not meet Design Standards	Select material and pattern that are historically appropriate to the building.
Installation or removal of vent hoods. Removal of damaged or unstable secondary chimney.	Metal	Yes	If primary chimney	Secondary chimney must be behind the roof peak.
Fences				
Front Fences	Wood, metal	Yes	Change in height, materials or unusual design	Height not to exceed 48". Vinyl not permitted. Must conform to the Design Standards.
New rear or side yard privacy fence	Cedar, dog-ear pickets with lattice above	Yes	Change in height, materials or unusual design	Height not to exceed 48". Vinyl not permitted. Must conform to the Design Standards.
Synthetic Siding				
All new applications		No	Yes	Must go before Historic District Commission - color review for all new applications.
Removal of synthetic siding		Yes	No	Check condition of historic wood material beneath.
ADA/Accessibility				
Ramps or Lifts	Wood	Yes	Lifts visible from the city right-of-way	Should be placed on side or rear of structure if possible/met setbacks.
Signage				
New		Yes - if no change in materials or allowable size	If change in materials or allowable size	Accurate, full-color renderings submitted to HPO
Work in Rear Yards				
Removal of dilapidated, non-historic rear yard secondary structure	Various	Yes	If historic contributing structure	Submission of photographs verifying condition of property
Minor alterations to accessory buildings	Various	Yes	If visible from public right-of-way	Including garage doors, enclosure or foundations, access stairs to associated decks and porches
New rear yard accessory buildings and structures	Various	Yes	If significantly visible from the public right-of-way	Must conform to the Design Standards
Paint				
Exterior painting		Yes - if painting with the existing colors or slight variations from the approved color palette	If painting a new structure OR if making substantial changes to the paint scheme OR if using colors not on the approved color palette	Approved Exterior Paint Palettes: Sherwin Williams: "America's Heritage Palette"; Benjamin Moore "Williamsburg" or "Historical Color Collection"

APPENDIX II. RESOURCES

(Note: If link does not work over time, try an online search).

Advocacy

- [FIND YOUR REPRESENTATIVES AND EXPRESS YOUR VIEWS ON IMPORTANT PRESERVATION ISSUES](http://www.legis.la.gov)
www.legis.la.gov
- [LOUISIANA CITIZENS FOR CULTURE](http://louisianaculture.org) louisianaculture.org

Statewide

- [LOUISIANA DIVISION OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION](http://www.crt.state.la.us) www.crt.state.la.us (state agency)
National Register of Historic Places Listing, Rehabilitation Tax Credits, Main Street Communities
- [LOUISIANA TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION](http://LTHP.org) LTHP.org (non-profit organization)

Resource for advice on project; revolving fund for saving endangered buildings; paint discounts for members

Disaster Recovery

- [OPERATION PHOTO RESCUE – RESTORING PHOTOS DAMAGED BY NATURAL DISASTERS](http://www.operationphotorescue.org)
www.operationphotorescue.org

Research/Education

- [DATABASE OF LOUISIANA SITES ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES](http://www.crt.state.la.us/dataprojects/hp/nhl/index.asp)
<http://www.crt.state.la.us/dataprojects/hp/nhl/index.asp>
- [HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY – LIBRARY OF CONGRESS](http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/hh/index/places/l/)
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/hh/index/places/l/>
- [HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS COLLECTION](https://www.hnoc.org/research) <https://www.hnoc.org/research>
- [LOUISIANA DIGITAL LIBRARY](http://www.louisianadigitallibrary.org/) <http://www.louisianadigitallibrary.org/>
- [LOUISIANA’S LIVING NEW DEAL – NEW DEAL PROJECTS](https://livingnewdeal.org/louisiana/) <https://livingnewdeal.org/louisiana/>
- [LOUISIANA STATE ARCHIVES](https://www.sos.la.gov/HistoricalResources/LearnAboutTheArchives/Pages/default.aspx)
<https://www.sos.la.gov/HistoricalResources/LearnAboutTheArchives/Pages/default.aspx>
- [LOUISIANA STATE EXHIBIT MUSEUM](http://laexhibitmuseum.org/museum-history/) <http://laexhibitmuseum.org/museum-history/>
- [LOUISIANA STATE LIBRARY](http://www.state.lib.la.us/) <http://www.state.lib.la.us/>
- [LOUISIANA STATE MUSEUM –DATABASE](https://www.crt.state.la.us/louisiana-state-museum/collections/historical-center/index)
<https://www.crt.state.la.us/louisiana-state-museum/collections/historical-center/index>
- [SOUTHEASTERN ARCHITECTURAL ARCHIVE – TULANE UNIVERSITY](http://seaa.tulane.edu/) <http://seaa.tulane.edu/>

