INTENT & PURPOSE

APPROACH & FORMAT

INTENT AND PURPOSE OF THIS MANUAL

The purpose of this manual is to present architectural design guidelines to property owners, residents, contractors and others, relating to the type of rehabilitation work and new construction. Additionally, the guidelines may be used as a reference source for the rehabilitation of vintage structures not located within downtown historic area.

The guidelines apply only to the exteriors of properties and are intended to protect the overall character of Wheeling's downtown historic area. The guidelines emphasize maintaining architectural styles, details and streetscape elements which collectively make up the unique character of the downtown. For new construction, the guidelines provide information on the importance of relating new buildings and landscape elements to the existing historic streetscapes.
The Wheeling Design Guidelines are based on the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for rehabilitating historic buildings. These federal standards provide a framework for the more detailed guidelines presented in this manual. The Wheeling Design Guidelines state the generally appropriate and inappropriate treatments for rehabilitation work and preserving the architectural styles, details and streetscape elements which collectively make up the character of the downtown area.

DESIGN GUIDELINES - APPROACH AND FORMAT

HOW ARE THE GUIDELINES WRITTEN?

Design guidelines emphasize preservation of existing building details, materials, and overall plan rather than complete remodeling. That is why terms such as repair, retain, maintain, and protect are widely used throughout the guidelines. To repair, retain and maintain original architectural features and materials is preferred to their replacement. To protect the overall character of the districts is the goal of the preservation ordinance and the guideline document.

Other common terms used in this manual are should and should not. The use of the terms should or should not often expect property owners to follow the meaning and intent of a guideline as written. There may be instances where more flexibility or creative solutions are needed in applying the guidelines

WHAT IS THE PRIMARY FOCUS OF THE GUIDELINES?

The design guidelines are primarily concerned with the fronts and readily visible sides of buildings because buildings are most commonly viewed by the public from either the street or sidewalk in front of the property. The fronts and visible sides of a building usually contain its most defining features such as porches, main entrances, and decorative details. **The rears of buildings have more flexibility since they are generally not readily visible due to the building's placement on the lot or screening by landscaping or fences.** The rears of buildings are the most appropriate locations for the construction of additional space or other major alterations.

HOW TO USE THE MANUAL

Property owners are encouraged to refer to the guidelines when planning or designing new construction projects, planning exterior rehabilitations, and completing everyday maintenance. Illustrated descriptions of the guidelines are included to familiarize property owners with typical features and characteristics. At the end of the guideline section is a suggested bibliography.

WHAT ARE THE GUIDELINES BASED ON?

The Wheeling Design Guidelines are based upon the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. These standards are used throughout the country by the majority of America's heritage or preservation commissions as a basis for local design review guidelines and for projects utilizing federal funds or tax credits. The guidelines presented in this manual are modeled after these standards. In the event of any conflict in this manual and the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, the provisions of the Wheeling Design Guidelines shall control.

The standards that follow were originally published in 1977 and revised in 1990 as part of the U.S. Department of the Interior regulations. They pertain to historic buildings of all materials, construction types, sizes, and occupancy and encompass the exterior and the interior of historic buildings. The standards also encompass related landscape features and the building's site and environment as well as attached adjacent or related new construction.

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings shall not be undertaken.

4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken in the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archaeological 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.

SITE & SETTING

SITE AND SETTING

Wheeling's Downtown Historic area developed from the mid-19th to the early 20th centuries and most blocks retain their original character of site and setting. Dwellings were built with consistent setbacks from the street and main entrance oriented towards the street. Most blocks were laid out with similar lot dimensions and distances between buildings, creating a consistent rhythm and pattern in the location of the buildings and their intervening spaces. This streetscape character is retained on most blocks and should be preserved and maintained.

Subject to the limitations imposed by the underlying zoning district and applicable building codes, any new construction, remodeling, demolition and/or landscaping should attempt to blend proposed work into the traditional design of the area.

This includes considerations of items such as:

- Set backs
- Lot sizes
- Density
- Location on the lot
- Orientation & size of: - new buildings, additions, remodeling
- Placement of hard scape features such as: - driveways, sidewalks, parking pads, retaining walls, patios, planters, fountains, pools, gazebos, etc.

DRIVEWAYS, PARKING LOTS, AND PAVING

Wheeling's downtown area was largely plotted in the days of horses and horse drawn vehicles. Some streets were laid out with rear alleys to provide access to barns, carriage houses, and sheds. The downtown area does contain some driveways.

DRIVEWAYS

A. should always be preserved in their original designs, materials, (cobblestone, concrete, brick, etc.), and placement.

B. should be of brick, concrete, or concrete tracks (narrow strips) if it is a new or replacement driveway in the front or side yards. Asphalt or textured concrete designed to look like brick pavers are also appropriate materials. Gravel driveways are discouraged because gravel migrates and is difficult to maintain.

C. should have their parking areas located behind the front building line and be screened with hedges, shrubs, or fences where noticeable from the street. The width of driveways in front of the building line should not exceed ten feet. In width, sidewalks should not be constructed adjacent to the driveway and should be distinguished by a landscaped barrier.

D. should not be sited in front yards if of semi-circular or drive-thru design.

PARKING LOTS

E. should be screened through plantings of hedges, shrubs, trees, or fences at edges and in medians within.

F. should be located in rear yards for commercially-used houses, churches, apartment buildings, or schools. If placement along a side yard is required, the parking lot should be located no closer than the front wall of the building.

