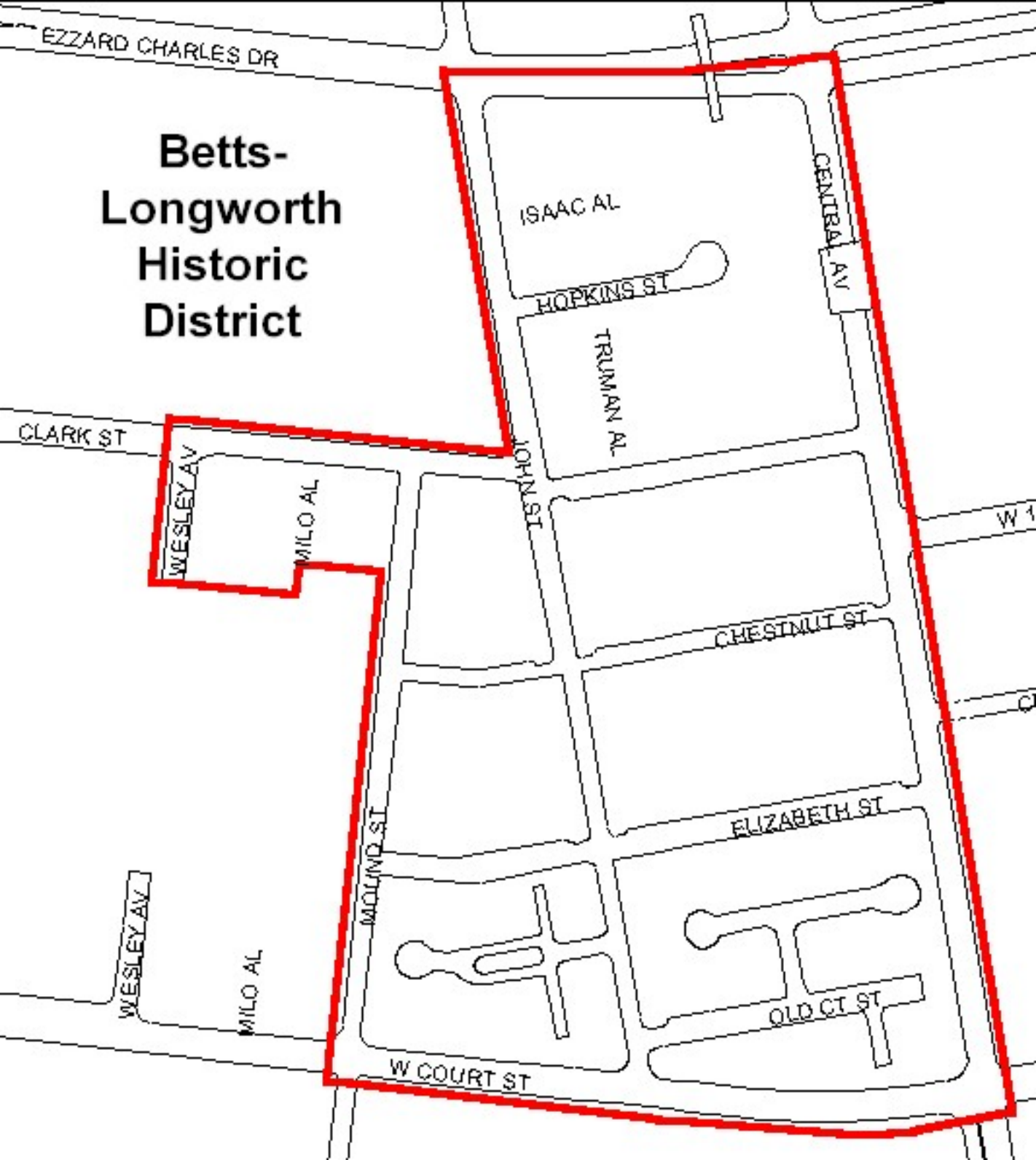
Betts-
Longworth
Historic
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CONSERVATION GUIDELINES: BETTS-LONGWORTH HISTORIC DISTRICT

INTRODUCTION

The Betts-Longworth Historic District is named after two of the area's original property owners, William Betts and Nicholas Longworth. Both owned large tracts of land which were subdivided in the 1830's and sold as individual lots.

The City's Historic Conservation Board authorized staff work on the district in December, 1981, following requests for a district by City Councilman Arn Bortz and Neighborhood Housing and Conservation Director Steven Bloomfield.