Construction Help

- [DATABASE OF LOUISIANA STATE LICENSING BOARD FOR CONTRACTORS](http://www.lslbc.louisiana.gov/contractor-search/)
<http://www.lslbc.louisiana.gov/contractor-search/>
- [NATIONAL CENTER FOR PRESERVATION TECHNOLOGY AND TRAINING \(NCPTT\) – NATCHITOCHES](https://www.ncptt.nps.gov/)
<https://www.ncptt.nps.gov/>
- [PRESERVATION BRIEFS – NATIONAL PARK SERVICE TOPICS ON CONSTRUCTION](https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs.htm)
<https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs.htm>
- [“RESILIENT HERITAGE: PROTECTING YOUR HISTORIC HOME FROM NATURAL DISASTERS”](https://www.ncptt.nps.gov/technical-resources/resilient-heritage/)
<https://www.ncptt.nps.gov/technical-resources/resilient-heritage/>

APPENDIX III. CASE STEPS OF A HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION MEETING

Case is called by the chairperson.

City liaison/staff member presents the application, background information and staff recommendation.

Only Time to Speak

Public Session is opened. (Time for input from applicant and general public. All applicants must sign their name and address at the podium before speaking, for the city's records).

Applicant or their representative is called to present their case and answer questions.

Other members of the public are called to provide input or opinions (typically 3 min. time limit)

Applicant allowed to provide further clarification or answer commission's final questions.

Public Session is closed. (Only commissioners and city staff may discuss the case at this point, unless chair chooses to open public session again to question applicant or others).

Commissioners deliberate case and make a motion.

Motion to approve as presented.

Motion to approve with staff recommendations (or other conditions).

Motion to deny application.

Motion to defer to future meeting.