G. should align edge landscape screening with front facades of adjacent buildings if on vacant lots between buildings.

H. should have edge landscape screening on both the primary and secondary street, if a corner lot.

A fence is a "frame" around a building. Fences and gates are an extension of the architecture of the building. Fences are often character defining features of a property and should be treated sensitively. Most of the classic picket and baluster fences built in the 1930's feature a continuous horizontal bottom board or baseboard, which is seldom part of a modern fence design today. The baseboard is wooden imitation of a stone base called a plinth, which is a feature of many iron and stone fences. The baseboard is an easy way to enhance the design of a simple picket fence as well as add strength. Visually, a baseboard is desirable since it gives a fence a much more solid, architectural appearance. Chain-Link fences should not be used in the historic downtown area. Property owners with existing chain-link fences are encouraged to screen them with hedges, ivy, or other creeping cover or by painting them dark green or black.

FENCES

A. should be proportionate to the building and the design should be compatible with the character of the building and downtown historic area.

B. should be painted white or a trim color related to the building never left to weather or given a stain finish.

C. of cast iron or other material of original design should be preserved

D. of cast iron may be added to buildings constructed in the late 19th and early 20th century. Cast iron fences are generally not appropriate for dwellings built after 1920.

E. if placed along common property lines it should not be placed against another fence - avoid double line fencing.

F. should have posts that are set a minimum of 30 inches below grade and no more than eight feet apart.

G. if wood, be of cedar, redwood or pressure treated pine, cypress or other rot resistant wood.

FENCES IN FRONT

I. should be no higher than 36 inches with the posts being slightly higher and having caps

J. should have pickets no wider than four inches with spacing between boards a minimum of one inch up to the width of the board depending on the design of the fence.

K. if applicable to the layout, should have a minimum of corner posts, end posts and gate posts which are slightly taller than the fence and five to ten inches thick with a cap and finial. Line posts can be visible and decorative to compliment the main posts or be hidden behind the picket design. Fences which cross a driveway or walkway should have gate posts. Gates should be designed to swing onto the private walkway or driveway, not onto the public sidewalk.

FENCES IN REAR

L. built for privacy should not extend beyond the rear yard beginning at the back corner of the building.

M.built for privacy should have a minimum of gate post, corner post, and end posts which are five to ten inches wide and taller than the pickets.

N. Can be constructed in the same low fence design found in the front of building

O. of wood boards or planks for privacy should be located in rear and be no taller than six feet. Boards should be no more than six inches wide.

P. Privacy fences of flat boards with flat tops in a single row are most appropriate for the historic districts. Vertical boards topped with lattice or pickets are also appropriate as privacy fences.

GARBAGE COLLECTORS, LANDSCAPING, GRADE CHANGES

Garbage collectors (cans, dumpsters, etc) should be located at the rear of the building or along an alley.

GARBAGE COLLECTORS

A. should be located at the rear of the building and be screened from the street view with shrubbery and fencing.

LANDSCAPING

Planting flowers and shrubs and trees should be used for construction of structures as retaining walls and driveways. Wheeling's shade trees are important to the character of the downtown area and existing trees should be pruned and cared for.

TREES AND SHRUBBERY

A. should be regularly pruned and maintained, so as to not conceal, obscure, or damage a building. The lower branches of trees should be pruned up as the tree grows so that the dwelling is visible beneath the branches. Trees on the street bank are the responsibility of the city. Please contact the city if they need trimming.

B. should be indigenous or traditional to the historic downtown area. Appropriate shade tree species include Red Oak, Ash, Linden, Ginkgo, Maple, and Hackberry. Ornamental trees such as Hawthorns, Bradford Pears, Crab Apples and similar varietals are not appropriate for downtown planting.

VEGETABLE GARDENS

C. should not be situated in the front area

The addition or removal of ground material is known as grade change. This should be avoided. In addition to changing the visual character of the property, they may result in damage to the structure, or erosion and drainage problems on the property or adjacent to it.

GRADE CHANGES

A. should not result in the obscuring or concealment of a dwelling.

B. should not change the character of the streetscape or the relationship of buildings to their sites.

RETAINING WALLS

A limited number of retaining walls are found in Wheeling's downtown area. Some are of concrete construction and were built are the same time as building. Other concrete retaining walls were built in the early 20th century when concrete sidewalks were installed. Historic retaining walls should be preserved and maintained. New retaining walls should be built of stone or concrete.

A. should be preserved and maintained, if original to the building (or built before 1945).
B. should be of poured concrete (not concrete blocks) or in stone designs such as cut stone, random rubble, coursed rubble, or cobblestones. Retaining walls of brick are less appropriate but may be constructed. If constructed of artificial or cultured stone, textures, colors and random designs should replicate natural stone. If located in front, the walls should be constructed using up to two courses and an additional cap course, not to exceed twenty inches in height.
C. should not be removed or replaced with new materials, if built before 1945.
D. should not be built on the fronts of buildings, if constructed of timbers or railroad ties.

SIDEWALKS AND WALKWAYS

Sidewalks and walkways in Wheeling's downtown area are primarily of concrete construction. Many of these were poured in the early 20th century and remain in good condition. The use of concrete is traditional and appropriate for Wheeling's downtown area.

A. should be preserved, if original to a building or block
B. should be constructed of smooth concrete poured in detail, dimension, and placement as that of original or early sidewalks.
C. should not be of aggregate or pebble-surfaced concrete. Smooth poured concrete, flagstone pavers, brick pavers, or pavers that replicate brick such as stamped concrete can be used.
D. should not be constructed of asphalt, if situated in the front yard, but may be permitted in less visible areas of the property.
E. should not abut existing driveways and should be located a minimum distance of three feet from any existing driveway.