Staff of the City Planning Department's Historic Conservation Office wish to acknowledge the assistance of the persons listed below in "thinking through" proposals for district boundaries and guidelines. They are City or agency staff, present or future owners, or interested citizens:

Ann Antenen	Mark Green	Norman Kattelman	Mike Painter
Patti Baker	David Huwer	Helen Knight	Mary Palmer
Roger Bradley	Myron Ingram	Reginald Lee	Pearlie Palmer
Ginger Brockwehl	Rosemary Jackson	Richard V. Lewis	Mary Schum
Michael Connelly	Roger Jansen	Essie Long	Louis Smith
Robbie Garvin	Clinton Johnson	Joel McCray	Mathrie Whittle
Dorian Gray	James J. Jones		

The Betts-Longworth Historic District boundaries and conservation guidelines were adopted by City Council on May 26, 1982. The guidelines will be used by the Historic Conservation Board and its staff to review exterior alterations within the district.

THESE GUIDELINES ARE NOT CAST IN CONCRETE.

- They do not force you to do work on your property.
- They do not force you to "take the property back to the way it was."
- The guidelines should not substantially increase rehabilitation costs. They can be adjusted or waived by the Historic Conservation Board to meet the owner's rehab budget.
- Ordinary repair and maintenance does not require review by the Historic Conservation Board.

Applicants are encouraged to consult with Historic Conservation Board staff before they finalize their plans and formally apply for a building permit. We are available in Suite 700, Centennial Plaza Two, 805 Central Avenue or at 352-4890.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS/BUILDING TYPE AND STYLE

When the area now known as Queensgate II was developing in the mid-1800s, it was not unusual to-find

houses next to livery stables or even a packing house. The area was dense and active, developing over a period of about 75 years from 1830 through the turn of the century.

Eventually, the residential quality of the area prevailed, and "cleaner" businesses were integrated into the neighborhood. The buildings standing today are evidence of that residential era: townhouses on long, narrow lots and commercial buildings with storefronts on the first floors. Most of the remaining buildings date from the late 19th century.

The area is dominated by the Italianate style of architecture, which was popular in Cincinnati for about 30 years, starting at the time of the Civil War. Major elements of this style are heavy bracketed cornices at the roof line and elaborate "hoodmolds" (moldings above the door and window openings).

The earlier buildings are generally smaller, simpler structures. These are Greek Revival style, and are characterized by simplicity in form and detail. They are likely to have a plain, rectangular "lintel" over the window, rather than the Italianate's more decorative hoodmold. In Cincinnati, the Greek Revival style dates from about 1835-1860.

Also found in the area is the Queen Anne style, which was built in Cincinnati from about 1880-1900. This is a more complex, free-form style. Decorative patterns in various materials (wood shingle, molded brick, terra cotta, stone and tin), changes in wall planes, and a variety of window patterns including groups of three or four together and projecting bay windows, may be found on a Queen Anne building.

Despite plenty of variety in architecture, the district has an overriding homogenous feeling. Almost all of the buildings are brick, some with stone fronts. Fitting the long, narrow lots, the buildings themselves are vertical in design—narrow with tall, slender windows stacked above first-floor windows and doors. The "verticality" of the district is echoed in narrow spaces between buildings. This emphasis on vertical elements is one of the most dominant characteristics of the district.

The residential buildings vary in setback from the street. Some have no setback at all, some go back to fifteen feet or more. Stone steps, stone walls and iron fencing are found throughout the area. These add variety and a street-level human scale to the district. The roofs of these buildings look flat from the front, but some are really gable roofs, which have two slopes which come together at a peak. The peak can be seen from the side of the building.

Commercial enterprises were clustered along Central Avenue and were also established along Old Court Street and, to a lesser extent, near John Street. These buildings have storefronts on the first level and residences or apartments above. To take advantage of the narrow lots, these buildings were usually built from lot line to lot line, forming a continuous wall facing the street. The roofs of these structures were usually flat, although there are a few with "hip roofs," which have more than two sloping sides (unlike the gable, which has only two slopes). While these buildings probably looked similar when built, they have been changed over the years as their owners sought to modernize their properties. Most changes, however, happened only at the first level.

Finally, some buildings in the area can't be put readily into the Italianate, Queen Anne or Greek Revival pigeonholes. These are transitional buildings, which combine elements from several styles. Nonetheless, the area is remarkably cohesive in its feeling of time and place. Walking down the street can give the viewer a real feeling of the late 19th century in Cincinnati's densely-populated basin area.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR REHABILITATION AND ALTERATION

Since there is a variety of building types existing in Queensgate II, each project should be reviewed individually. There are, however, a few guidelines that apply to all rehabilitation work:

1. Avoid removing or altering historic material or distinctive architectural features; if it's original and in fairly good condition, try to keep it.