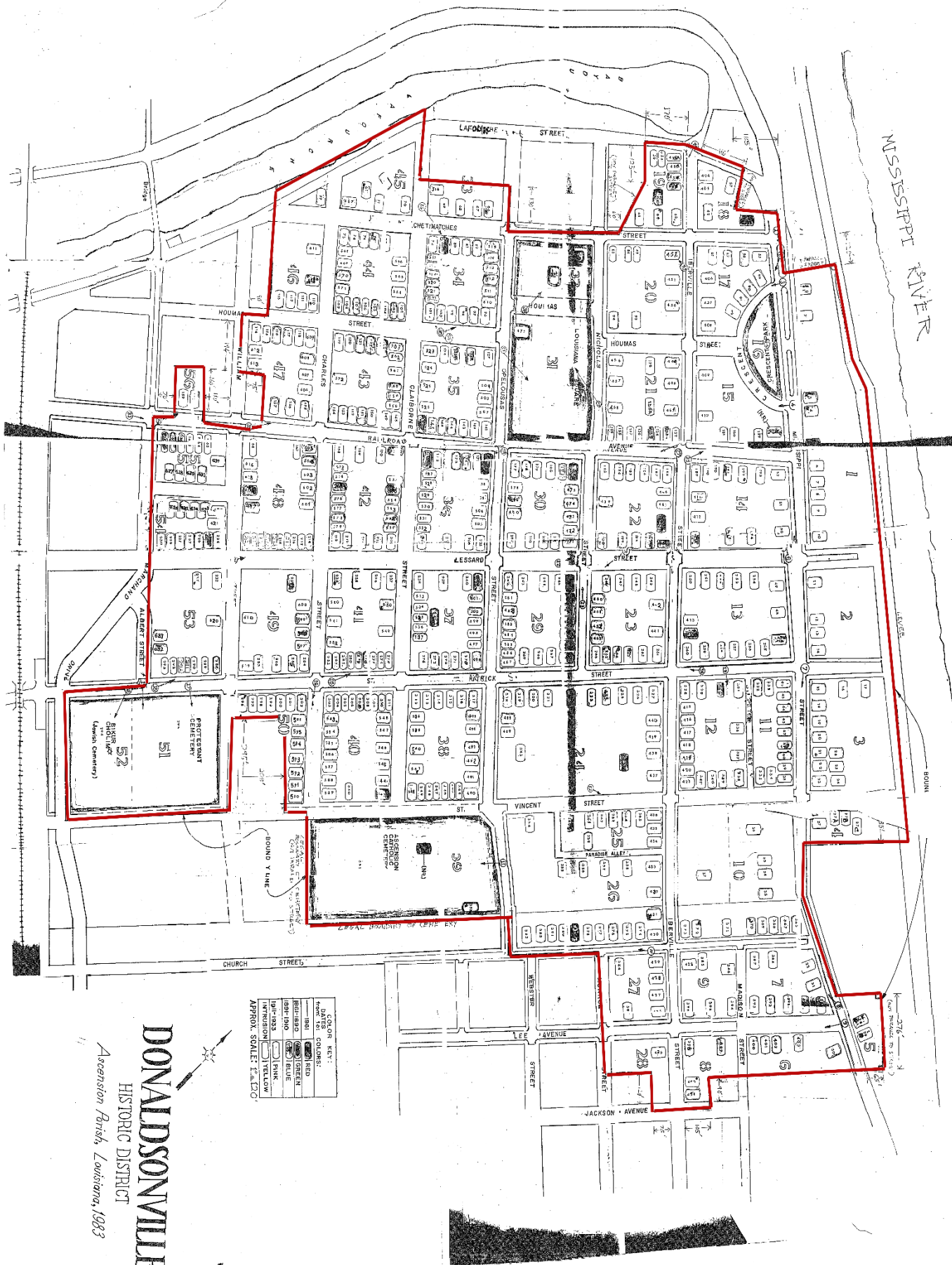
All motions should refer to the section numbers of the design guidelines and/or the special conditions which support their action.

Motion is seconded for discussion or call of the commission's vote.

The chairperson calls for a vote rollcall from the secretary.

End of case hearing.

Soon after the hearing where a case is approved or denied, a letter will be sent to the applicant explaining the outcome of the decision. If approved, the city liaison/staff will issue a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA), which the applicant will need in order to get their building permit. The COA should be displayed visibly on the front of the property, while construction is underway. If denied, the letter will outline corrective steps in order to receive approval based on the denial. An appeals process is outlined in the Historic District Ordinance ((Ord. No. 2007-07, §§ I, II, 6-12-07).



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



This update to the Donaldsonville Historic District Design Standards was conducted from Fall 2017 through Spring 2018, using input from local residents and Donaldsonville Historic District Commissioners. It is intended to be a working document and a tool for commissioners, property owners and developers, with supplemental modifications and updates as needed.

This project has been financed in part with federal funds from the National Park Service, Department of the Interior through the Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, Office of Cultural Development, Division of Historic Preservation. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior, Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, Office of Cultural Development, Division of Historic Preservation, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by the Department of the Interior, Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, Office of Cultural Development, Division of Historic Preservation.

This program received federal financial assistance for identification and protection of historic properties. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, the U.S. Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, age, sex or sexual orientation in its federally assisted programs. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, please write to: Office of Equal Opportunity - U.S. Department of the Interior - Washington, D.C. 20240