2. Don't try to make the building look older than it really is by adding decorations like eagles or Paul Revere lanterns. These reflect a time prior to the development of Queensgate II and make a building which never existed.

3. A later addition to an old house may have gained significance on its own. Don’t assume it’s worthless just because it’s not part of the original building. For example, Greek Revival buildings built between 1830 and 1850 had plain window decorations. Some of these were "updated" with more elaborate Italianate window decoration in the 1870s. Since this later decoration reflects a style of architecture now over 100 years old, it too has gained historic significance and is architectural evidence which tells us something about the history of the building; such later decoration should not be removed.

4. Repair rather than replace whenever possible.

5. Be sensitive to distinct stylistic features and examples of skilled craftsmanship.

6. Surface cleaning should be done with the gentlest means possible. Don’t sandblast or use other abrasive methods.

7. New additions should look new. They should be compatible with the existing structure but should not try to copy the old building. The proper use of scale and proportion will help keep new additions from looking too big or too small. In most cases do not try to imitate the old; new materials and different construction methods make this difficult and may result in a new structure which tries to look old but which really looks like a "bad copy" of something old.

REVIEW CRITERIA FOR REHABILITATION AND ALTERATION

1. MATCH ORIGINAL MATERIALS AS CLOSELY AS POSSIBLE

Most buildings in this district are made of brick, often with stone details. There are a few wood frame structures and a few wood additions to brick buildings. Missing or deteriorated materials should be replaced with recycled or new materials which match the original as closely as possible with regard to the following: type, color, style, shape, and texture of material, composition, type of joint, size of unit, placement and detailing.

2. DOORS AND WINDOWS: KEEP THE "EYES" OF THE BUILDING OPEN

Possibly the most important feature of any building is its openings: its doors and windows. Original openings should not be altered. Original doors and window sash should be repaired rather than replaced, when possible. When replacement is necessary, the new door or window should match the original as closely as possible.

The doors and doorways in the Queensgate II area are generally rectangular, though there are some with arched openings. Many doorways are recessed with heavy wooden storm doors which enclose a small entry. When opened, these doors become part of the entry wall. Some doors have rectangular glass transoms above. Some contain glass panels (these are usually in recessed entries), but most doors are solid wood. Original doors had recessed wooden panels, surrounded by several layers of applied molding. These are "paneled doors."

The most common window is double-hung (it has an upper and a lower section both of which can be raised and lowered). Very early buildings in the district had window sash that contained six panes of glass on the top and six on the bottom (called 6 over 6, abbreviated to "6/6"). Later buildings had 2 over 2, and even later had 1 over 1. The district displays a variety of window openings: full height floor to ceiling, circular, oval, and various types of arched. Shown at right is a typical double-hung, 6/6 window. It is not appropriate to put 6/6 windows in later-period buildings. Italianate buildings had 212 or 1/1. Most buildings in the district are Italianate.

A major design element found in this district are hoodmolds over door and window openings. Their original purpose was to divert water away from the opening below, but this practical function seems overpowered by their decorative function. They enrich and enliven each building, and provide a variety of detail in the whole district. Maintaining them should be a key factor in any rehab program. If hoodmolds are missing on your building, you may be able to replicate simpler ones. Extremely ornate hoodmolds are more difficult and expensive to reproduce. Some rehabbers replace them with fiberglass hoodmolds, make by taking an actual mold of the original and using that as a "master" for the fiberglass replicas.

Maintaining hoodmolds over doors and windows should be a key factor in any rehab. These are usually made of carved stone, molded tin or pressed brick.

3. ROOFS: MAINTAIN THE ROOFLINE

In general, rooflines in the district are low pitched gables or flat. The smaller buildings usually have pitched roofs with gables, while the larger buildings have flat roofs. Tin roofs with standing seams are found on some buildings and have been covered over on many more. Newer rolled roofs and composition shingles have replaced much of the original material. Slate is found on the few buildings with hip roofs or mansard roofs.

The existing roofline and architectural features which give the building its character, such as dormers, cornices, brackets, and chimneys, should be preserved. The addition of inappropriate features, such as vents, skylights and rooftop utilities, should be avoided or inconspicuously placed and screened where necessary.

4. WOOD SIDING: USE WOOD NOT AN IMITATION

In cases where wood siding is to be repaired or replaced, wood should be used as the replacement material. The use of aluminum or vinyl siding should be avoided whenever possible. When they are used, the exposed width of each replacement board should not exceed 4 inches. Artificial stone, brick veneer, asbestos, asphalt shingles and other similar resurfacing materials should not be used. Architectural features, such as cornices, brackets, window sills, door and window moldings, should not be covered when resurfacing occurs.

5. CLEANING: NEVER SANDBLAST

The cleaning of existing material should be done by the gentlest method possible.

For wood structures, hand scraping is probably the best method although chemical paint strippers and heat guns are effective. Torches can be very dangerous and wire brushes can damage the wood; these methods should not be used.

For masonry structures, begin with scraping by hand or scrubbing with a bristle brush and mild detergent. Chemical cleaning is effective but must be followed immediately with a neutralizing acid wash. In any case, sandblasting is not an acceptable method of cleaning. Sandblasting destroys the surface of the brick and stone and lessens the life of the building. Wire brushes can also damage the masonry surface and their use is also not acceptable.

The brick on the left is painted. The brick on the right has been sandblasted. Notice that the surface has been removed, leaving a pitted and scarred surface which leaves the softer, inferior part of the brick exposed and vulnerable. The best treatment for painted brick is a gentle scraping, then repainting.

6. REPOINTING MASONRY: USE THE PROPER MORTAR AND MORTAR JOINT

The mortar joints (spaces between the bricks) found in masonry construction deteriorate for a variety of reasons. Effectively repointing these joints can significantly aid the rehabilitation of a structure. Old buildings were built with old mortar. This mortar, which is lime based, is much softer than the portland cement based mortar of today. If a hard, modern mortar is used, the softer bricks may crack or break during the freeze/thaw cycle.

When repointing an existing wall, be sure to try and match the consistency of the sand as closely as possible. Next, try and match the type of joint, being careful to consider thickness of the original.

7. WATER REPELLENT COATINGS AND PAINT: PAINT IS BETTER

Most historic structures have survived without the need of water repellent coatings. Water related damage on the interior of buildings is usually a result of deteriorated or faulty gutters and downspouts, deteriorated mortar, rising damp or condensation. Water repellent coatings will not solve these problems, and may even accelerate the problems. Waterproof and water repellent coatings should never be used

unless there is actual water penetration through the masonry, then only the affected area should be treated and only after it has thoroughly dried.

In most cases, the brick buildings in the district were completely or partially painted. While not permanent, paint provides an effective protective skin for brick structures. Historically, paint was part of the overall design scheme and its use is recommended.

The colors used in painting a building are not subject to review but at no time shall the body of the building and the decorative elements be the same color. Light colored buildings should have dark trim; dark colored buildings should have light trim.

8. WALLS, FENCES, AND STEPS: PUBLIC TO PRIVATE

Iron fences set on low stone walls or between stone posts are typical in Queensgate II. They are a decorative dividing line between public and private property. Stone steps are also common. Almost every building is raised off the ground and entered by way of these steps. Often there are two sets, one at the street level and another at the main entrance. Every effort should be made to retain all of these features.

Iron fences, stone walls and stone steps are a tremendous asset to the historic district. Chain link fences in front yards are not acceptable. High "stockade" fences, even in rear yards, should be avoided.

9. SITE IMPROVEMENTS: SHOULD BE COMPATIBLE

The alteration or removal of existing walkways, steps, fencing, or planting which contribute to the character of the district should be avoided. All new site improvements should be compatible with the architectural character of the district. Tree removal should be avoided.

10. PORCHES AND DECKS: NOT ON THE STREET FACADE

The addition of porches and decks on the street facade shall not be permitted. Decks added elsewhere shall not obscure or require the removal of any significant feature. Balusters should be vertical and placed no more than 6 inches apart. Railing heights should not exceed 42 inches.

11. STOREFRONTS: DIFFERENT AT THE FIRST FLOOR

There are several buildings in Queensgate II which contain storefronts at the first level; these are concentrated along Central Avenue and Old West Court Street. Above the storefronts, these buildings are usually very similar to residential structures with the same kind of design and detailing. The storefront, however, is completely different. The basic elements which give the storefront its character should be retained and repaired. These include:

- Cornice
- Window Lintel
- Sill
- Storefront Lintel
- Transom
- Pier
- Original Door
- Sill
- Window Panel

Piers or columns which divide the storefront into bays, and lintels or cornices which separate the storefront from the upper floors should not be covered or removed. Windows should not be filled-in. Sill height should be maintained. Original transoms, window configuration, doors, and ornamentation should be retained, repaired, or replicated. Where no original materials or detailing remains, new work should be compatible with the original character of the building.

12. SIGNS: CLEAN AND SIMPLE

(a) Signs should be compatible with the district and in character with the building they are on. The removal of inappropriate and extraneous signs is encouraged. New or altered signs should meet the following guidelines:

(b) Signs should be compatible with the architecture of the building on which they are located.

(c) The design of signs should capitalize on the special character of the area and reflect the nature of the business they are identifying.

(d) Large signs should be kept flat against buildings and not detract from the architecture of the building or cover architectural details.

(e) Generally, signs should be located on storefront lintels or at the height of the lintel.

(f) Small projecting signs may be used for identification. These may take the form of projecting symbol signs.

(g) Signs should be adequately spaced from other signs for good visibility and should be approximately the same size and shape, placed in the same general location, and at the same height as other signs of similar businesses.

(h) Obsolete signs and unused sign supports should be removed. New roof top signs, signs which extend above the roof line of a building or above the window sill line of the 2nd floor of buildings should not be permitted.

- Signs should be on the storefront lintel.
- Signs should not cover architectural detail.
- Signs should not project above the 2nd floor sill lines.

13. SHUTTERS AND OTHER ATTACHMENTS: NO FAKE OR COLONIAL ADDITIONS

Some of the houses in Queensgate II originally had shutters, although few still have them. Buildings which did not originally have shutters should not have them added. Check the window frames for hinges or where hinges might have been. Replacement shutters should be wood and properly hung, not nailed to the side of the building. They should be sized correctly, meeting in the middle and completely covering the window.

Wood exterior shutters are designed to perform various functions. Louvered shutters allow the passage of air while maintaining some privacy. Solid shutters are generally used at night to retain heat and provide complete privacy. The combination shutter provides both functions to a lesser degree.

New exterior light fixtures should be a simple design and not "colonial." The installation of canvas awnings and canopies is permissible but should not obscure or require the removal of significant architectural features. Awnings and canopies made of plastic, wood, or metal shall not be permitted.

14. UTILITY/SYSTEMS INSTALLATION: PLACE THEM CAREFULLY

The installation of utility and mechanical systems, such as water or gas meters, central air conditioning cooling units, and elaborate electrical hookups should be inconspicuously placed and screening should be provided; the installation of such systems should be avoided on the street facade. Permanent installation of wall or window air conditioning units on the street facade is strongly discouraged. If possible, even removable window units should be kept on the side of the building rather than the front.

DEMOLITION

Demolition of existing buildings shall not be permitted unless one of the following conditions exist:

(a) Emergency demolition has been ordered by the Director of Buildings & Inspections for reasons of public health and safety.

(b) The demolition request is for a garage, an inappropriate addition, or a building of a later period as defined and identified in these guidelines; and the demolition of said structure will not adversely effect the streetscape as determined by the Historic Conservation Board.

(c) The owner can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Historic Conservation Board that the structure cannot be reused nor can a reasonable economic return-be gained from the use of all or part of the building proposed for demolition.

BUILDINGS OF A LATER PERIOD

Buildings of a later period were generally constructed after most of the rest of the district was built and are of a different architectural character than the district. These buildings are usually obvious because their appearance does not "fit" with the older buildings in the district. Buildings of a later period are usually smaller or larger than the earlier buildings and are constructed of different materials and exhibit fewer decorative elements.

In the Betts-Longworth Historic District, the following buildings are considered to be of a later period.

401 Ezzard Charles Drive (Queen City Vocational School)
501-505 Chestnut Street
438 Elizabeth Street
420 Clark Street

Additions, alterations, and rehabilitation to the above buildings shall be either compatible with the style and character each possesses or shall cause the above buildings to become more compatible with the district.

NEW CONSTRUCTION / ADDITIONS: BUILDINGS SHOULD FIT THEIR SURROUNDINGS

New construction should not try to imitate the old, but should be compatible with respect to the following:

MATERIALS – The type of materials and their color, texture, scale and detailing should be compatible with those of the District and/or the original building. Predominate materials are brick with stone, tin, or wood trim.

SCALE – The scale of new work and its constituent parts should be compatible with the District and/or the original building and the scale of its parts.

FORM – The shape, massing, and proportions of new work should be compatible with the District and the original building. Openings are primarily vertical.

DETAILING – The detailing including, but not limited to, the following features and their placement on additions and new construction should be compatible with the District:

- Walls
- Eaves
- Roofs
- Cornices
- Appurtenances
- Windows
- Chimneys
- Doors
- Porches

HEIGHT – The height of an addition should not exceed the height of the original building. The height of new buildings should be comparable to the height of existing buildings and should not detract from the character and appearance of the District.

SETBACK – The setback of new buildings should be comparable to the setbacks of existing buildings in the District.

HISTORIC INTEGRITY – Compatibility of new work to original work is required, but imitation of old work in new construction should be avoided. If original openings are filled in on the side or rear elevations, the outline of the original opening should remain apparent by setting new infill material back from the surface and leaving original sills and lintels in place.